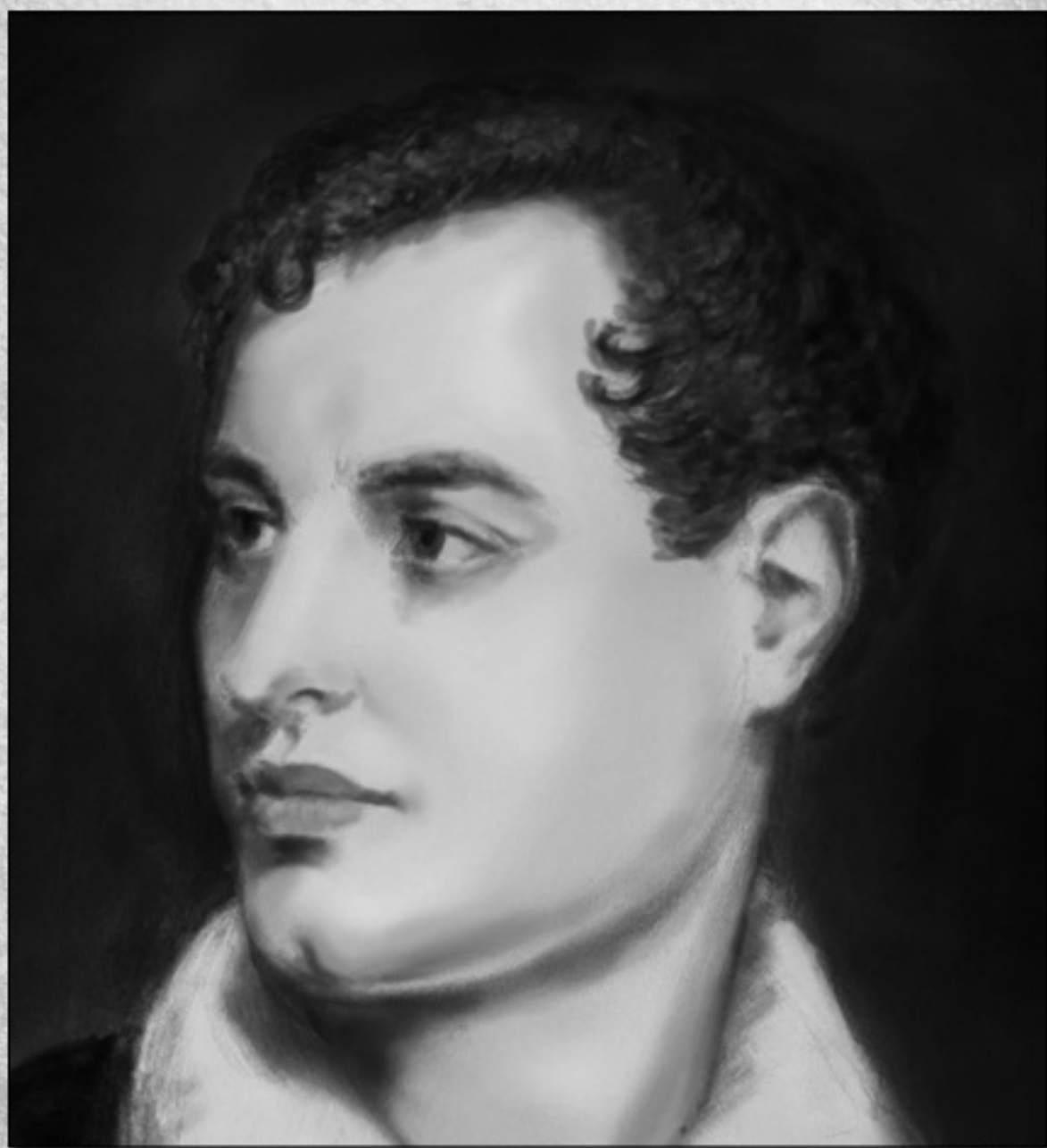


DELPHI POETS SERIES

LORD BYRON



DELPHI CLASSICS

DELPHI POETS SERIES

LORD BYRON

(1788–1824)



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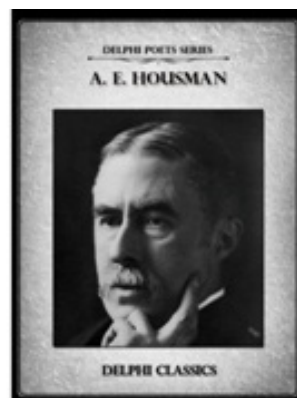
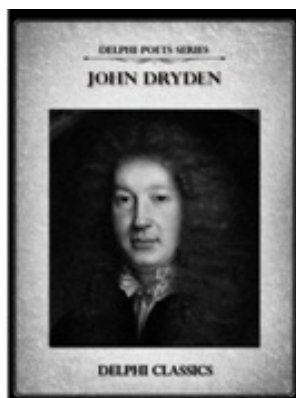
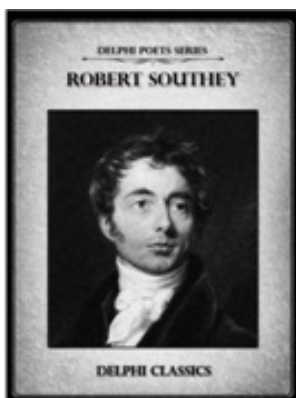
THE LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF LORD BYRON

The Biography

THE LIFE OF LORD BYRON by John Galt



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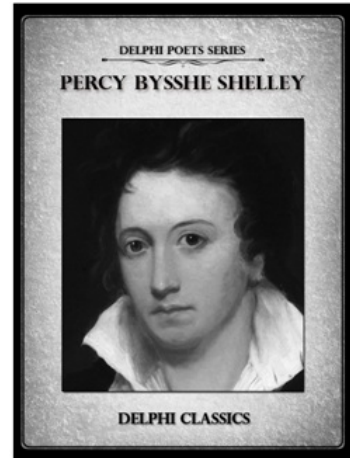
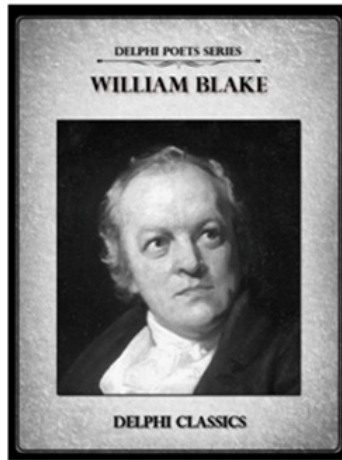
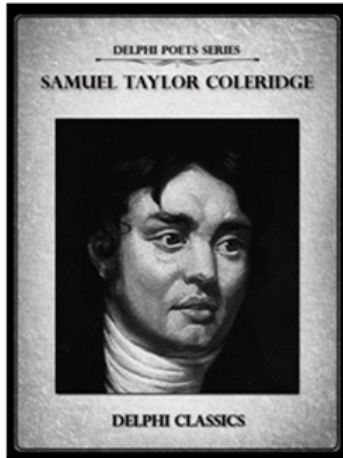
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The Poetry Collections



Holles Street, Central London — Byron's birthplace



The plaque commemorating his birthplace



Holles Street in 1775



Byron, aged 15

HOURS OF IDLENESS



Lord Byron's first volume of poetry was published in 1807, when the poet was only 19 years old. He had previously printed a volume under the title *Fugitive Pieces* the year before, but with the Reverend John Beecher's objections to some of the poems, the volume was withdrawn. Then Byron privately printed *Poems on Various Occasions*, an expurgated version of *Fugitive Pieces*. Following the warm reception it received from friends, he later in the year released the volume under the new title *Hours of Idleness*.

At the time, Byron wrote to a friend, "In every Bookseller's I see my own name and say nothing, but enjoy my fame in secret." The collection contains mostly short poems, many in imitation of classic Roman poets, and they received mixed reviews. One particularly scathing criticism in the *Edinburgh Review* spurred Byron to reply with the satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in 1809.



Captain John 'Mad Jack' Byron, the poet's father



Lady Catherine Gordon, the poet's mother

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HARROW



The first edition of the collection

HOURS OF IDLENESS

A SERIES OF POEMS ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED

First published in 1807

'Virginibus puerisque canto.'— Horace, lib. iii, Ode 1.
'He whistled as he went, for want of thought.'— Dryden.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In submitting to the public eye the following collection, I have not only to combat the difficulties that writers of verse generally encounter, but may incur the charge of presumption for obtruding myself on the world, when, without doubt, I might be, at my age, more usefully employed.

These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours of a young man who has lately completed his nineteenth year. As they bear the internal evidence of a boyish mind, this is, perhaps, unnecessary information. Some few were written during the disadvantages of illness and depression of spirits: under the former influence, 'Childish Recollections,' in particular, were composed. This consideration, though it cannot excite the voice of praise, may at least arrest the arm of censure. A considerable portion of these poems has been privately printed, at the request and for the perusal of my friends. I am sensible that the partial and frequently injudicious admiration of a social circle is not the criterion by which poetical genius is to be estimated, yet 'to do greatly' we must 'dare greatly'; and I have hazarded my reputation and feelings in publishing this volume. I have 'passed the Rubicon,' and must stand or fall by the 'cast of the die.' In the latter event I shall submit without a murmur; for, though not without solicitude for the fate of these effusions, my expectations are by no means sanguine. It is probable that I may have dared much and done little; for, in the words of Cowper, 'it is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biassed in our favour, and another to write what may please everybody; because they who have no connexion, or even knowledge of the author, will be sure to find fault if they can.' To the truth of this, however, I do not wholly subscribe; on the contrary, I feel convinced that these trifles will not be treated with injustice. Their merit, if they possess any, will be liberally allowed; their numerous faults, on the other hand, cannot expect that favour which has been denied to others of maturer years, decided character, and far greater ability.

I have not aimed at exclusive originality, still less have I studied any particular model for imitation; some translations are given, of which many are paraphrastic. In the original pieces there may appear a casual coincidence with authors whose works I have been accustomed to read; but I have not been guilty of intentional plagiarism. To produce anything entirely new, in an age so fertile in rhyme, would be a Herculean task, as every subject has already been treated to its utmost extent. Poetry, however, is not my primary vocation; to divert the dull moments of indisposition, or the monotony of a vacant hour, urged me 'to this sin': little can be expected from so unpromising a muse. My wreath, scanty as it must be, is all I shall derive from these productions; and I shall never attempt to replace its fading leaves, or pluck a single additional sprig from groves where I am, at best, an intruder. Though accustomed, in my younger days, to rove a careless mountaineer on the Highlands of Scotland, I have not, of late years, had the benefit of such pure air, or so elevated a residence, as might enable me to enter the lists with genuine bards, who have enjoyed both these advantages. But they derive considerable fame, and a few not less profit, from their productions; while I shall expiate my rashness as an interloper, certainly without the latter, and in all probability with a very slight share of the former. I leave to others 'virum volitare per ora.' I look to the few who will hear with patience, 'dulce est desipere in loco.' To the former worthless I resign, without repining, the hope of immortality, and content myself with the not very magnificent prospect of ranking amongst 'the mob of gentlemen who write';—my readers must determine whether I dare say 'with ease,' or the honour of a posthumous page in 'The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,'—a work to which the Peerage is under infinite obligations, inasmuch as many names of considerable length, sound, and antiquity, are thereby rescued from the obscurity which unluckily overshadows several voluminous production of their illustrious bearers.

With slight hopes, and some fears, I publish this first and last attempt. To the dictates of young ambition may be ascribed many actions more criminal and equally absurd. To a few of my own age the contents may afford amusement; I trust they will, at least, be found harmless. It is highly improbable, from my situation and pursuits hereafter, that I should ever obtrude myself a second time on the public; nor even, in the very doubtful event of present indulgence, shall I be tempted to commit a future trespass of the same nature. The opinion of Dr. Johnson on the poems of a noble relation of mine*, 'That when a man of rank appeared in the character of an author, he deserved to have his merit handsomely allowed,' can have little weight with verbal, and still less with periodical, censors; but were it otherwise, I should be loth to avail myself of the privilege, and would rather incur this bitterest censure of anonymous criticism, than

triumph in honours granted solely to a title.

* The Earl of Carlisle, whose works have long received the meed of public applause, to which, by their intrinsic worth, they are well entitled.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK, EARL OF CARLISLE,
KNIGHT OF THE GARTER, ETC., ETC.,
THE SECOND EDITION OF THESE POEMS IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS OBLIGED WARD AND AFFECTIONATE KINSMAN,
THE AUTHOR.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY

Cousin to the Author, and very dear to him

Hush'd are the winds, and still the evening gloom,
Not e'en a zephyr wanders through the grove,
Whilst I return, to view my Margaret's tomb,
And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
That clay, where once such animation beam'd;
The King of Terrors seized her as his prey,
Not worth nor beauty have her life redeem'd.

Oh! could that King of Terrors pity feel,
Or heaven reverse the dread decree of fate,
Not here the mourner would his grief reveal,
Not here the muse her virtues would relate.

But wherefore weep? Her matchless spirit soars
Beyond where splendid shines the orb of day;
And weeping angels lead her to those bowers
Where endless pleasures virtuous deeds repay.

And shall presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign,
And, madly, godlike Providence accuse?
Ah! no, far fly from me attempts so vain;--
I'll ne'er submission to my God refuse.

Yet is remembrance of those virtues dear,
Yet fresh the memory of that beauteous face;
Still they call forth my warm affection's tear,
Still in my heart retain their wonted place.

(1802)

TO E—

Let Folly smile, to view the names
Of thee and me in friendship twined;
Yet Virtue will have greater claims
To love, than rank with vice combined.

And though unequal is thy fate,
Since title deck'd my higher claims
Yet envy not this gaudy state;
Thine is the pride of modest worth.

Our souls at least congenial meet,
Nor can thy lot my rank disgrace;
Our intercourse is not less sweet,
Since worth of rank supplies the place.

November 1802

TO D—

In thee I fondly hoped to clasp
A friend whom death alone could sever;
Till envy, with malignant grasp,
Detach'd thee from my breast for ever.

True, she has forced thee from my breast,
Yet in my heart thou keep'st thy seat;
There, there thine image still must rest,
Until that heart shall cease to beat.

And when the grave restored her dead,
When life again to dust is given,
On thy dear breast I'll lay my head--
Without thee where would be my heaven?

February 1803

EPITAPH ON A BELOVED FRIEND

Oh, Friend! for ever loved, for ever dear!
What fruitless tears have bathed thy honour'd bier!
What sighs re'echo'd to thy parting breath,
Wilst thou wast struggling in the pangs of death!
Could tears retard the tyrant in his course;
Could sighs avert his dart's relentless force;
Could youth and virtue claim a short delay,
Or beauty charm the spectre from his prey;
Thou still hadst lived to bless my aching sight,
Thy comrade's honour and thy friends delight.
If yet thy gentle spirit hover nigh
The spot where now thy mouldering ashes lie,
Here wilt thou read, recorded on my heart,
A grief too deep to trust the sculptor's art.
No marble marks thy couch of lowly sleep,
But living statues there are seen to weep;
Affliction's semblance bands not o'er thy tomb,
Affliction's self deplores thy youthful doom.
What though thy sire lament his failing line,
A father's sorrows cannot equal mine!
Though none, like thee, his dying hour will cheer,
Yet other offspring soothe his anguish here:
But who with me shall hold thy former place?
Thine image what new friendship can efface?
Ah, none! - a father's tears will cease to flow,
Time will assuage an infant brother's woe;
To all, save one, is consolation known,
While solitary friendship sighs alone.

A FRAGMENT

When, to their airy hall, my father's voice
Shall call my spirit, joyful in their choice;
When, poised upon the gale, my form shall ride,
Or, dark in mist, descend the mountains side;
Oh! may my shade behold no sculptured urns,
To mark the spot where earth to earth returns!
No lengthen'd scroll, no praise-encumber'd stone;
My epitaph shall be my name alone:
If *that* with honour fail to crown my clay,
Oh! may no other fame my deeds repay!
That, only *that*, shall single out the spot;
By that remember'd, or with that forgot.

1803

ON LEAVING NEWSTEAD ABBEY

‘Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy tower to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes, it howls in thy empty court.’ - Ossian

Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
Have choked up the rose which late bloom’d in the way.

Of the mail-cover’d Barons, who proudly to battle
Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine’s plain,
The escutcheon and shield, which with every blast rattle,
Are the only sad vestiges now that remain.

No more doth old Robert, with harp-stringing numbers,
Raise a flame in the breast for the war-laurell’d wreath;
Near Askalon’s towers, John of Horistan slumbers,
Unnerved is the hand of his minstrel by death.

Paul and Hubert, too, sleep in the valley of Cressy;
For the safety of Edward and England they fell:
My fathers! the tears of your country redress ye;
How you fought, how you died, still her annals can tell.

On Marston, with Rupert, ‘gainst traitors contending,
Four brothers enrich’d with their blood the bleak field;
For the rights of a monarch their country defending,
Till death their attachment to royalty seal’d.

Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu!
Abroad, or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he’ll think upon glory and you.

Though a tear dim his eye at this sad separation,
‘Tis nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emulation,

The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

That fame, and that memory, still will he cherish;

He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown:

Like you will he live, or like you will he perish;

When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own!

1803

LINES

WRITTEN IN 'LETTERS OF AN ITALIAN NUN AND AN ENGLISH
GENTLEMAN; BY J. J. ROUSSEAU: FOUNDED ON FACTS'

'Away, away, your fleeting arts
May now betray some simpler hearts;
And you will smile at their believing,
And they shall weep at your deceiving.'

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING, ADDRESSED TO MISS — .

Dear, simple girl, those flattering arts,
From which thou'dst guard frail female hearts,
Exist but in imagination, —
Mere phantoms of thine own creation;
For he who views that witching grace,
That perfect form, that lovely face,
With eyes admiring, oh! believe me,
He never wishes to deceive thee:
Once in thy polish'd mirror glance,
Thou'lt there descry that elegance
Which from our sex demands such praises,
But envy in the other raises:
Then he who tells thee of thy beauty,
Believe me, only does his duty:
Ah! fly not from the candid youth;
It is not flattery, — 'tis truth.

July 1804

ADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL WHEN DYING

[Animula! vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca--
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?]

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

AD LESBIAM

Equal to Jove that youth must be —
Greater than Jove he seems to me —
Who, free from Jealousy's alarms,
Securely views thy matchless charms.
That cheek, which ever dimpling glows,
That mouth, from whence such music flows,
To him, alike, are always known,
Reserved for him, and him alone.
Ah! Lesbia! though 'tis death to me,
I cannot choose but look on thee;
Whilst trembling with a thousand fears,
Parch'd to the throat my tongue adheres,
My pulse beats quick, my breath heaves short,
My limbs deny their slight support,
Cold dew drops my pallid face o'erspread,
With deadly languor droops my head,
My ears with tingling echoes ring,
And life itself is on the wing;
My eyes refuse the cheering light,
Their orbs are veil'd in starless night:
Such pangs my nature sinks beneath,
And feels a temporary death.

TRANSLATION OF THE EPITAPH ON VIRGIL AND TIBULLUS

BY DOMITIUS MARSUS

He who sublime in epic numbers roll'd,
And he who struck the softer lyre of love,
By Death's unequal hand alike controll'd,
Fit comrades in Elysian regions move!

IMITATION OF TIBULLUS

‘Sulpicia ad Cerinthus.’--Lib. iv.

Cruel Cerinthus! does the fell disease
Which racks my breast your fickle bosom please?
Alas! I wish'd but to o'ercome the pain,
That I might live for love and you again;
But now I scarcely shall bewail my fate:
By death alone I can avoid your hate.

TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS

[Lugete, Veneres, Cupidinesque, &c.]

Ye Cupids, droop each little head,
Nor let your wings with joy be spread;
My Lesbia's favourite bird is dead,
Whom dearer than her eyes she loved:
For he was gentle, and so true,
Obedient to her call he flew,
No fear, wild alarm he knew,
But lightly o'er her bosom moved: And softly fluttering here and there,
He never sought to cleave the air,
But chirrup'd oft, and, free from care,
Tuned to her ear his grateful strain.
Now having pass'd the gloomy bourne
From whence he never can return,
His death and Lesbia's grief I mourn,
Who sighs, alas! but sighs in vain.

Oh! curst be thou, devouring grave!
Whose jaws eternal victims crave,
From whom no earthly power can save,
For thou hast ta'en the bird away:
From thee my Lesbia's eyes o'erflow,
Her swollen cheeks with weeping glow;
Thou art the cause of all her woe,
Receptacle of life's decay.

IMITATED FROM CATULLUS

TO ELLEN

Oh! might I kiss those eyes of fire,
A million scarce would quench desire:
Still would I steep my lips in bliss,
And dwell an age on every kiss;
Nor then my soul should sated be,
Still would I kiss and cling to thee:
Nought should my kiss from thine dissever;
Still would we kiss, and kiss for ever,
E'en though the numbers did exceed
The yellow harvest's countless seed.
To part would be a vain endeavor:
Could I desist? — ah! never — never!

TRANSLATION FROM HORACE

[Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.]

The man of firm and noble soul
No factious clamours can control;
No threat'ning tyrant's darkling brow
Can swerve him from his just intent:
Gales the warring waves which plough,
By Auster on the billows spent,
To curb the Adriatic main,
Would awe his fix'd, determined mind in vain.

Ay, and the red right arm of Jove,
Hurtling his lightnings from above,
With all his terrors, there unfurl'd,
He would unmoved, unawed, behold.
The flames of an expiring world,
Again in crashing chaos roll'd,
In vast promiscuous ruin hurl'd,
Might light his glorious funeral pile:
Still dauntless 'midst the wreck of earth he'd smile.

FROM ANACREON

I wish to tune my quivering lyre
To deed of fame and notes of fire;
To echo, from its rising swell,
How heroes fought and nations fell,
When Atreus' sons advanced to war,
Or Tyrian Cadmus roved afar;
But still, to martial strains unknown,
My lyre recurs to love alone.
Fired with the hope of future fame,
I seek some nobler hero's name;
The dying chords are strung anew,
To war, to war, my harp is due.
With glowing strings, the epic strain
To Jove's great son I raise again;
Alcides and his glorious deeds,
Beneath whose arm the Hydra bleeds.
All, all in vain; my wayward lyre
Wakes silver notes of soft desire.
Adieu, ye chiefs renown'd in arms!
Adieu the clang of war's alarms!
To other deeds my soul is strung,
And sweeter notes shall now be sung;
My harp shall all its powers reveal,
To tell the tale my heart must feel;
Love, Love alone, my lyre shall claim,
In songs of bliss and sighs of flame.

FROM ANACREON

'Twas now the hour when Night had driven
Her car half round yon sable heaven;
Boötes, only, seem'd to roll
His arctic charge around the pole;
While mortals, lost in gentle sleep,
Forgot to smile, or ceased to weep:
At this lone hour the Paphian boy,
Descending from the realms of joy,
Quick to my gate directs his course,
And knocks with all his little force.
My visions fled, alarm'd I rose,--
'What stranger breaks my blest repose?'
'Alas!' replies the wily child,
In faltering accents sweetly mild,
'A hapless infant here I roam,
Far from my dear maternal home.
Oh! shield me from the wintry blast!
The nightly storm is pouring fast.
No prowling robber lingers here.
A wandering baby who can fear?'
I heard his seeming artless tale,
I heard his sighs upon the gale:
My breast was never pity's foe,
But felt for all the baby's woe.
I drew the bar, and by the light
Young Love, the infant, met my sight;
His bow across his shoulders flung,
And thence his fatal quiver hung
(Ah! little did I think the dart
Would rankle soon within my heart).
With care I tend my weary guest,
His little fingers chill my breast;
His glossy curls, his azure wing,
Which droop with nightly showers, I wring;
His shivering limbs the embers warm;
And now reviving from the storm,

Scarce had he felt his wonted glow,
Than swift he seized his slender bow:-
'I fain would know, my gentle host,'
He cried, 'if this its strength has lost;
I fear, relax'd with midnight dews,
The strings their former aid refuse.'
With poison tipt, his arrow flies,
Deep in my tortured heart it lies:
Then loud the joyous urchin laugh'd:-
'My bow can still impel the shaft:
'Tis firmly fix'd, thy sighs reveal it;
Say, courteous host, canst thou not feel it?'

FROM THE PROMETHEUS VINCTUS OF ÆSCHYLUS

Great Jove, to whose almighty throne
Both gods and mortals homage pay,
Ne'er may my soul thy power disown,
Thy dread behests ne'er disobey.
Oft shall the sacred victim fall
In sea-girt Ocean's mossy hall;
My voice shall raise no impious strain
'Gainst him who rules the sky and azure main.

How different now thy joyless fate,
Since first Hesione thy bride,
When placed aloft in godlike state,
The blushing beauty by the side,
Thou sat'st, while reverend Ocean smiled,
And mirthful strains the hours beguiled;
The Nymphs and Tritons dances around,
Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove relentless frown'd.

TO EMMA

Since now the hour is come at last,
When you must quit your anxious lover;
Since now our dream of bliss is past,
One pang, my girl, and all is over.

Alas! that pang will be severe,
Which bids us part to meet no more;
Which tears me far from one so dear,
Departing for a distant shore.

Well! we have pass'd some happy hours,
And joy will mingle with our tears;
When thinking on these ancient towers,
We shelter of our infant years; Where from this Gothic casement's height,
We view's the lake, the park, the dell,
And still, though tears obstruct our sight,
We lingering look a last farewell, O'er fields through which we used to run,
And spend the hours in childish play;
O'er shades where, when our race was done,
Reposing on my breast you lay; Whilst I, admiring, too remiss,
Forgot to scare the hovering flies,
Yet envied every fly the kiss
It dared to give your slumbering eyes: See still the little painted bark,
In which I row'd you o'er the lake;
See there, high waving o'er the park,
The elm I clamber'd for your sake.

These times are past — our joys are gone,
You leave me, leave this happy vale;
These scenes I must retrace alone:
Without thee what will they avail?

Who can conceive, who has not proved,
The anguish of a last embrace?
When, torn from all you fondly loved,
You bid a long adieu to peace.

This is the deepest of our woes,
For this these tears our cheeks bedew;
This is of love the final close,
Oh, God! the fondest, last adieu!

TO M. S. G.

Whene'er I view those lips of thine,
Their hue invites my fervent kiss;
Yet, I forego that bliss divine,
Alas! it were — unhallow'd bliss.

Whene'er I dream of that pure breast,
How could I dwell upon its snows!
Yet, is the daring wish repress,
For that, — would banish its repose.

A glance from thy soul-searching eye
Can raise with hope, depress with fear;
Yet, I conceal my love, — and why?
I would not force a painful tear.

I ne'er have told my love, yet thou
Hast seen my ardent flame too well;
And shall I plead my passion now,
To make thy bosom's heaven a hell?

No! for thou never canst be mine,
United by the priest's decree:
By any ties but those divine,
Mine, my belov'd, thou ne'er shalt be.

Then let the secret fire consume,
Let it consume, thou shalt not know:
With joy I court a certain doom,
Rather than spread its guilty glow.

I will not ease my tortur'd heart,
By driving dove-ey'd peace from thine;
Rather than such a sting impart,
Each thought presumptuous I resign.

Yes! yield those lips, for which I'd brave
More than I here shall dare to tell;

Thy innocence and mine to save, —
I bid thee now a last farewell.

Yes! yield that breast, to seek despair
And hope no more thy soft embrace;
Which to obtain, my soul would dare,
All, all reproach, but thy disgrace.

At least from guilt shalt thou be free,
No matron shall thy shame reprove;
Though cureless pangs may prey on me,
No martyr shalt thou be to love.

TO CAROLINE

Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffus'd in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmov'd thy plenteous sighs,
Which said far more than words can say?

Though keen the grief thy tears exprest,
When love and hope lay both o'erthrown;
Yet still, my girl, this bleeding breast
Throbb'd, with deep sorrow, as thine own.

But, when our cheeks with anguish glow'd,
When thy sweet lips were join'd to mine;
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou could'st not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its flame,
And, as thy tongue essay'd to speak,
In sighs alone it breath'd my name.

And yet, my girl, we weep in vain,
In vain our fate in sighs deplore;
Remembrance only can remain,
But that, will make us weep the more.

Again, thou best belov'd, adieu!
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret,
Nor let thy mind past joys review,
Our only hope is, to forget!

TO CAROLINE

When I hear that you express an affection so warm,
Ne'er think, my beloved, that I do not believe;
For your lip would the soul of suspicion disarm,
And your eye beams a ray which can never deceive.

Yet, still, this fond bosom regrets, while adoring,
That love, like the leaf, must fall into the sear;
That age will come on, when remembrance, deploring,
Contemplates the scenes of her youth with a tear; That the time must arrive,
when, no longer retaining
Their auburn, those locks must wave thin to the breeze,
When a few silver hairs of those tresses remaining
Prove nature a prey to decay and disease.

'Tis this, my beloved, which spreads gloom o'er my features,
Though I ne'er shall presume to arraign the decree,
Which God has proclaim'd as the fate of his creatures,
In the death which will one day deprive you of me.

Mistake not, sweet sceptic, the cause of emotion,
No doubt can the mind of your lover invade;
He worships each look with such faithful devotion,
A smile can enchant, or a tear can dissuade.

But as death, my beloved, soon or late shall o'ertake us,
And our breasts, which alive with such sympathy glow,
Will sleep in the grave till the blast shall awake us,
When calling the dead, in earth's bosom laid low,-

Oh! then let us drain, while we may, draughts of pleasure,
Which from passion like ours may unceasingly flow;
Let us pass round the cup of love's bliss in full measure,
And quaff the contents as our nectar below.

TO CAROLINE

Oh when shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow?
Oh when shall my soul wing her flight from this clay?
The present is hell, and the coming to-morrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse of to-day.

From my eye flows no tear, from my lips flow no curses
I blast not the fiends who have hurl'd me from bliss;
For poor is the soul which bewailing rehearses
Its querulous grief, when in anguish like this.

Was my eye, 'stead of tears, with red fury flakes bright'ning,
Would my lips breathe a flame which no stream could assuage
On our foes should my glance launch in vengeance its lightning,
With transport my tongue give loose to its rage.

But now tears and curses, alike unavailing,
Would add to the souls of our tyrants delight;
Could they view us our sad separation bewailing
Their merciless hearts would rejoice at the sight.

Yet still, though we bend with a feign'd resignation,
Life beams not for us with one ray that can cheer;
Love and hope upon earth bring no more consolation,
In the grave is our hope, for in life is our fear.

Oh! when, my adored, in the tomb will they place me,
Since, in life, love and friendship for ever are fled?
If again in the mansion of death I embrace thee,
Perhaps they will leave unmolested the dead.

STANZAS TO A LADY, WITH THE POEMS OF CAMOËNS

This votive pledge of fond esteem,
Perhaps, dear girl! for me thou'lt prize;
It sings of Love's enchanting dream,
A theme we never can despise.

Who blames it but the envious fool,
The old and dissappointed maid;
Or pupil of the prudish school,
In single sorrow doom'd to fade?.

Then read, dear girl! with feeling read,
For thou wilt ne'er be one of those;
To thee in vain I shall not plead
In pity for the poet's woes.

He was in sooth a genuine bard;
His was no faint, fictitious flame.
Like his, may love be thy reward,
But not thy hapless fate the same.

THE FIRST KISS OF LOVE

Away with your fictions of flimsy romance,
Those tissues of falsehood which folly has wove!
Give me the mild beam of the soul-breathing glance,
Or the rapture which dwells on the first kiss of love.

Ye rhymers, whose bosoms with phantasy glow,
Whose pastoral passions are made for the grove;
From what blest inspiration your sonnets would flow,
Could you ever tasted the first kiss love!

If Apollo should e'er his assistance refuse,
Or the Nine be disposed from your service to rove,
Invoke them no more, bid adieu to the muse,
And try the effect of the first kiss of love.

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art!
Though prudes may condemn me, and bigots reprove,
I court the effusions that spring from the heart,
Which throbs with delight to the first kiss of love.

Your shepherds, your flocks, those fantastical themes,
Perhaps may amuse, yet they never can move:
Arcadia displays but a region of dreams;
What are visions like these to the first kiss of love.

Oh! cease to affirm that man, since his birth,
From Adam till now, has with wretchedness strove;
Some portion of paradise still is on earth,
And Eden revives in the first kiss of love.

When age chills the blood, when our pleasures are past —
For years fleet away with the wings of the dove —
The dearest remembrance will still be the last,
Our sweetest memorial the first kiss of love.

ON A CHANGE OF MASTERS AT A GREAT PUBUC SCHOOL

WHERE are those honours, Ida! once yow own,
When Probus fill'd your magisterial throne?
As ancient Rome, fast falling to disgrace,
Hail'd a barbarian in her Cæsar's place,
So you, degenerate, share as hard a fate,
And seat Pomposus where your Probus sate.
Of narrow brain, yet of a narrower soul,
Pomposus holds you in his harsh control;
Pomposus, by no social virtue sway'd,
With florid jargon, and with vain parade;
With noisy nonsense, and new-fangled rules,
Such as were ne'er before enforced in schools
Mistaking pedantry for learning's laws,
He governs, sanction'd but by self applause;
With him the same dire fate attending Rome,
Ill-fated Ida! soon must stamp your doom;
Like her o'erthrown, for ever lost to fame,
No trace of science left you, but the name.

July 1805.

TO THE DUKE OF DORSET

Dorset! whose early steps with mine have stray'd,
Exploring every path of Ida's glade;
Whom still affection taught me to defend
And made me less a tyrant than a friend
Though the harsh custom of our youthful band
Bade thee obey, and gave me to command ;
Thee, on whose head a few short years will shower
The gift of riches and the pride of power;
E'en now a name illustrious is thine own,
Renown'd in rank, nor far beneath the throne.
Yet, Dorset, let not this seduce thy soul
To shun fair science, or evade control,
Though passive tutors, fearful to dispraise
The titled child, whose future breath may raise,
View ducal errors with indulgent eyes,
And wink at faults they tremble to chastise
When youthful parasites, who bend the knee
To wealth, their golden idol, not to thee,—
And even in simple boyhood 's opening dawn
Some slaves are found to flatter and to fawn,—
When these declare, ' that pomp alone should wait
On one by birth predestined to be great;
That books were only meant for drudging fools,
That gallant spirits scorn the common rules;'—
Believe them not;— they point the path to shame,
And seek to blast the honours of thy name.
Turn to the few in Ida's early throng,
Whose souls disdain not to condemn the wrong;
Or if, amidst the comrades of thy youth,
None dare to raise the sterner voice of truth,
Ask thine own heart; 'twill bid thee, boy, forbear;
For *well* I know that virtue lingers there.
Yes! I have mark'd thee many a passing day,
But now new scenes invite me far away;
Yes! I have mark'd within that generous mind
A soul, if well matured, to bless mankind.

Ah! though myself by nature haughty, wild,
Whom Indiscretion hail'd her favourite child;
Though every error stamps me for her own,
And dooms my fall, I fain would fall alone;
Though my proud heart no precept now can tame,
I love the virtues which I cannot claim.

'Tis not enough, with other sons of power
To gleam like lambent meteor of an hour;
To swell some peerage page in feeble pride,
With long-drawn names that grace no page beside;
Then share with titled crowds the common lot—
In life just gazed at, in the grave forgot;
While nought divides thee from the vulgar dead,
Except the dull cold stone that hides thy head,
The mouldering 'scutcheon, or the herald's roll,
That well-emblazon'd but neglected scroll,
Where lords, unhonour'd, in the tomb may find
One spot, to leave a worthless name behind.
There sleep, unnoticed as the gloomy vaults
That veil their dust, their follies, and their faults,
A race, with old armorial lists o'erspread,
In records destined never to be read.
Fain would I view thee, with prophetic eyes,
Exalted more among the good and wise,
A glorious and a long career pursue,
As first in rank, the first in talent too:
Spurn every vice, each little meanness shun;
Not Fortune's minion, but her noblest son.
Turn to the annals of a former day;
Bright are the deeds thine earlier sires play.
One, though a Courtier, lived a man of worth,
And call'd, proud boast! the British drama forth.
Another view, not less renown'd for wit;
Alike for Courts, and camps, or senates fit;
Bold in the field, and favour'd by the Nine;
In every splendid part ordain'd to shine;
Far, far distinguish'd from the glittering throng,
The pride of princes, and the boast of song.
Such were thy fathers; thus preserve their name;

Not heir to titles only, but to fame.
The hour draws nigh, a few brief days will close,
To me, this little scene of joys and woes;
Each knell of Time now warns me to resign
Shades where Hope, Peace, and Friendship all were mine:
Hope, that could vary like the rainbow's hue,
And gild their pinions as the moments flew;
Peace, that reflection never frown'd away,
By dreams of ill to cloud some future day;
Friendship, whose truth let childhood only tell;
Alas! they love not long, who love so well.
To these adieu! nor let me linger o'er
Scenes hail'd, as exiles hail their native shore,
Receding, slowly through the dark-blue deep,
Beheld by eyes that mourn, yet cannot weep.
Dorset, farewell! I will not ask one part
Of sad remembrance in so young a heart;
The coming morrow from thy youthful mind
Will sweep my name, nor leave a trace behind.
And yet, perhaps, in some maturer year,
Since chance has thrown us in the self same sphere,
Since the same senate, nay, the same debate,
May one day claim our suffrage for the state,
We hence may meet, and pass each other by
With faint regard, or cold and distant eye.
For me, in future, neither friend nor foe,
A stranger to thyself thy weal or woe,
With thee no more again I hope to trace
The recollection of our early race;
No more, as once, in social hours rejoice,
Or hear, unless in crowds, thy well-known voice:
Still, if the wishes of a heart untaught
To veil those feelings which perchance it ought,
If these – but let me cease the lengthen'd strain, –
Oh! if these wishes are not breathed in vain,
The guardian seraph who directs thy fate
Will leave thee glorious, as he found thee great.

FRAGMENT

WRITTEN SHORTLY AFTER THE
MARRIAGE OF MISS CHAWORTH

HILLS of Annesley, bleak and barren,
Where my thoughtless childhood stray'd,
How the northern tempests, warring,
Howl above thy tufted shade!

Now no more, the hours beguiling,
Former favourite haunts I see;
Now no more my Mary smiling
Makes ye seem a heaven to me.

1805

GRANTA

A MEDLEY

OH! could Le Sage's demon's gift
Be realized at my desire,
This night my trembling form he'd lift
To place it on St. Mary's spire.

Then would, unroof'd, old Granta's halls
Pedantic inmates full display;
Fellows who dream on lawn or stalls'
The price of venal votes to pay.

Then would I view each rival wight,
Petty and Palreerston survey;
Who canvass there with all their might,
Against the next elective day.

Lo! candidates and voters lie
All lull'd in sleep, a goodly number;
A race renown'd for piety
Whose conscience won't disturb their slumber.

Lord H –, indeed, may not demur:
Fellows are sage, reflecting men:
They know preferment can occur
But very seldom, – now and then.

They know the Chancellor has got
Some pretty livings in disposal:
Each hopes that one may be his lot,
And therefore smiles on his proposal.

Now from the soporific scene
I'll turn mine eye, as night grows later,
To view, unheeded and unseen,
The studious sons of Alma Mater.

There, in apartments small and damp,
The candidate for college prizes
Sits poring by the midnight lamp;
Goes late to bed, yet early rises.

He surely well deserves to gain them,
With all the honours of his college,
Who, striving hardly to obtain them,
Thus seeks unprofitable knowledge: Who sacrifices hours of rest
To scan precisely meres Attic;
Or agitates his anxious breast
In solving problems mathematic:

Who reads false quantities in Seale,
Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle;
Deprived of many a wholesome meal;
In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle: Renouncing every pleasing page
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage
The square of the hypothenuse.

Still, harmless are these occupations
That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compared with other recreations,
Which bring together the imprudent; Whose daring revels shock the sight,
When vice and infamy combine,
When drunkenness and dice invite,
As every sense is steep'd in wine.

Not so the methodistic crew,
Who plans of reformation lay:
In humble attitude they sue,
And for the sins of others pray:

Forgetting that their pride of spirit
Their exultation in their trial
Detracts most largely from the merit
Of all their boasted self-denial.

‘Tis morn:– from these I turn my sight.
What scene is this which meets the eye?
A numerous crowd, array’d in white,
Across the green in numbers fly.

Loud rings in air the chapel bell;
‘Tis hush’d:-what sounds are these I hear?
The organ’s soft celestial swell
Rolls deeply on the list’ning ear.

To this is join’d the sacred song,
The royal minstrel’s hallow’d strain;
Though he who hears the music long
Will never wish to hear again.

Our choir would be scarcely excused,
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne’er descended,–
In furious mood he would have tore ‘em.

The luckless Israelites, when taken
By some inhuman tyrant’s order,
Were ask’d to sing, by joy forsaken
On Babylonian river’s border.

Oh! had they sung in notes like these,
Inspired by stratagem or fear,
They might have set their hearts at ease
The devil a soul had stay’d to hear.

But if I scribble longer now
The deuce a soul will stay to read;
My pen is blunt, my ink is low;
‘Tis almost time to stop, indeed.

Therefore, farewell old Granta's spires!
No more like Cleofas, I fly;
No more thy theme my muse inspires;
The reader's tired, and so am I.

1806

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF THE HARROW HILL

Oh! mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos. —
Virgil

Ye scenes of my childhood, whose lov'd recollection
 Embitters the present, compar'd with the past;
Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,
 And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last; Where fancy, yet, joys to
retrace the resemblance
 Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied;
How welcome to me your ne'er fading remembrance,
 Which rests in the bosom, though hope is deny'd!

Again I revisit the hills where we sported,
 The streams where we swam, and the fields where we fought;
The school where, loud warn'd by the bell, we resorted,
 To pore o'er the precepts by Pedagogues taught.

Again I behold where for hours I have ponder'd,
 As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay;
Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wander'd,
 To catch the last gleam of the sun's setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spectators surrounded,
 Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo o'erthrown;
While, to swell my young pride, such applauses resounded,
 I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone.

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,
 By my daughters, of kingdom and reason depriv'd;
Till, fir'd by loud plaudits and self-adulation,
 I regarded myself as a Garrick reviv'd.

Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you!
 Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast;
Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you:

Your pleasures may still be in fancy possest.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore me,
While Fate shall the shades of the future unroll!
Since Darkness o'ershadows the prospect before me,
More dear is the beam of the past to my soul!

But if, through the course of the years which await me,
Some new scene of pleasure should open to view,
I will say, while with rapture the thought shall elate me,
Oh! such were the days which my infancy knew.

TO M —

Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire,
With bright, but mild affection shine:
Though they might kindle less desire,
Love, more than mortal, would be thine.

For thou art form'd so heavenly fair,
Howe'er those orbs may wildly beam,
We must admire, but still despair;
That fatal glance forbids esteem.

When Nature stamp'd thy beauteous birth,
So much perfection in thee shone,
She fear'd that, too divine for earth,
The skies might claim thee for their own.

Therefore, to guard her dearest work,
Lest angels might dispute the prize,
She bade a secret lightning lurk,
Within those once celestial eyes.

These might the boldest Sylph appall,
When gleaming with meridian blaze;
Thy beauty must enrapture all;
But who can dare thine ardent gaze?

'Tis said that Berenice's hair,
In stars adorns the vault of heaven;
But they would ne'er permit thee there,
Who wouldst so far outshine the seven.

For did those eyes as planets roll,
Thy sister-lights would scarce appear:
E'en suns, which systems now control,
Would twinkle dimly through their sphere.

TO WOMAN

Woman! experience might have told me,
That all must love thee who behold thee:
Surely experience might have taught
Thy firmest promises are nought:
But, placed in all thy charms before me,
All I forget, but to adore thee.
Oh memory! Thou choicest blessing
When join'd with hope, when still possessing;
But how much cursed by every lover
When hope is fled and passion's over.
Woman, that fair and fond deceiver,
How throbs the pulse when first we view
The eye that rolls in glossy blue,
Or sparkles black, or mildly throws
A beam from under hazel brows!
How quick we credit every oath,
And hear her plight the willing troth!
Fondly we hope't will last for aye,
When, lo! she changes in a day.
This record will for ever stand,
"Woman, thy vows are traced in sand."

TO M.S.G.

When I dream that you love me, you'll surely forgive;
Extend not your anger to sleep;
For in visions alone your affection can live, —
I rise, and it leaves me to weep.

Then, Morpheus! envelope my faculties fast,
Shed o'er me your languor benign;
Should the dream of to-night but resemble the last,
What rapture celestial is mine!

They tell us that slumber, the sister of death,
Mortality's emblem is given;
To fate how I long to resign my frail breath,
If this be a foretaste of heaven!

Ah! frown not, sweet lady, unbend your soft brow,
Nor deem me to happy in this;
If I sin in my dream, I atone it for now,
Thus doom'd but to gaze upon bliss.

Though in visions, sweet lady, perhaps you may smile,
Oh, think not my penance deficient!
When dreams of your presence my slumbers beguile,
To awake will be torture sufficient.

TO MARY
ON RECEIVING HER PICTURE

This faint resemblance of thy charms,
 (Though strong as mortal art could give,)
My constant heart of fear disarms,
 Revives my hopes, and bids me live.

Here, I can trace the locks of gold
 Which round thy snowy forehead wave;
The cheeks which sprung from Beauty's mould,
 The lips, which made me Beauty's slave.

Here I can trace — ah, no! that eye,
 Whose azure floats in liquid fire,
Must all the painter's art defy,
 And bid him from the task retire.

Here, I behold its beauteous hue;
 But where's the beam so sweetly straying,
Which gave a lustre to its blue,
 Like Luna o'er the ocean playing?

Sweet copy! far more dear to me,
 Lifeless, unfeeling as thou art,
Than all the living forms could be,
 Save her who plac'd thee next my heart.

She plac'd it, sad, with needless fear,
 Lest time might shake my wavering soul,
Unconscious that her image there
 Held every sense in fast control.

Thro' hours, thro' years, thro' time, 'twill cheer —
 My hope, in gloomy moments, raise;
In life's last conflict 'twill appear,
 And meet my fond, expiring gaze.

TO LESBIA

Lesbia! since far from you I've ranged,
Our souls with fond affection glow not;
You say 't is I, not you, have changed,
I'd tell you why,- but yet I know not.

Your polish'd brow no cares have crost;
And, Lesbia! we are not much older,
Since, trembling, first my heart I lost,
Or told my love, with hope grown bolder.

Sixteen was then our utmost age,
Two years have lingering past away, love!
And now new thoughts our minds engage,
At least I feel disposed to stray, love!

'Tis I that am alone to blame,
I, that am guilty of love's treason;
Since your sweet breast is still the same,
Caprice must be my only reason.

I do not, love! suspect your truth,
With jealous doubt my bosom heaves not;
Warm was the passion of my youth,
One trace of dark deceit it leaves not.

No, no, my flame was not pretended,
For, Oh! I loved you most sincerely;
And though our dream at last is ended –
My bosom still esteems you dearly.

No more we meet in yonder bowers;
Absence has made me prone to roving;
But older, firmer hearts than ours
Have found monotony in loving.

Your cheek's soft bloom is unimpeair'd,
New beauties still are daily bright'ning,

Your eye for conquest beams prepared,
The forge of love's resistless lightning.

Arm'd thus, to make their bosoms bleed,
Many will throng to sigh like me, love!
More constant they may prove, indeed;
Fonder, alas! they ne'er can be, love!

Lines Addressed to a Young Lady

[As the author was discharging his pistols in a garden, two ladies passing near the spot were alarmed by the sound of a bullet hissing near them; to one of whom the following stanzas were addressed the next morning.]

DOUBTLESS, sweet girl! the hissing lead,
 Wafting destruction o'er thy charms,
And hurtling o'er thy lovely head,
 Has fill'd that breast with fond alarms.

Surely some envious demon's force,
 Vex'd to behold such beauty here,
Impell'd the bullet's viewless course,
 Diverted from its first career.

Yes! in that nearly fatal hour
 The ball obey'd some hell-born guide;
But Heaven, with interposing power,
 In pity turn'd the death aside.

Yet, as perchance one trembling tear
 Upon that thrilling bosom fell;
Which I, th' unconscious cause of fear,
 Extracted from its glistening cell: Say, what dire penance can atone
 For such an outrage done to thee?
Arraign'd before thy beauty's throne,
 What punishment wilt thou decree?

Might I perform the judge's part,
 The sentence I should scarce deplore;
It only would restore a heart
 Which but belong'd to thee before.

The least atonement I can make
 Is to become no longer free;
Henceforth I breathe but for thy sake,
 Thou shalt be all in all to me.

But thou, perhaps, may'st now reject
Such expiation of my guilt;
Come then, some other mode elect;
Let it be death, or what thou wilt.

Choose then, relentless! and I swear
Nought shall thy dread decree prevent;
Yet hold-one little word forbear!
Let it be aught but banishment.

LOVE'S LAST ADIEU

The roses of love glad the garden of life,
Though nurtured 'mid weeds dropping pestilent dew,
Till time crops the leaves with unmerciful knife,
Or prunes them for ever, in love's last adieu!

In vain, with endearments, we soothe the sad heart,
In vain do we vow for an age to be true;
The chance of an hour may command us to part,
Or death disunite us in love's last adieu!

Still Hope, breathing peace, through the grief-swollen breast,
Will whisper, 'Our meeting we yet may renew.'
With this dream of deceit, half our sorrow's repress,
Nor taste we the poison, of love's last adieu!

Oh! mark you yon pair: in the sunshine of youth,
Love twined round their childhood his flowers as they grew;
They flourish awhile, in the season of truth,
Till chill'd by the winter of love's last adieu!

Sweet lady! why thus doth a tear steal its way,
Down a cheek which outrivals thy bosom in hue?
Yet why do I ask?—to distraction a prey,
Thy reason has perish'd with love's last adieu!

Oh! who is yon misanthrope, shunning mankind?
From cities to caves of the forest he flew:
There, raving, he howls his complaint to the wind,
The mountains reverberate love's last adieu!

Now hate rules a heart which in love's easy chains,
Once passion's tumultuous blandishments knew;
Despair now inflames the dark tide of his veins;
He ponders in frenzy on love's last adieu!

How he envies the wretch with a soul wrapt in steel!
His pleasures are scarce, yet his troubles are few,

Who laughs at the pang that he never can feel,
And dreads not the anguish of love's last adieu!

Youth flies, life decays, even hope is o'ercast;
No more, with love's former devotion, we sue:
He spreads his young wing, he retires with the blast;
The shroud of affection is love's last adieu!

In this life of probation, for rapture divine,
Astrea declares that some penance is due;
From him, who has worshipp'd at love's gentle shrine,
The atonement is ample in love's last adieu!

Who kneels to the god, on his altar of light
Must myrtle and cypress alternately strew:
His myrtle, an emblem of purest delight,
His cypress, the garland of love's last adieu!

DAMÆTAS

In law an infant, and in years a boy,
In mind a slave to every vicious joy;
From every sense of shame and virtue wean'd;
In lies an adept, in deceit a fiend;
Versed in hypocrisy, while yet a child;
Fickle as wind, of inclinations wild;
Women his dupe, his heedless friend a tool;
Old in the world, though scarcely broke from school;
Damætas ran through all the maze of sin,
And found the goal when others just begin:
Even still conflicting passions shake his soul,
And bid him drain the dregs of pleasure's bowl;
But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former chain,
And what was once his bliss appears his bane.

TO MARION

Marion! why that pensive brow?
What disgust to life hast thou?
Change that discontented air;
Frowns become not one so fair.
'Tis not love disturbs thy rest,
Love's a stranger to thy breast;
He in dimpling smiles appears,
Or mourns in weedy timid tears'
Or bends the languid eyelid down,
But shuns the cold forbidding frown.
Then resume thy former fire
Some will love, and all admire;
While that icy aspect chills us,
Nought but cool indifference thrills us.
Wou'dst thou wandering hearts beguile,
Smile at least, or seem to smile.
Eyes like thine were never meant
To hide their orbs in dark restraint.
Spite of all thou fain wouldst say,
Still in truant beams they play.
Thy lips – but here my modest Muse
Her impulse chaste must needs refuse:
She blushes, curt'sies, frowns, – in short she
Dreads lest the subject should transport me;
And flying off in search of reason,
Brings prudence back in proper season.
All I shall therefore say (whate'er
I think, is neither here nor there)
Is, that such lips of looks endearing,
Were form'd for better things than sneering:
Of soothing compliments divested,
Advice at least's disinterested;
Such is my artless song to thee,
From all the flow of flattery free;
Counsel like mine is as a brother's,
My heart is given to some others;

'That is to say, unskill'd to cozen
It shares itself among a dozen.

Marion. adieu! oh, pr'ythee slight not
This warning, though it may delight not;
And, lest my precepts be displeasing
To those who think remonstrance teasing:
At once I'll tell thee our opinion
Concerning woman's soft dominion:
Howe'er we gaze with admiration
On eyes of blue or lips carnation,
Howe'er the flowing locks attract us,
Howe'er those beauties may distract us,
Still fickle, we are prone to rove,
These cannot fix our souls to love;
It is not too severe a stricture
To say they form a pretty picture;
But wouldst thou see the secret chain
Which binds us in your humble train,
To hail you queens of all creation,
Know, in a word, 'tis ANIMATION.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR A LOCK OF HAIR BRAIDED WITH
HIS OWN, AND APPOINTED A NIGHT IN DECEMBER TO MEET HIM IN
THE GARDEN

These locks, which fondly thus entwine,
In firmer chains our hearts confine
Than all th' unmeaning protestations
Which swell with nonsense love orations.
Our love is fix'd, I think we've proved it,
Nor time, nor place, nor art have moved it;
Then wherefore should we sigh and whine,
With groundless jealousy repine,
With silly whims and fancies frantic,
Merely to make our love romantic?
Why should you weep like Lydia Languish,
And fret with self-created anguish?
Or doom the lover you have chosen,
On winter to nights to sigh half frozen;
In leafless shades to sue for pardon,
Only because the scene's a garden?
For gardens seem, by one consent
(Since Shakespeare set the precedent,
Since Juliet first declared her passion),
To from the place of assignation.
Oh! would some modern muse inspire,
And seat her by a sea-coal fire;
Or had the bard at Christmas written,
And laid the scene of love in Britain,
He surely, in commiseration,
Had changed the place of declaration.
In Italy I've no objection,
Warm nights are proper for reflection;
But here our climate is so rigid,
That love itself is rather frigid:
Think on our chilly situation,
And curb this rage for imitation.

These locks were presented to the author by a lady who appointed a night in December to meet him in the garden

Then let us meet, as oft we've done,
Beneath the influence of the sun;
Or, if at midnight I must meet you,
Within your mansion let me greet you:
There we can love for hours together,
Much better, in such snowy weather,
Than placed in all th' Arcadian groves
That ever witness'd rural loves;
Then, if my passion fail to please,
Next night I'll be content to freeze;
No more I'll give a loose to laughter,
But curse my fate for ever after

OSCAR OF ALVA

A TALE

How sweetly shines through azure skies,
The lamp of heaven on Lora's shore;
Where Alva's hoary turrets rise,
And hear the din of arms no more!

But often has yon rolling moon
On Alva's casques of silver play'd;
And view'd at midnight's silent noon,
Her chief's in gleaming mail array'd: And on the crimson'd rocks beneath,
Which scowl o'er ocean's sullen flow,
Pale in the scatter'd runks of death,
She saw the gasping warrior low; While many an eye which ne'er again
Could mark the rising orb of day,
T'urn'd feebly from the gory plain,
Beheld in death her fading ray.

Once to those eyes the lamp of Love,
They blest her dear propitious light;
But now she glimmer'd from above,
A sad, funereal torch of night.

Faded is Alva's noble race,
And gray her towers are seen afar;
No more her heroes urge the chase,
Or roll the crimson tide of war.

But who was last of Alva's clan?
Why grows the moss on Alva's stone?
Her towers resound no steps of man,
They echo to the gale alone.

And when that gale is fierce and high,
A sound is heard in yonder hall;
It rises hoarsely through the sky,

And vibrates o'er the mould'ring wall.

Yes, when the eddying tempest sighs,
It shakes the shield of Oscar brave;
But there no more his banners rise,
No more his plumes of sable wave.

Fair shone the sun on Oscar's birth,
When Angus hail'd his eldest born
The vassals round their chieftain's hearth
Crowd to applaud the happy morn.

They feast upon the mountain deer,
The pibroch raised its piercing note;
To gladden more their highland cheer,
The strains in martial numbers float: And they who heard the war-notes wild
Hoped that one day the pibroch's strain
Should play before the hero's child
While he should lead the tartan train.

Another year is quickly past,
And Angus hails another son;
His natal day is like the last,
Nor soon the jocund feast was done.

Taught by their sire to bend the bow,
On Alva's dusky hills of wind,
The boys in childhood chased the roe,
And left their hounds in speed behind.

But ere their years of youth are o'er,
They mingle in the ranks of war;
They lightly wheel the bright claymore
And send the whistling arrow far.

Dark was the flow of Oscar's hair,
Wildly it stream'd along the gale;
But Allan's locks were bright and fair,
And pensive seem'd his cheek, and pale.

But Oscar own'd a hero's soul,
His dark eye shone through beams of truth;
Allan had early learn'd control,
And smooth his words had been from youth.

Both, both were brave; the Saxon spear
Was shiver'd oft beneath their steel;
And Oscar's bosom scorn'd to fear,
But Oscar's bosom knew to feel; While Allan's soul belied his form,
Unworthy with such charms to dwell:
Keen as the lightning of the storm,
On foe, his deadly vengeance fell.

From high Southannon's distant tower
Arrived a young and noble dame;
With Kenneth's lands to form her dower,
Glenalvon's blue-eyed daughter came; And Oscar claim'd the beauteous bride,
And Angus on his Oscar smiled:
It soothed the father's feudal pride
Thus to obtain Glenalvon's child.

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

See how the heroes' blood-red plumes
Assembled wave in Alva's hall;
Each youth his varied plaid assumes,
Attending on thir chieftain's call.

It is not war their aid demands,
The pibroch plays the song of peace;
To Oscar's nuptials throng the bands,
Nor yet the sounds of pleasure cease.

But where is Oscar? sure 'tis late:
Is this a bridegroom's ardent flame?
While thronging guests and ladies wait,

Nor Oscar nor his brother came.

At length young Allan join'd the bride;

‘Why comes not Oscar?’ Angus said:

Is he not here?’ the youth replied;

‘With me he roved not o’er the glade: ‘Perchance, forgetful of the day,

‘Tis his to chase the bounding roe;

Or ocean’s waves prolong his stay;

Yet Oscar’s bark is seldom slow.’

‘Oh, no!’ the anguish’d Sire rejoin’d,

‘Nor chase nor wave, my boy delay;

Would he to Mora seem unkind?

Would aught to her impede his way?

‘Oh, search, ye chiefs! oh, search around!

Allan, with these through Alva fly;

Till Oscar, till my son is found,

Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply.’

All is confusion — through the vale

The name of Oscar hoarsely rings,

It rises on the murmuring gale,

Till night expands her dusky wings;

It breaks the stillness of the night,

But echoes through her shades in vain;

It sounds through morning’s misty light,

But Oscar comes not o’er the plain.

Three days, three sleepless nights, the Chief

For Oscar search’d each mountain cave:

Then hope is lost; in boundless grief,

His locks in gray-torn ringlets wave.

‘Oscar! my son! thou God of heaven,

Restore the prop of sinking age!

Or if that hope no more is given,

Yield his assassin to my rage.

‘Yes, on some desert rocky shore
My Oscar’s whiten’d bones must lie;
Then grant, thou God! I ask no more,
With him his frantic sire may die!

‘Yet he may live, — away, despair!
Be calm, my soul! he yet may live;
T’arraign my fate, my voice forbear!
O God! my impious prayer forgive.

‘What, if he live for me no more,
I sink forgotten in the dust,
The hope of Alva’s age is o’er:
Alas! can pangs like these be just?’

Thus did the hapless parent mourn,
Till Time, which soothes severest woe,
Had bade serenity return
And made the tear-drop cease to flow.

For still some latent hope survived
That Oscar might once more appear;
His hope now droop’d and now revived,
Till Time had told a tedious year.

Days roll’d along, the orb of light
Again had run his destined race;
No Oscar bless’d his father’s sight,
And sorrow left a fainter trace.

For youthful Allan still remain’d,
And now his father’s only joy:
And Mora’s heart was quickly gain’d,
For beauty crown’d the fair-hair’d boy.

She thought that Oscar low was laid,
And Allan’s face was wondrous fair;
If Oscar lived, some other maid
Had claim’d his faithless bosom’s care.

And Angus said, if one year more
In fruitless hope was pass'd away,
His fondest scruples should be o'er,
And he would name their nuptial day.

Slow roll'd the moons, but blest at last
Arrived the dearly destined morn
The year of anxious trembling past,
What smiles the lovers' cheeks adorn!

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

Again the clan, in festive crowd,
Throng through the gate of Alva's hall;
The sounds of mirth re-echo loud,
And all their former joy recall.

But who is he, whose darken'd brow
Glooms in the midst of general mirth?
Before his eyes' far fiercer glow
The blue flames curdle o'er the hearth.

Dark is the robe which wraps his form,
And tall his plume of gory red;
His voice is like the rising storm,
But light and trackless is his tread.

'Tis noon of night, the pledge goes round,
The bridegroom's health is deeply quaff'd;
With shouts the vaulted roofs resound,
And all combine to hail the draught.

Sudden the stranger-chief arose,
And all the clamorous crowd are hush'd;
And Angus' cheek with wonder glows,
And Mora's tender bosom blush'd 'Old rnan!' he cried, 'this pledge is done;
Thou saw'st 'twas duly drank by me;

It hail'd the nuptials of thy son:
Now will I claim a pledge from thee.

'While all around is mirth and joy,
To bless thy Allan's happy lot,
Say, hadst thou ne'er another boy?
Say, why should Oscar be forgot?'

'Alas!' the hapless sire replied,
The big tear starting as he spoke
'When Oscar left my hail, or died,
This aged heart was almost broke,

'Thrice has the earth revolved her course
Since Oscar's form has bless'd my sight;
And Allan is my last resource,
Since martial Oscar's death or flight.'

"Tis well,' replied the stranger stern,
And fiercely flash'd his rolling eye;
'Thy Oscar's fate I fain would learn;
Perhaps the hero did not die.

'Perhaps, if those whom most he loved
Would call, thy Oscar might return;
Perchance the chief has only roved;
For him thy beltane yet may burn.

'Fill high the bowl the table round,
We will not climb the pledge by stealth;
With wine let every cup be crown'd
Pledge me departed Oscar's health.'

'With all my soul,' old Angus said,
And fill'd his goblet to the brim:
'Here's to my boy! alive or dead'
I ne'er shall find a son like him'

'Bravely. old man this health has sped;
But why does Allan trembling stand?

Come, drink remembrance of the dead,
And raise thy cup with firmer hand.'

The crimson glow of Allan's face
Was turn'd at once to ghastly hue;
The drops of death each other chase
Adown in agonizing dew.

Thrice did he raise the goblet high,
And thrice his lips refused to taste;
For thrice he caught the stranger's eye
On his with deadly fury placed.

'And is it thus a brother's hails
A brother's fond remembrance here?
If thus affection's strength prevails'
What might we not expect from fear?'

Roused by the sneer, he raised the bowl,
'Would Oscar now could share our mirth!'
Internal fear appall'd his soul;
He said and dash'd the cap to earth, 'Tis he! I hear my murderer's voice!'
Loud shrieks a darkly gleaming form.
'A murderer's voice!' the roof replies,
And deeply swells the bursting storm, The tapers wink, the chieftains shrink,
The stranger's gone, — amidst the crew,
A form was seen in tartan green,
And tall the shade terrific grew.

His waist was bound with a broad belt round,
His plume of sable stream'd on high;
But his breast was bare, with the red wounds there,
And fix'd was the glare of his glassy eye.

And thrice he smiled, with his eyes so wild,
On Angus bending low the knee;
And thrice he frown'd on a chief on the ground
Whom shivering crowds with horror see The bolts loud roll from pole to pole
The thunders through the welkin ring,

And the gleaming form, through the mist of the storm,
Was borne on high by the whirlwind's wing Cold was the feast, the revel
ceased.

Who lies upon the stony floor?
Oblivion press'd old Angus' breast,
At length his life-pulse throbs once more.

'Away, away! let the leech essay
To pour the light on Allan's eyes;
His sand is done, – his race is run –
Oh! never more shall Allan rise!

But Oscar's breast is cold as clay,
His locks are lifted by the gale;
And Allan's barbed arrow lay
With him In dark Glentanar's vale.

And whence the dreadful stranger came,
Or who, no mortal wight can tell;
But no one doubts the form of flame,
For Alva's sons knew Oscar well.

Ambition nerved young Allan's hand,
Exulting demons wing'd his dart;
While Envy waved her burning brand,
And pour'd her venom round his heart.

Swift is the shaft from Allan's bow;
Whose streaming life-blood stains his side?
Dark Oscar's sable crest is low,
The dart has drunk his vital tide.

And Mora's eyes could Allan move,
She bade his wounded pride rebel:
Alas! that eyes which beam'd with love
Should urge the soul to deeds of hell.

Lo! seest thou not a lonely tomb
Which rises o'er a warrior dead?
It glimmers through the twilight gloom;

Oh! that is Allan's nuptial bed.

Far distant far, the noble grave
Which held his clan's great ashes stood;
And o'er his corse no banners wave,
For they were stain'd with kindred blood.

What minstrel gray, what hoary bard,
Shall Allan's deeds on harp-strings raise?
The song is glory's chief reward,
But who can strike a murderer's praise?

Unstrung, untouch'd, th harp must stand,
No minstrel dare the theme awake;
Guilt would benumb his palsied hand,
His harp in shuddering chords would break.

No lyre of fame, no hallow'd verse,
Shall sound his glories high in air:
A dying father's bitter curse,
A brother's death-groan echoes there.

THE EPISODE OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

A paraphrase from the ÆNEID, LIB. IX

Nisus, the guardian of the portal, stood,
Eager to gild his arms with hostile blood;
Well skill'd in fight the quivering lance to wield,
Or pour his arrows through th' embattled field:
From Ida torn, he left his sylvan cave,
And sought a foreign home, a distant grave.
To watch the movements of the Daunian host,
With him Euryalus sustains the post;
No lovelier mien adorn'd the ranks of Troy,
And beardless bloom yet graced the gallant boy;
Though few the seasons of his youthful life,
As yet a novice in the martial strife,
'T was his, with beauty, valour's gifts to share —
A soul heroic, as his form was fair:
These burn with one pure flame of generous love;
In peace, in war, united still they move;
Friendship and glory form their joint reward;
And now combined they hold their nightly guard.

"What god," exclaim'd the first, "instils this fire?
Or, in itself a god, what great desire?
My labouring soul, with anxious thought oppress'd,
Abhors this station of inglorious rest;
The love of fame with this can ill accord,
Be't mine to seek for glory with my sword.
Seest thou yon camp, with torches twinkling dim,
Where drunken slumbers wrap each lazy limb?
Where confidence and ease the watch disdain,
And drowsy Silence holds her sable reign?
Then hear my thought: -- In deep and sullen grief
Our troops and leaders mourn their absent chief:
Now could the gifts and promised prized be thine
(The deed, the danger, and the fame be mine),
Were this decreed, beneath yon rising mound,
Methinks an easy path perchance were found:

mediums an easy pain perchance were found,
Which past, I speed my way to Pallas' walls,
And lead Æneas from Evander's halls."

With equal ardour fired, and warlike joy,
His glowing friend address'd the Dardan boy: —
"These deeds, my Nisus, shalt thou dare alone?
Must all the fame, the peril, be thine own?
Am I by thee despised, and left afar,
As one unfit to share the toils of war?
Not thus his son the great Opheltes taught;
Not thus my sire in Argive combats fought;
Not thus, when Ilion fell by heavenly hate,
I track'd Æneas through the walks of fate;
Thou know'st my deeds, my breast devoid of fear
And hostile life-drops dim my gory spear.
Here is a soul with hope immortal burns,
And life, ignoble life, for *glory* spurns.
Fame, fame is cheaply earn'd by fleeting breath:
The price of honour is the sleep of death."

Then Nisus: — "Calm the bosom's fond alarms:
Thy heart beats fiercely to the din of arms.
More dear thy worth and valour than my own,
I swear by him who fills Olympus' throne!
So may I triumph, as I speak the truth,
And clasp again the comrade of my youth!
But should I fall, — and he who dares advance
Through hostile legions must abide by chance, —
If some Rutulian arm, with adverse blow,
Should lay the friend who ever loved thee low,
Live thou, such beauties I would fain preserve,
Thy budding years a lengthen'd term deserve.
When humbled in the dust, let some one be,
Whose gentle eyes will shed one tear for me;
Whose manly arm may snatch me back by force,
Or wealth redeem from foes my captive corse:
Or, if my destiny these last deny,
If in the spoiler's power my ashes lie,
Thy pious care may raise a simple tomb

To mark thy love, and signalize my doom.
Why should thy doting wretched mother weep
Her only boy, reclined in endless sleep?
Who, for thy sake, the tempest's fury dared,
Who, for thy sake, war's deadly peril shared;
Who braved what woman never braved before,
And left her native for the Latian shore."

"In vain you damp the ardour of my soul,"
Replied Euryalus; "it scorns control!
Hence, let us haste! " — their brother guards arose,
Roused by their call, nor court again repose;
The pair, buoy'd up on Hope's exulting wing,
Their stations leave, and speed to seek the king.

Now o'er the earth a solemn stillness ran,
And lull'd alike the cares of brute and man;
Save where the Dardan leaders nightly hold
Alternate converse, and their plans unfold.
One one great point the council are agreed,
An instant message to their prince decreed;
Each lean'd upon the lance he well could wield,
And poised with easy arm his ancient shield;
When Nisus and his friend their leave request
To offer something to their high behest.
With anxious tremors yet unawed by fear,
The faithful pair before the throne appear:
Iulus greets them; at his kind command,
The elder first address'd the hoary band.

"With patience" (thus Hyrtacides began)
"Attend, nor judge from youth our humble plan.
Where yonder beacons half expiring beam,
Our slumbering foes of future conquest dream,
Nor heed that we a secret path have traced,
Between the ocean and the portal placed.
Beneath the covert of the blackening smoke,
Whose shade securely our design will cloak!
If you, ye chiefs, and fortune will allow,

We'll bend our course to yonder mountain's brow,
Where Pallas' walls at distance meet the sight,
Seen o'er the glade, when not obscured by night:
Then shall Æneas in his pride return,
When hostile matrons raise their offspring's urn;
And Latian spoils and purpled heaps of dead
Shall mark the havoc of our hero's tread.
Such is our purpose, not unknown the way;
Where yonder torrent's devious waters stray,
Oft have we seen, when hunting by the stream,
The distant spires above the valleys gleam."

Mature in years, for sober wisdom famed,
Moved by the speech, Alethes here exclaim'd, —
"Ye parent gods! who rule the fate of Troy,
Still dwells the Dardan spirit in the boy;
When minds like these in striplings thus ye raise,
Yours is the godlike act, be yours the praise;
In gallant youth, my fainting hopes revive,
And Ilion's wonted glories still survive."
Then in his warm embrace the boys he press'd,
And, quivering, strain'd them to his aged breast;
With tears the burning cheek of each bedew'd,
And, sobbing, thus his first discourse renew'd;
"What gift, my countrymen, what martial prize,
Can we bestow, which you may not despise?
Our deities the first best boon have given —
Internal virtues are the gift of Heaven.
What poor rewards can bless your deeds on earth,
Doubtless await such young, exalted worth.
Æneas and Ascanius shall combine
To yield applause far, far surpassing mine."

Iulus then: — "By all the powers above!
By those Penates who my country love!
By hoary Vesta's sacred fane, I swear,
My hopes are all in you, ye generous pair!
Restore my father to my grateful sight,
And all my sorrows yield to one delight.

Nisus! two silver goblets are thine own,
Saved from Arisba's stately domes o'erthrown!
My sire secured them on that fatal day,
Nor left such bowls an Argive robber's prey:
Two massy tripods, also, shall be thine;
Two talents polish'd from the glittering mine;
An ancient cup, which Tyrian Dido gave,
While yet our vessels press'd the Punic wave:
But when the hostile chiefs at length bow down,
When great Æneas wears Hesperia's crown,
The casque, the buckler, and the fiery steed
Which Turnus guides with more than mortal speed,
Are thine; no envious lot shall then be cast,
I pledge my word, irrevocably past:
Nay more, twelve slaves, and twice six captive dames,
To soothe thy softer hours with amorous flames,
And all the realms which now the Latins sway,
The labours of to-night shall well repay.
But thou, my generous youth, whose tender years
Are near my own, whose worth my heart reveres,
Henceforth affection, sweetly thus begun,
Shall join our bosoms and our souls in one;
Without thy aid, no glory shall be mine;
Without thy dear advice, no great design;
Alike through life esteem'd, thou godlike boy,
In war my bulwark, and in peace my joy."

To him Euryalus: - "No day shall shame
The rising glories which from this I claim.
Fortune may favour, or the skies may frown,
But valour, spite of fate, obtains renown.
Yet, ere from hence our eager steps depart,
One boon I beg, the nearest to my heart:
My mother, sprung from Priam's royal line,
Like thine ennobled, hardly less divine,
Nor Troy nor king Acestes' realms restrain
Her feeble age from dangers of the main:
Alone she came, all selfish fears above.
A bright example of maternal love.

Unknown the secret enterprise I brave,
Lest grief should bend my parent to the grave;
From this alone no fond adieus I seek,
No fainting mother's lips have press'd my cheek;
By gloomy night and thy right hand I vow
Her parting tears would shake my purpose now:
Do thou, my prince, her failing age sustain,
In thee her much-loved child may live again:
Her dying hours with pious conduct bless,
Assist her wants, relieve her fond distress:
So dear a hope must all my soul inflame,
To rise in glory, or to fall in fame."
Struck with a filial care so deeply felt,
In tears at once the Trojan warriors melt;
Faster than all, Iulus' eyes o'erflow!
Such love was his, and such had been his woe.
"All thou hast, ask'd, receive," the prince replied;
"Nor this alone, but many a gift beside.
To cheer thy mother's years shall be my aim,
Creusa's style but wanting to the dame.
Fortune an adverse wayward course may run,
But bless'd thy mother in so dear a son.
Now, by my life! — my sire's most sacred oath —
To thee I pledge my full, my firmest troth,
All the rewards which once to thee were vow'd,
If thou shouldst fall, on her shall be bestow'd."
Thus spoke the weeping prince, then forth to view
A gleaming falchion from the sheath he drew;
Lycaon's utmost skill had graced the steel,
For friends to envy and for foes to feel:
A tawny hide, the Moorish lion's spoil,
Slain 'midst the forest, in the hunter's toil,
Mnestheus to guard the elder youth bestows,
And old Alethes' casque defends his brows.
Arm'd thence they go, while all th' assembled train,
To aid their cause, implore the gods in vain.
More than a boy, in wisdom and in grace,
Iulus holds amidst the chiefs his place:
His prayer he sends; but what can prayers avail,

Lost in the murmurs of the sighing gale?

The trench is pass'd, and, favour'd by the night,
Through sleeping foes they wheel their wary flight.
When shall the sleep of many a foe be o'er?
Alas! some slumber who shall wake no more!
Chariots and bridles, mix'd with arms, are seen;
And flowing flasks, and scatter'd troops between:
Bacchus and Mars to rule the camp combine;
A mingled chaos this of war and wine.
"Now," cries the first, "for deeds of blood prepare,
With me the conquest and the labour share:
Here lies our path; lest any hand arise,
Watch thou, while many a dreaming chieftain dies:
I'll carve our passage through the heedless foe,
And clear thy road with many a deadly blow."
His whispering accents then the youth repress'd,
And pierced proud Rhamnes through his panting breast:
Strech'd at his ease, th' incautious king reposed;
Debauch, and not fatigue, his eyes had closed:
To Turnus dear, a prophet and a prince,
His omens more than augur's skill evince;
But he, who thus foretold the fate of all,
Could not avert his own untimely fall.
Next Remus' armour-bearer, hapless, fell,
And three unhappy slaves the carnage swell;
The charioteer along his courser's sides
Expires, the steel his sever'd neck divides;
And, last, his lord is number'd with the dead;
Bounding convulsive, flies, the gasping head;
From the swoll'n veins the blackening torrents pour;
Stain'd is the couch and earth with clotting gore,
Young Lamyrus and Lamus next expire,
And gay Serranus, fill'd with youthful fire;
Half the long night in childish games was pass'd;
Lull'd by the potent grape, he slept at last:
Ah! happier far had he the morn survey'd,
And till Aurora's dawn his skill display'd.

In slaughter'd told, the keepers lost in sleep,
His hungry fangs a lion thus may steep;
'Mid the sad flock, at dead of night he prowls,
With murder glutted, and in carnage rolls;
Insatiate still, through teeming herds he roams;
In seas of gore the lordly tyrant foams.

Nor less the other's deadly vengeance came,
But falls on feeble crowds without a name;
His wound unconscious Fadius scarce can feel,
Yet wakeful Rhæsus sees the threatening steel;
His coward breast behind a jar he hides,
And vainly in the weak defence confides;
Full in his heart, the falchion search'd his veins,
The reeking weapon bears alternate stains;
Through wine and blood, commingling as they flow,
One feeble spirit seeks the shades below,
Now where Messapus dwelt they bend their way,
Whose fires emit a faint and trembling ray;
There, unconfined, behold each grazing steed,
Unwatch'd, unheeded, on the herbage feed:
Brave Nisus here arrests his comrade's arm,
Too flush'd with carnage, and with conquest warm:
"Hence let us haste, the dangerous path is pass'd;
Full foes enough to-night have breathed their last;
Soon will the day those eastern clouds adorn;
Now let us speed, nor temp the rising morn."

What silver arms, with various art emboss'd,
What bowls and mantles in confusion toss'd,
They leave regardless! yet one glittering prize
Attracts the younger hero's wandering eyes;
The gilded harness Rhamnes' coursers felt,
The gems which stud the monarch's golden belt:
This from the pallid corse was quickly torn,
Once by a line of former chieftains worn.
The exulting boy the studded girdle wears,
Messapus ' helm his head in triumph bears;
Then from the tents their cautious steps they bend,

To seek the vale where safer paths extend.

Just at this hour, a band of Latian horse
To Turnus' camp pursue their destined course:
While the slow foot their tardy march delay,
The knights, impatient, spur along the way:
Three hundred mail-clad men, by Volscens led,
To Turnus with their master's promise sped:
Now they approach the trench, and view the walls,
When, on the left, a light reflection falls;
The plunder'd helmet, through the waning night,
Sheds forth a silver radiance, glancing bright.
Volscens with question loud the pair alarms: —
“Stand stragglers! stand! why early thus in arms?
From whence? to whom?” — He meets with no reply;
Trusting the covert of the night, they fly:
The thicket's depth with hurried pace they tread,
While round the wood the hostile squadron spread.

With brakes entangled, scarce a path between,
Dreary and dark appears the sylvan scene:
Euryalus his heavy spoils impede,
The boughs and winding turns his steps mislead;
But Nisus scours along the forest's maze
To where Latinus' steeds in safety graze,
Then backward o'er the plain his eyes extend,
On every side they seek his absent friend.
“O God! my boy,” He cries, “of me bereft,
In what impending perils art thou left! “
Listening he runs — above the waving trees,
Tumultuous voices swell the passing breeze;
The war-cry rises, thundering hoofs around
Wake the dark echoes of the trembling ground.
Again he turns, of footsteps hears the noise;
The sound elates, the sight his hope destroys:
The hapless boy a ruffian train surround.
While lengthening shades his weary way confound;
Him with loud shouts the furious knights pursue,
Struggling in vain, a captive to the crew.

What can his friend 'gainst thronging numbers dare?
Ah! must he rush his comrade's fate to share?
What force, what aid, what stratagem essay,
Back to redeem the Latian spoiler's prey?
His life a votive ransom nobly give,
Or die with him for whom he wish'd to live?
Poising with strength his lifted lance on high,
On Luna's orb he cast his frenzied eye: —
"Goddess serene, transcending every star!
Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen afar!
By night heaven owns thy sway, by day the grove,
When, as chaste Dian, here thou deign'st to rove;
If e'er myself, or sire, have sought to grace
Thine altars with the produce of the chase,
Speed, speed my dart to pierce yon vaunting crowd,
To free my friend, and scatter far the proud."
Thus having said, the hissing dart he flung;
Through parted shades the hurtling weapon sung;
The thirsty point in Sulmo's entrails lay,
Transfix'd his heart, and stretch'd him on the clay:
He sobs, he dies, — the troop in wild amaze,
Unconscious whence the death, with horror gaze.
While pale they stare, through Tagus' temples riven,
A second shaft with equal force is driven:
Fierce Volscens rolls around his lowering eyes;
Veil'd by the night, secure the Trojan lies.
Burning with wrath, he view'd his soldiers fall.
"Thou youth accurst, thy life shall pay for all! "
Quick from the sheath his flaming glaive he drew,
And, raging, on the boy defenceless flew.
Nisus no more the blackening shade conceals,
Forth, forth he starts, and all his love reveals;
Aghast, confused, his fears to madness rise,
And pour these accents, shrieking as he flies:
"Me, me, — your vengeance hurl on me alone;
Here sheathe the steel, my blood is all your own.
Ye starry spheres! thou conscious Heaven! attest!
He could not — durst not — lo! the guile confest!
All, all was mine, — his early fate suspend;

He only loved too well his hapless friend:
Spare, spare, ye chiefs! from him your rage remove;
His fault was friendship, all his crime was love.”
He pray’d in vain; the dark assassin’s sword
Pierced the fair side, the snowy bosom gored;
Lowly to earth inclines his plume-clad crest,
And sanguine torrents mantle o’er his breast:
As some young rose, whose blossom scents the air,
Languid in death, expires beneath the share;
Or crimson poppy, sinking with the shower,
Declining gently, falls a fading flower;
Thus, sweetly drooping, bends his lovely head,
And lingering beauty hovers round the dead.

But fiery Nisus stems the battle’s tide,
Revenge his leader, and despair his guide;
Volscens he seeks amidst the gathering host,
Volscens must soon appease his comrade’s ghost;
Steel, flashing, pours on steel, foe crowds on foe;
Rage nerves his arm, fate gleams in every blow;
In vain beneath unnumber’d wounds he bleeds,
Nor wounds, nor death, distracted Nisus heeds;
In viewless circles wheel’d, his falchion flies,
Nor quits the hero’s grasp till Volscens dies;
Deep in his throat its end the weapon found,
The tyrant’s soul fled groaning through the wound.
Thus Nisus all his fond affection proved —
Dying, revenged the fate of him he loved;
Then on his bosom sought his wonted place,
And death was heavenly in his friend’s embrace!

Celestia pair! if aught my verse can claim,
Wafted on Time’s broad pinion, yours is fame!
Ages on ages shall your fate admire,
No future day shall see your names expire,
While stands the Capitol, immortal dome!
And vanquish’d millions hail their empress, Rome !

TRANSLATION FROM THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

When fierce conflicting urge
The breast where love is wont to glow,
What mind can stem the stormy surge
Which rolls the tide of human woe?
The hope of praise, the dread of shame,
Can rouse the tortured breast no more;
The wild desire, the guilty flame,
Absorbs each wish it felt before.

But if affection gently thrills
The soul by purer dreams possest,
The pleasing balm of mortal ills
In love can soothe the aching breast:
If thus thou comest in disguise,
Fair Venus! from thy native heaven,
What heart unfeeling would despise
The sweetest boon the gods have given?

But never from thy golden bow
May I beneath the shaft expire!
Whose creeping venom, sure and slow,
Awakes an all-consuming fire:
Ye racking doubts! ye jealous fears!
With others wage internal war;
Repentance, source of future tears,
From me be ever distant far!

May no distracting thoughts destroy
The holy calm of sacred love!
May all the hours be wing'd with joy,
Which hover faithful hearts above!
Fair Venus, on thy myrtle shrine
May I with some fair lover sigh,
Whose heart may mingle pure with mine –
With me to live, with me to die!

My native soil! beloved before,
Now dearer as my peaceful home,
Ne'er may I quit thy rocky shore,
A hapless banish'd wretch to roam!
This very day, this very hour,
May I resign this fleeting breath;
Nor quit my silent humble bower,
A doom to me far worse than death.

Have I not heard the exile's sigh?
And seen the exile's silent tear,
Through distant climes condemn'd to fly,
A pensive, weary wanderer here?
Ah, hapless dame! no sire bewails,
No friend thy wretched fate deplores,
No kindred voice with rapture hails
Thy steps within a stranger's doors.

Perish the fiend whose iron heart,
To fair affection's truth unknown,
Bids her he fondly loved depart,
Unpitied, helpless, and alone;
Who ne'er unlocks with silver key
The milder treasures of his soul,-
May such a friend be far from me,
And ocean's storms between us roll!

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A COLLEGE EXAMINATION

High in the midst, surrounded by his peers,
MAGNUS his ample front sublime up rears:
Placed on his chair of state, he seems a god.
While Sophs and Freshmen tremble at his nod.
As all around sit wrapt in speechless gloom,
His voice in thunder shakes the sounding dome;
Denouncing dire reproach to luckless fools,
Unskill'd to plod in mathematic rules.

Happy the youth in Euclid's axiorn tried,
Though little versed in any art beside;
Who, scarcely skill'd an English line to pen,
Scans Attic metres with a critic's ken.
What, though he knows not how his fathers bled,
When civil discord piled the fields with dead,
When Edward bade his conquering bands advance
Or Henry trampled on the crest of France.
Though marvelling at the name of Magna Charta,
Yet well he recollects the laws of Sparta;
Can tell what edicts sage Lycurgus made,
While Blackstone's on the shelf neglected laid;
Of Grecian dramas vaunts the deathless fame,
Of Avon's bard remembering scarce the name.

Such is the youth whose scientific pate
Class-honours, medals, fellowships, await
Or even, perhaps, the declamation prize
If to such glorious height he lifts his eyes.
But lo! no common orator can hope
The envied silver cup within his scope.
Not that our heads much eloquence require,
Th' ATHENIAN'S glowing style, or Tully's fire.
A manner clear or warm is useless, since
We do not try by speaking to convince.
Be other orators of pleasing proud,-
We speak to please ourselves, not move the crowd:

Our gravity prefers the muttering tone,
A proper mixture of the squeak and groan:
No borrow'd grace of action must he seen;
The slightest motion would displease the Dean;
Whilst every staring graduate would prate
Against what he could never imitate.

The man who hopes t' obtain the promised cup
Must in one posture stand, and ne'er look up;
Nor stop, but rattle over every word –
No matter what, so it can *not* be heard.
Thus let him hurry on, nor think to rest:
Who speaks the fastest's sure to speak the best;
Who utters most within the shortest space
May safely hope to win the wordy race.

The sons of science these, who, thus repaid,
Linger in ease in Granta's sluggish shade;
Where on Cam's sedgy banks supine they lie,
Unknown, unhonour'd live, unwept-for die:
Dull as the pictures which adorn their halls,
They think all learning fix'd within their walls:
In manners rude, in foolish forms precise,
All modern arts affecting to despise;
Yet prizing Bentley's, Brunck's, or Porson's note,
More than the verse on which the critic wrote:
Vain as their honours, heavy as their ale,
Sad as their wit, and tedious as their tale;
To friendship dead, though not untaught to feel
When Self and Church demand a bigot zeal.
With eager haste they court the lord of power,
Whether 'tis Pitt or Petty rules the hour;
To him, with suppliant smiles, they bend the head,
While distant mitres to their eyes are spread.
But should a storm o'erwhelm him with disgrace,
They'd fly to seek the next who fill'd his place.
Such are the men who learning's treasures guard!
Such is their practice, such is their reward!
This much, at least, we may presume to say –

The premium can't exceed the price they pay.

1806

TO A BEAUTIFUL QUAKER

Sweet girl! though only once we met,
That meeting I shall ne'er forget;
And though we ne'er may meet again,
Remembrance will thy form retain.
I would not say, "I love," but still
My senses struggle with my will:
In vain, to drive thee from my breast,
My thoughts are more and more repress;
In vain I check the rising sighs,
Another to the last replies:
Perhaps this is not love, but yet
Our meeting I can ne'er forget.

What though we never silence broke,
Our eyes a sweeter language spoke.
The tongue in flattering falsehood deals,
And tells a tale in never feels;
Deceit the guilty lips impart,
And hush the mandates of the heart;
But soul's interpreters, the eyes,
Spurn such restraint and scorn disguise.
As thus our glances oft conversed,
And all our bosoms felt, rehearsed,
No spirit, from within, reproved us,
Say rather, "'twas the spirit moved us."
Though what they utter'd I repress,
Yet I conceive thou'lt partly guess;
For as on thee my memory ponders,
Perchance to me thine also wanders.
This for myself, at least, I'll say,
Thy form appears through night, through day:
Awake, with it my fancy teems;
In sleep, it smiles in fleeting dreams;
The vision charms the hours away,
And bids me curse Aurora's ray
For breaking slumbers of delight

which make me wish for endless night:
Since, oh! whate'er my future fate,
Shall joy or woe my steps await,
Tempted by love, by storms beset,
Thine image I can ne'er forget.

Alas! again no more we meet,
No more former looks repeat;
Then let me breathe this parting prayer,
The dictate of my bosom's care:
"May heaven so guard my lovely quaker,
That anguish never can o'ertake her;
That peace and virtue ne'er forsake her,
But bliss be aye her heart's partaker!
Oh, may the happy mortal, fated
To be by dearest ties related,
For her each hour new joys discover,
And lose the husband in the lover!
May that fair bosom never know
What 't is to feel the restless woe
Which stings the soul with vain regret,
Of him who never can forget!"

THE CORNELIAN

No specious splendour of this stone
Endears it to my memory ever;
With lustre only once it shone,
And blushes modest as the giver.

Some, who can sneer at friendship's ties,
Have, for my weakness, oft reproved me;
Yet still the simple gift I prize,-
For I am sure the giver loved me.

He offer'd it with downcast look,
As fearful that I might refuse it;
I told him when the gift I took,
My only fear should be to lose it.

This pledge attentively I view'd,
And sparkling as I held it near,
Methought one drop the stone bedew'd,
And ever since I've loved a tear.

Still, to adorn his humble youth,
Nor wealth nor birth their treasures yield;
But he who seeks the flowers of truth,
Must quit the garden for the field.

'Tis not the plant uprear'd in sloth,
Which beauty shows, and sheds perfume;
The flowers which yield the most of both
In Nature's wild luxuriance bloom.

Had Fortune aided Nature's care,
For once forgetting to be blind,
His would have been an ample share,
If well proportion'd to his mind.

But had the goddess clearly seen,
His form had fix'd her fickle breast;

Her countless hoards would his have been,
And none remain'd to give the rest.

AN OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE

DELIVERED PREVIOUS TO THE PERFORMANCE OF 'THE WHEEL OF
FORTUNE' AT A PRIVATE THEATRE

Since the refinement of this polish'd age
Has swept immortal raillery from the stage;
Since taste has now expunged licentious wit,
Which stamp'd disgrace on all an author writ;
Since now to please with purer scenes we seek,
Nor dare to call the blush from Beauty's cheek;
Oh! let the modest Muse some pity claim,
And meet indulgence, though she find not fame.
Still, not for her alone we wish respect,
Others appear more conscious of defect;
To-night no veteran Roscii you behold,
In all the arts of scenic action old;
No Cooke, no Kemble, can salute you here,
No Siddons draw the sympathetic tear;
To-night you throng to witness the *début*
Of embryo actors, to the Drama new:
Here, then, our almost unfledged wings we try;
Clip not our pinions ere the birds can fly:
Failing in this our first attempt to soar,
Drooping, alas! we fall to rise no more.
Not one poor trembler only fear betrays
Who hopes, yet almost dreads, to meet your praise,
But all our *dramatis personæ* wait
In fond suspense this crisis of their fate.
No venal views our progress can retard,
Your generous plaudits are our sole reward.
For these, each Hero all his power displays,
Each timid Heroine shrinks before your gaze.
Surely the last will some protection find;
None to the softer sex can prove unkind
While Youth and Beauty form the female shield,
The sternest censor to the fair must yield.
Yet, should our feeble efforts nought avail,

Should, after all, our best endeavours fail,
Still let some mercy in your bosoms live,
And, if you can't applaud, at le'st forgive.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. FOX

THE FOLLOWING ILLIBERAL IMPROMPTU APPEARED IN A MORNING
PAPER

‘Our nation’s foes lament on Fox’s death,
But bless the hour when PITT resign’d his breath:
These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
We give the palm where Justice points its due.’

TO WHICH THE AUTHOR OF THESE PIECES SENT THE FOLLOWING
REPLY

Oh factious viper! whose envenom’d tooth
Would mangle still the dead, perverting truth;
What though our ‘nation’s foes’ lament the fate
With generous’ feeling, of the good and great’
Shall dastard tongues essay to blast the name
Of him whose meed exists in endless fame?
When PITT expired in plenitude of power,
Though Ilisuccess obscured his dying hour,
Pity her dewy wings before him spread,
For noble spirits ‘war not with the dead:’
His friends, in tears, a last sad requiem gave,
As all his errors slumber’d in the grave;
He sunk, an Atlas bending ‘neath the weight
Of cares o’erwhelmng our conflicting state:
When, lo! a Hercules in FOX appear’d
Who for a time the ruin’d fabric rear’d:
He, too, is fall’n, who Britain’s loss supplied,
With him our fast reviving hopes have died;
Not one great people only raise his urn,
All Europe’s far-extended regions mourn.
‘These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
To give the palm where Justice points its due;’
Yet let not canker’d Calumny assail,
Or round our statesman wind her gloomy veil.
FOX o’er whose corse a mourning world must weep,
Whose dear remains in honour’d marble sleep.

whose dear remains in honour a marble sleep,
For whom, at last, e'en hostile nations groan,
While friends and foes alike his talents own;
FOX shall in Britain's future annals shine,
Nor e'en to PITT the patriot's palm resign;
Which Envy, wearing Candour's sacred mask,
For PITT, and PITT alone, has dared to ask.

THE TEAR

‘O lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros

Ducentium ortus ex animo; quater

Felix! in imo qui scatentem

Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.’ — GRAY

When Friendship or Love our sympathies move,

When Truth, in a glance, should appear,

The lips may beguile with a dimple or smile,

But the test of affection’s a Tear: Too oft is a smile but the hypocrite’s wile,

To mask detestation, or fear;

Give me the soft sigh, whilst the soultelling eye

Is dimm’d, for a time, with a Tear: Mild Charity’s glow, to us mortals below,

Shows the soul from barbarity clear;

Compassion will melt, where this virtue is felt,

And its dew is diffused in a Tear: The man, doom’d to sail with the blast of the gale,

Through billows Atlantic to steer,

As he bends o’er the wave which may soon be his grave,

The green sparkles bright with a Tear; The Soldier braves death for a fanciful wreath

In Glory’s romantic career;

But he raises the foe when in battle laid low,

And bathes every wound with a Tear.

If, with high-bounding pride he return to his bride!

Renouncing the gore-crimson’d spear;

All his toils are repaid when, embracing the maid,

From her eyelid he kisses the Tear.

Sweet scene of my youth! seat of Friendship and Truth,

Where Love chas’d each fast-fleeting year

Loth to leave thee, I mourn’d, for a last look I turn’d,

But thy spire was scarce seen through a Tear: Though my vows I can pour, to my Mary no more,

My Mary, to Love once so dear,
In the shade of her bow'r I remember the hour,
She rewarded those vows with a Tear.

By another possest, may she live ever blest!
Her name still my heart must revere:
With a sigh I resign what I once thought was mine,
And forgive her deceit with a Tear.

Ye friends of my heart, ere from you I depart,
This hope to my breast is most near:
If again we shall meet in this rural retreat,
May we meet, as we part, with a Tear.

When my soul wings her flight to the regions of night,
And my corse shall recline on its bier;
As ye pass by the tomb where my ashes consume,
Oh! moisten their dust with a Tear.

May no marble bestow the splendour of woe
Which the children of vanity rear;
No fiction of fame shall blazon my name.
All I ask – all I wish – is a Tear.

October 26 1806

REPLY TO SOME VERSES OF J.M.B. PIGOT, ESQ., ON THE CRUELTY OF HIS MISTRESS

WHY, Pigot, complain of this damsel's disdain,
Why thus in despair do you fret?
For months you may try, yet, believe me, a sigh
Will never obtain a coquette.

Would you teach her to love? for a time seem to rove;
At first she may frown in a pet;
But leave her awhile, she shortly will smile,
And then you may kiss your coquette.

For such are the airs of these fanciful fairs,
They think all our homage a debt:
Yet a partial neglect soon takes an effect,
And humbles the proudest coquette.

Dissemble your pain, and lengthen your chain,
And seem her hauteur to regret;
If again you shall sigh, she no more will deny,
That yours is the rosy coquette.

If still, from false pride, your pangs she deride,
This whimsical virgin forget;
Some other adaiire, who will melt with your fire,
And laugh at the little coquette.

For me I adore some twenty or more,
And love them most dearly but yet
Though my heart they enthrall, I'd abandon them all,
Did they act like your blooming coquette.

No longer repine, adopt this design,
And break through her slight-woven net;
Away with despair, no longer forbear
To fly from the captious coquette.

Then quit her, my friend your bosom defend,

Ere quite with her snares you're beset;
Lest your deep-wounded heart, when incensed by the smart,
Should lead you to curse the coquette.

TO THE SIGHING STREPHON

Your pardon, my friend, if my rhymes did offend;
Your pardon, a thousand times o'er:
From friendship I strove your pangs to remove,
But, I swear, I will do so no more.

Since your beautiful maid your flame has repaid,
No more I your folly regret
She's now most divine, and I bow at the shrine
Of this quickly reformed coquette.

Yet still, I must own, I should never have known
From your verses what else she deserved;
Your pain seem'd so great, I pitied your fate,
As your fair was so devilish reserved.

Since the baim-br'eathing kiss of this magical miss
Can such wonderful transports produce;
Since the 'world you forget, when your lips once have met,'
My counsel will get but abuse.

You Say, 'When I rove, I know nothing of love;'
'Tis true, 'I am given to range;
If I rightly remember, I've loved a good number,
Yet there's pleasure, at least, in a change.

I will not advance, by the rules of romance,
To humour a whimsical fair;
Though a smile may delight, yet a frown won't affright,
Or drive me to dreadful despair.

While my blood is thus warm I ne'er shall reform,
To mix in the Platonists' school;
Of this I am sure, was my passion so pure,
Thy mistress would think me a fool.

And if I should shun every woman for one,
Whose image must fill my whole breast -

Whom I must prefer, and sigh but for her -
What an insult 'twould be to the rest!

Now, Strephon, good bye, I cannot deny
Your passion appears most absurd;
Such love as you plead is pure love indeed,
For it only consists in the word.

TO ELIZA

Eliza, what fools are the Mussulman sect,
Who to woman deny the soul's future existence!
Could they see thee, Eliza, they'd own their defect,
And this doctrine would meet with a general resistance.

Had their prophet possess'd half an atom of sense,
He ne'er would have woman from paradise driven;
Instead of his houris, a flimsy pretence,
With woman alone he had peopled his heaven.

Yet still, to increase your calamities more,
Not Content with depriving your bodies of spirit,
He allots one poor husband to share amongst four!-
With souls you'd dispense; but this last, who could bear it?

His religion to please neither party is made;
On husbands 'tis hard, to the wives most uncivil;
Still I Can't contradict, what so oft has been said,
'Though women are angels, yet wedlock's the devil.'

LACHIN Y GAIR

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye garden of roses!
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks, where the snow-flake reposes,
Though still they are sacred to freedom and love:
Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,
Round their white summits though elements war;
Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd;
My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid;
On chieftains long perish'd my memory pondered,
As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd glade;
I sought not my home till the day's dying glory
Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;
For fancy was cheered by traditional story,
Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

"Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?"
Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale.
Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,
Winter presides in his cold icy car:
Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;
They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

"Ill-starred, though brave, did no visions foreboding
Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?"
Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,
Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:
Still were you happy in death's earthy slumber,
You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar;
The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
Nature of verdure and flow'rs has bereft you,
Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
England! thy beauties are tame and domestic
To one who has roved o'er the mountains afar:
Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!
The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr!

TO ROMANCE

Parent of golden dreams, Romance!
Auspicious Queen of childish joys,
Who lead'st along, in airy dance,
Thy votive train of girls and boys;
At length, in spells no longer bound,
I break the fetters of my youth;
No more I tread thy mystic round,
But leave thy realms for those of Truth.

And yet 'tis hard to quit the dreams
Which haunt the unsuspecting soul,
Where every nymph a goddess seems,
Whose eyes through rays immortal roll;
While Fancy holds her boundless reign,
And all assume a varied hue;
When Virgins seem no longer vain,
And even Woman's smiles are true.

And must we own thee, but a name,
And from thy hall of clouds descend?
Nor find a Sylph in every dame,
A Pylades in every friend?
But leave, at once, thy realms of air
To mingling bands of fairy elves;
Confess that woman's false as fair,
And friends have feeling for — themselves?

With shame, I own, I've felt thy sway;
Repentant, now thy reign is o'er;
No more thy precepts I obey,
No more on fancied pinions soar;
Fond fool! to love a sparkling eye,
And think that eye to truth was dear;
To trust a passing wanton's sigh,
And melt beneath a wanton's tear!

Romance! disgusted with deceit,
Far from thy motley court I fly,
Where Affectation holds her seat,
And sickly Sensibility;
Whose silly tears can never flow
For any pangs excepting thine;
Who turns aside from real woe,
To steep in dew thy gaudy shrine.

Now join with sable Sympathy,
With cypress crown'd, array'd in weeds,
Who heaves with thee her simple sigh,
Whose breast for every bosom bleeds;
And call thy sylvan female choir,
To mourn a Swain for ever gone,
Who once could glow with equal fire,
But bends not now before thy throne.

Ye genial Nymphs, whose ready tears
On all occasions swiftly flow;
Whose bosoms heave with fancied fears,
With fancied flames and phrenzy glow
Say, will you mourn my absent name,
Apostate from your gentle train
An infant Bard, at least, may claim
From you a sympathetic strain.

Adieu, fond race! a long adieu!
The hour of fate is hovering nigh;
E'en now the gulf appears in view,
Where unlamented you must lie:
Oblivion's blackening lake is seen,
Convuls'd by gales you cannot weather,
Where you, and eke your gentle queen,
Alas! must perish altogether.

**ANSWER TO SOME ELEGANT VERSES SENT BY A FRIEND
TO THE AUTHOR, COMPLAINING THAT ONE OF HIS
DESCRIPTIONS WAS RATHER TOO WARMLY DRAWN**

‘But if any old lady, knight, priest or physician
Should condemn me for printing a second edition;
If good Madam Squintum my work should abuse,
May I venture to give her a smack of my muse?’

New Bath Guide.

CANDOUR compels me, BECHER! to commend
The verse which blends the censor with the friend.
Your strong yet just reproof extorts applause
From me, the heedless and imprudent cause.
For this wild error which pervades my strain,
I sue for pardon, — must I sue In vain?
The wise sometimes from Wisdom’s ways depart:
Can youth then hush the dictates of the heart?
Precepts of prudence curb, but can’t control
The fierce emotions of the flowing soul.
When Love’s delirium haunts the glowing mind
Limping Decorum lingers far behind:
Vainly the dotard mends her prudish pace,
Outstript and vanquish’d In the mental chase.
The young, the old, have worn the chains of love;
Let those they ne’er confined my lay reprove:
Let those whose souls Contermn the pleasing power
Their censures on the hapless victim shower.
Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,
The ceaseless echo of the rhyming throng,
Whose labour’d lines In chilling numbers flow,
To paint a pang the author ne’er can know!
The artless Helicon I boast is youth; —
My lyre, the heart; my muse, the simple truth.
Far be ‘t from me the ‘vlgin’s stand’ to ‘taint’:
Seduction’s dread is here no slight restraint.
The maid whose virgin breast is void of guile,

Whose wishes dimple in a modest smile,
Whose downcast eye disdains the wanton leer,
Firm in her virtue's strength, yet not severe
She whom a conscious grace shall thus refine
Will ne'er be 'tainted' by a strain of mine.
But for the nymph whose premature desires
Torment her bosom with unholy fires,
No net to snare her willing heart is spread
She would have fallen, though she ne'er had read.
For me, I fain would please the chosen few,
Whose souls, to feeling and to nature true,
Will spare the childish verse, and not destroy
The light effusions of a heedless boy.
I seek not glory from the senseless crowd;
Of fancied laurels I shall ne'er be proud;
Their warmest plaudits I would scarcely prize,
Their sneers or censures I alike despise.

November 26, 1806

ELEGY ON NEWSTEAD ABBEY

‘It is the voice of years that are gone!
they roll before me with all their deeds.’ — OSSIAN

Newstead! fast-falling, once-resplendent dome!
Religion’s shrine! repentant HENRY’s pride!
Of warriors, monks, and dames the cloister’d tomb,
Whose pensive shades around thy ruins glide, Hail to thy pile! more honour’d
in thy fall

Than modern mansions in their pillar’d state;
Proudly majestic frowns thy vaulted hall,
Scowling defiance on the blasts of fate.

No mail-clad serfs, obedient to their lord,
In grim array the crimson cross demand;
Or gay assemble round the festive board
Their chief’s retainers, an immortal band:

Else might inspiring Fancy’s magic eye
Retrace their progress through the lapse of time,
Marking each ardent youth, ordaln’d to die,
A votive pilgrim in Judea’s clime.

But not from thee, dark pile! departs the chief;
His feudal realm in other regions lay:
In thee the wounded conscience courts relief,
Retiring from the garish blare of day.

Yes! in thy gloomy cells and shades profound
The monk abjured a world he ne’er could view;
Or blood-stain’d guilt repenting solace found,
Or innocence from stern oppression flew.

A monarch bade thee from that wild arise,
Where Sherwood’s outlaws once were wont to prowl;
And Superstition’s crimes, of various dyes,
Sought shelter in the priest’s protecting cowl.

Where now the grass exhales a murky dew,
The humid pail of life-extinguish'd clay,
In sainted fame the sacred fathers grew,
Nor raised their pious voices but to pray.

Where now the bats their wavering wings extend
Soon as the gloaming spreads her waning shade,
The choir did oft their mingling vespers blend,
Or matin orisons to Mary pald.

Years roll on years; to ages, ages yield;
Abbots to abbots, in a line, succeed;
Religion's charter their protecting shield,
Till royal sacrilege their doom decreed,

One holy HENRY rear'd the Gothic walls,
And bade the pious inmates rest in peace
Another HENRY the kind gift recalls,
And bids devotion's hallow'd echos cease.

Vain is each threat or supplicating prayer;
He drives them exiles from their blest abode,
To roam a dreary world in deep despair —
No friend, no home, no refuge, but their God.

Hark how the hall, resounding to the strain
Shakes with the martial music's novel din!
The heralds of a warrior's haughty reign,
High crested banners wave thy wails within.

Of changing sentinels the distant hum,
The mirth of feasts, the clang of burnish'd arms,
The braying trumpet and the hoarser drum,
Unite in concert with increased alarms.

An abbey once, a regal fortress now,
Encircled by insulting rebel powers,
War's dread machines o'erhang thy threat'ning brow,
And dart destruction in sulphureous showers.

Ah vain defence! the hostile traitor's siege,
Though oft repulsed, by guile o'er-comes the brave;
His thronging foes oppress the faithful liege,
Rebellion's reeking standards o'er him wave.

Not unavenged the raging baron yields;
The blood of traitors smears the purple plain
Unconqu'r'd still, his falchion there he wields,
And days of glory yet for him remain.

Still in that hour the warrior wish'd to strew
Self-gather'd laurel on a self-sought grave;
But Charles' protecting genius hither flew,
The monarch's friend, the monarch's hope, to save.

Trembling, she snatch'd him from th' unequal strife,
In other fields the torrent to repel;
For nobler combats, here reserved his life,
To lead the hand where godlike FALKLAND fell From thee, poor pile! to
lawless plunder given,
While dying groans their painful requiem sound,
Far different incense now ascends to heaven,
Such victims wallow on the gory ground.

There many a pale and ruthless robber's corse,
Noisome and ghast, defiles thy sacred sod;
O'er mingling man, and horse commix'd with horse,
Corruption's heap, the savage spoilers trod.

Graves, long with rank and sighing weeds o'erspread,
Ransack'd, resign perforce their mortal mould:
From ruffian fangs escape not e'en the dead,
Raked from repose in search of buried gold.

Hush'd is the harp, unstrung the warlike lyre'
The minstrel's palsied hand reclines in death;
No more he strikes the quivering chords with fire,
Or sings the glories of the martial wreath.

At length the sated murderers, gorged with prey,

Retire: the clamour of the fight is o'er;
Silence again resumes her awful sway,
And sable Horror guards the massy door.

Here Desolation holds her dreary court:
What satellites declare her dismal reign!
Shrieking their dirge, ill-omen'd birds resort,
To flit their vigils in the hoary fane.

Soon a new morn's restoring beams dispel
The clouds of anarchy from Britain's skies;
The fierce usurper seeks his native hell,
And Nature triumphs as the tyrant dies.

With storms she welcames his expiring groans
Whirlwinds, responsive, greet his labouring breath;
Earth shudders as her caves receive his bones,
Loathing the offering of so dark a death.

The legal ruler now resumes the helm,
He guides through gentle seas the prow of state
Hope cheers, with wonted smiles, the peaceful realm,
And heals the bleeding wounds of wearied hate.

The gloomy tenants, Newstead! of thy cells,
Howling, resign their violated nest;
Again the master on his tenure dwells,
Enjoy'd, from absence, with enraptured zest.

Vassals, within thy hospitable pale,
Loudly carousing, bless their lord's return.
Culture again adorns the gladdening vale,
And matrons, once lamenting, cease to mourn.

A thousand songs on tuneful echo float,
Unwonted foliage mantles o'er the trees;
And hark! the horns proclaim a mellow note,
The hunters' cry hangs lengthening on the breeze.

Beneath their coursers' hoofs the valleys shake:

What fears, what anxious hopes attend the chase!
The dying stag seeks refuge in the lake;
Exulting shouts announce the finish'd race.

Ah happy days! too happy to endure!
Such simple sports our plain forefathers knew
No splendid vices glitter'd to allure;
Their joys were many, as their cares were few.

From these descending, sons to sires succeed
Time steals along, and Death uprears the dart;
Another chief impels the foaming steed,
Another crowd pursue the panting hart.

Newstead! what saddening change of scene is thine!
Thy yawning arch betokens slow decay;
The last and youngest of a noble line
Now holds thy mouldering turrets in his sway.

Deserted now, he scans thy gray worn towers;
Thy vaults, where dead of feudal ages sleep;
Thy cloisters, pervious to the wintry showers
These, these he views, and views them but to weep.

Yet are his tears no emblem of regret:
Cherish'd affection only bids them flow.
Pride, hope, and love forbid him to forget
But warm his bosom with impassion'd glow.

Yet he prefers thee to the gilded domes
Or gewgaw grottos of the vainly great,
Yet lingers 'mid thy damp and mossy tombs,
Nor breathes a murmur 'gainst the will of fate.

Haply thy sun, emerging, yet may shine,
Thee to irradiate with meridian ray;
Hours splendid as the past may still be thine,
And bless thy future as thy former day.

CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS

‘I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to me.’

WHEN slow Disease, with all her host of pains,
Chills the warm, tide which flows along the veins
When Health, affrighted, spreads her rosy wing,
And flies with every changing gale of spring;
Not to the aching frame alone confined,
Unyielding pangs avail the drooping mind:
What grisly forms, the spectre-train of woe,
Bid shuddering Nature shrink beneath the blow
With Resignation wage relentless strife,
While Hope retires appall’d, and clings to life!
Yet less the pang when, through the tedious hour,
Remembrance sheds around her genial power,
Calls back the vanish’d days to rapture given,
When love was bliss, and Beauty form’d our heaven;
Or, dear to youth, portrays each childish scene,
Those farry bowers, where all in turn have been.
As when through clouds that pour the summer storm
The orb of day unveils his distant form,
Gilds with faint beams the crystal dew of rain,
And dimly twinkles o’er the watery plain;
Thus, while the future dark and cheerless gleams
The sun of memory, glowing through my dreams
Though sunk’ the radiance of his former blaze,
To scenes far distant points his paler rays;
Still rules my senses with unbounded sway,
The past confounding with the present day.

Oft does my heart indulge the rising thought,
Which still recurs, unlook’d for and unsought
My soul to Fancy’s fond suggestion yields,
And roams romantic o’er her airy fields.
Scenes of my youth, developed, crowd to view,
To which I long have bade a last adieu!

Seats of delight, inspiring youthful themes;
Friends lost to me for aye, except in dreams;
Some who in marble prematurely sleep.
Whose forms I now remember but to weep;
Some who yet urge the same scholastic course
Of early science, future fame the source;
Who, still contending in the studious race,
In quick rotation fill the senior place.
These with a thousand visions now unite,
To dazzle, though they please, my aching sight

Ida blest spot, where science holds her reign,
How joyous once I join'd thy youthful train!
Bright in idea gleams thy lofty spire,
Again I mingle with thy playful quire;
Our tricks of mischief, every childish game,
Unchanged by time or distance, seem the same.
Through winding paths along the glade, I trace
The social smile of every welcome face;
My wonted haunts, my scenes of joy and woe,
Each early boyish friend, or youthful foe,
Our feuds dissolved, but not my friendship past,-
I bless the former and forgive the last.
Hours of my youth! when, nurtured in my breast,
To love a stranger, friendship made me blest
Friendship, the dear peculiar bond of youth
When every artless bosom throbs with truth
Untaught my worldly wisdom how to feign,
And check each impulse with prudential rein;
When all we feel, our honest souls disclose
In love to friends, in open hate to foes;
No varnish'd tales the lips of youth repeat,
No dear-bought knowledge purchased by deceit,
Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen'd years,
Matured by age, the garb of prudence wears.
When now the boy is ripen'd into man,
His careful sire chalks forth some wary plan;
Instructs his son from candour's path to shrink,
Smoothly to speak, and cautiously to think;

Still to assent, and never to deny -
A patron's praise can well reward the lie:
And who, when Fortune's warning voice is heard,
Would lose his opening prospects for a word,
Although against that word his heart rebel,
And truth indignant all his bosom swell.

Away with themes like this! not mine the task
From flattering friends to tear the hateful mask;
Let keener bards delight in satire's sting;
My fancy soars not on Detraction's wing:
Once, and but once, she aim'd a deadly blow,
To hurl defiance on a secret foe;
But when that foe, from feeling or from shame,
The cause unknown, yet still to me the same,
Warn'd by some friendly hint, perchance, retired,
With this submission all her rage expired.
From dreaded pangs that feeble foe to save,
She hush'd her young resentment, and forgave;
Or, my muse a pedant's portrait drew,
POMPOSUS' virtues are but known to few:
I never fear'd the young usurper's nod,
And he who wields must sometimes feel the rod.
If since on Granta's failings, known to all
Who share the converse of a college hall,
She sometimes trifled in a lighter strain,
'Tis past, and thus she will not sin again;
Soon must her early song for ever cease,
And all may rest when I shall rest in peace.

Here first remember'd be the joyous band,
Who hail'd me chief, obedient to command;
Who join'd with me in every boyish sport -
Their first adviser, and their last resort;
Nor shrunk beneath the upstart pedant's frown,
Or all the sable glories of his gown;
Who, thus transplanted from his father's school -
Unfit to govern, ignorant of rule -
Succeeded him, whom all unite to praise,

The dear preceptor of my early days!
PROBUS, the pride of science, and the boast,
To IDA now, alas! for ever lost,
With him, for years, we search'd the classic page,
And fear'd the master, though we loved the sage:
Retired at last' his small yet peacefull seat
From learning's labour is the blest retreat,
POMPOSUS fills his magisterial chair;
POMPOSUS governs, - but, my muse, forbear:
Contempt, in silence, be the pedant's lot;
His name and precepts be alike forgot;
No more his mention shall my verse degrade
To him my tribute is already paid.

High through those elms, with hoary branches crown'd,
Fair IDA'S bower adorns the landscape round;
There Science, from her favour'd seat, surveys
The vale where rural Nature claims her praise;
To her awhile resigns her youthful train,
Who move in joy, and dance along the plain.
In scatter'd groups each favour'd haunt pursue,
Repeat old pastimes, and discover new;
Flush'd with his rays, beneath the noon-tide sun,
In rival bands, between the wickets run,
Drive o'er the sward the ball with active force,
Or chase with nimble feet its rapid course.
But these with slower steps direct their way,
Where Brent's cool waves in limpid currents stray;
While yonder few search out some green retreat
And arbours shade them from the summer heat:
Others, again, a pert and lively crew,
Some rough and thoughtless stranger placed in view,
With frolic quaint their antic jests expose,
And tease the grumbling rustic as he goes;
Nor rest with this, but many a passing fray
Tradition treasures for a future day:
'Twas here the gather'd swains for vengeance fought,
And here we earn'd the conquest dearly bought;
Here have we fled before superior might,

And here renew'd the wild tumultuous fight.'
While thus our souls with early passions swell
In lingering tones resounds the distant bell,
Th' allotted hour of daily sport is o'er,
And Learning beckons from her temple's door.
No splendid tablets grace her simple hall,
But ruder records fill the dusky wall;
There, deeply carved, behold! each tyro's name
Secures its owner's academic fame;
Here mingling view the names of sire and son -
The one long graved, the other just begun:
These shall survive alike when son and sire
Beneath one common stroke of fate expire;
Perhaps their last memorial these alone,
Denied in death a monumental stone,
Whilst to the gale in mournful cadence wave
The sighing weeds that hide their nameless grave.
And here my name, and many an early friend's,
Along the wall in lengthen'd line extends.
Though still our deeds amuse the youthful race,
Who tread our steps, and fill our former place,
Who young obey'd their lords in silent awe,
Whose nod commanded, and whose voice was law;
And now, in turn, possess the reins of power,
To rule, the little tyrants of an hour;
Though sometimes, with the tales of ancient day,
They pass the dreary winter's eve away --
'And thus our former rulers stemm'd the tide,
And thus they dealt the combat side by side;
Just in this place the mouldering walls they scaled,
Nor bolts nor bars against their strength avail'd;
Here PROBUS came, the rising fray to quell,
And here he falter'd forth his last farewell;
And here one night abroad they dared to roam,
While bold POMPOSUS bravely stay'd at home;'
While thus they speak, the hour must soon arrive,
When names of these, like ours, alone survive:
Yet a few years, one general wreck will overwhelm
The faint remembrance of our fairy realm.

Dear honest race! though now we meet no more,
One last long look on what we were before --
Our first kind greetings, and our last adieu -
Drew tears from eyes unused to weep with you.
Through splendid circles, fashion's gaudy world,
Where folly's glaring standard waves unfurl'd,
I plunged to drown in noise my fond regret,
And all I sought or hoped was to forget.
Vain wish! if chance some well-remember'd face,
Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend with honest joy,
My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a boy;
The glittering scene, the fluttering groups around'
Were quite forgotten when my friend was found;
The smiles of beauty--(for, alas! I've known
What 'tis to bend before Love's mighty throne)--
The smiles of beauty, though those smiles were dear,
Could hardly charm me, when that friend was near;
My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond surprise,
The woods of IDA danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wand'ers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng;
Panting, again I traced her lofty grove,
And friendship's feelings triumph'd over love.
Yet why should I alone with such delight
Retrace the circuit of my former flight?
Is there no cause beyond the common claim
Endear'd to all in childhood's very name?
Ah! sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one who thus for kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad the love denied at home.
Those hearts, dear IDA, have I found in thee--
A home, a world, a paradise to me.
Stern Death forbade my orphan youth to share
The tender guidance of a father's care.
Can rank, or e'en a guardian's name supply
The love which glistens in a father's eye?
For this can wealth or title's sound atone,

Made, by a parent's early loss, my own?
What brother springs a brother's love to seek?
What sister's gentle kiss has prest my cheek?
For me how dull the vacant moments rise,
To no fond bosom link'd by kindred ties!
Oft in the progress of some fleeting dream
Fraternal smiles collected round me seem;
While still the visions to my heart are prest,
The voice of love will murmur in my rest:
I hear-I wake-and in the sound rejoice;
I hear again,-but, ah! no brother's voice.
A hermit, 'midst of crowds, I fain must stray
Alone, though thousand pilgrims fill the way;
While these a thousand kindred wreaths entwine
I cannot call one single blossom mine:
What then remains? in solitude to groan,
To mix in friendship, or to sigh alone.
Thus must I cling to some endearing hand,
And none more dear than IDA'S social band.
Alonzo! best and dearest of my friends,
Thy name ennobles him who thus commends;
From this fond tribute thou canst gain no praise;
The praise as his who now that tribute pays.
Oh! in the promise of thy early youth,
If hope anticipate the words of truth,
Some loftier bard shall sing thy glorious name,
To build his own upon thy deathless fame.
Friend of my heart, and foremost of the list
Of those with whom I lived supremely blest,
Oft have we drain'd the font of ancient lore;
Though drinking deeply, thirsting still the more.
Yet, when confinement's lingering hour was done,
Our sports, our studies, and our souls were one:
Together we impell'd the flying ball;
Together waited in our tutor's hall;
Together join'd in cricket's manly toil,
Or shared the produce of the river's spoil;
Or, plunging from the green declining shore,
Our pliant limbs the buoyant billows bore;

In every element, unchanged, the same,
All, all that brothers should be, but the name.

Nor yet are you forgot, my jocund boy!
DAVUS, the harbinger of childish joy;
For ever foremost in the ranks of fun,
The laughing herald of the harmless pun;
Yet with a breast of such materials made--
Anxious to please, of pleasing half afraid;
Candid and liberal, with a heart of steel
In danger's path, though not untaught to feel.
Sill I remember, in the factious strife,
The rustic's musket aim'd against my life:
High pois'd in air the massy weapon hung,
A cry of horror burst from every tongue;
Whilst I, in combat with another foe,
Fought on, unconscious of th' impending blow;
Your arm, brave boy, arrested his career--
Forward you sprung, insensible to fear;
Disarm'd and baffled by your conquering hand,
The grovelling savage roll'd upon the sand:
An act like this, can simple thanks repay?
Or all the labours of a grateful lay?
Oh no! whene'er my breast forgets the deed,
That instant, DAVUS, it deserves to bleed.

LYCUS! on me thy claims are justly great:
Thy milder virtues could my muse relate,
To thee alone, unrivall'd would belong.
The feeble efforts of my lengthen'd song.
Well canst thou boast, to lead in senates fit,
A Spartan firmness with Athenian wit:
Though yet in embryo these perfections shine,
Lycus! thy father's fame will soon be thine.
Where learning nurtures the superior mind,
What may we hope from genius thus refined!
When time at length matures thy growing years,
How wilt thou tower above thy fellow peers!
Prudence and sense, a spirit bold and free,

With honour's soul, united beam in thee.

Shall fair EURYALUS pass by unsung?
From ancient lineage, not unworthy sprung:
What though one sad dissension bade us part?
That name is yet embalm'd within my heart;
Yet at the mention does that heart rebound,
And palpitate, responsive to the sound.
Envy dissolved our ties, and not our will:
We once were friends, --I'll think we are so still.
A form unmatch'd in nature's partial mould,
A heart untainted, we in thee behold:
Yet not the senate's thunder thou shalt wield,
Nor seek for glory in the tented field;
To minds of ruder texture these be given--
Thy soul shall nearer soar its native heaven.
Haply, in polish'd courts might be thy seat,
But that thy tongue could never forge deceit:
The courtier's supple bow and sneering smile,
The flow of compliment, the slippery wile,
Would make that breast with indignation burn,
And all the glittering snares to tempt thee spurn.
Domestic happiness will stamp thy fate;
Sacred to love, unclouded e'er by hate;
The world admire thee, and thy friends adore;
Ambition's slave alone would toil for more.

Now last, but nearest of the social band,
See honest, open, generous CLEON stand;
With scarce one speck to cloud the pleasing scene,
No vice degrades that purest soul serene.
On the same day our studious race begun,
On the same day our studious race was run;
Thus side by side we pass'd our first career,
Thus side by side we strove for many a year;
At last concluded our scholastic life,
We neither conquer'd in the classic strife:
As speakers each supports an equal name,
And crowds allow to both a partial fame:

To soothe a youthful rival's early pride,
Though Cleon's candour would the palm divide,
Yet candour's self compels me now to own
Justice awards it to my friend alone.

Oh! friends regretted, scenes for ever dear,
Remembrance hails you with her warmest tear!
Drooping, she bends o'er pensive Fancy's urn,
To trace the hours which never can return;
Yet with the retrospection loves to dwell,
And soothe the sorrows of her last farewell!
Yet greets the triumph of my boyish mind,
As infant laurels round my head were twined,
When PROBUS' praise repaid my lyric song,
Or placed me higher in the studious throng;
Or when my first harangue received applause,
His sage instruction the primeval cause,
What gratitude to him my soul possest,
While hope of dawning honours fill'd my breast!
For all my humble fame, to him alone
The praise is due, who made that fame my own.
Oh! could I soar above these feeble lays,
These young effusions of my early days,
To him my muse her noblest strain would give:
The song might perish, but the theme might live.
Yet why for him the needless verse essay?
His honour'd name requires no vain display:
By every son of grateful IDA blest,
It finds an echo in each youthful breast;
A fame beyond the glories of the proud,
Or all the plaudits of the venal crowd.

IDA! not yet exhausted is the theme,
Nor closed the progress of my youthful dream.
How many a friend deserves the grateful strain!
What scenes of childhood still unsung remain!
Yet let me hush this echo of the past,
This parting song, the dearest and the last;
And brood in secret o'er those hours of joy,

To me a silent and a sweet employ,
While future hope and fear alike unknown,
I think with pleasure on the past alone;
Yes to the past alone my heart confine,
And chase the phantom of what once was mine.

IDA! still o'er thy hills in joy preside,
And proudly steer through time's eventful tide;
Still may thy blooming sons thy name revere,
Smile in thy bower, but quit thee with a tear,-
That tear, perhaps, the fondest which will flow,
O'er their last scene of happiness below.
Tell me, ye hoary few, who glide along,
The feeble veterans of some former throng,
Whose friends, like autumn leaves by tempests whirl'd,
Are swept for ever from this busy world;
Revolve the fleeting moments of your youth,
While Care has yet withheld her venom'd tooth;
Say if remembrance days like these endears
Beyond the rapture of succeeding years?
Say, can ambition's fever'd dream bestow
So sweet a balm to soothe your hours of woe?
Can treasures, hoarded for some thankless son,
Can royal smiles, or wreaths by slaughter won,
Can stars or ermine, man's maturer toys
(For glittering baubles are not left to boys),
Recall one scene so much beloved to view,
As those where Youth her garland twined for you?
Ah, no! amidst the gloomy calm of age
You turn with faltering hand life's varied page;
Peruse the record of your days on earth,
Unsullied only where it marks your birth;
Still lingering pause above each chequer'd leaf,
And blot with tears the sable lines of grief;
Where passion o'er the theme her mantle threw,
Or weeping Virtue sigh'd a faint adieu;
But bless the scroll which fairer words adorn,
Traced by the rosy finger of the morn;
When Friendship bow'd before the shrine of Truth,

And Love without his pinion, smiled on Youth.

ANSWER TO A BEAUTIFUL POEM

ENTITLED 'THE COMMON LOT'

MONTGOMERY! true, the common lot
Of mortals lies in Lethe's wave;
Yet some shall never be forgot,
Some shall exist beyond the grave.

'Unknown the region of his birth,'
The hero rolls the tide of war;
Yet not unknown his martial worth,
Which glares a meteor from afar.

His joy or grief; his weal or woe,
Perchance may 'scape the page of fame;
Yet nations now unborn will know
The record of his deathless name.

The patriot's and the poet's frame
Must share the common tomb of all:
Their glory will not sleep the same;
That will arise, though empires fail.

The lustre of a beauty's eye
Assumes the ghastly stare of death;
The fair, the brave, the good must die,
And sink the yawning grave beneath.

Once more the speaking eye revive,
Still beaming through the lover's strain;
For Petrarch's Laura still survives:
She died, but ne'er will die again.

The rolling seasons pass away,
And Time, untiring, waves his wing;
Whilst honour's laurel ne'er decay,
But bloom in fresh, unfading spring.

All, all must sleep in grim repose,
Collected in the silent tomb;
The old and young, with friends and foes,
Fest'ring alike in shrouds, consume.

The mouldering marble lasts its day,
Yet falls at length an useless fane;
To ruin's ruthless fangs a prey,
The wrecks of pillar'd pride remain.

What, though the sculpture he destroy'd,
From dark oblivion meant to ward;
A bright renown shall he enjoy'd
By those whose virtues claim reward Then do not say the common lot
Of all lies deep in Lethe's wave;
Some few who ne'er will be forgot
Shall burst the bondage of the grave.

TO A LADY

WHO PRESENTED THE AUTHOR WITH THE
VELVET BAND WHICH BOUND HER TRESSES

This Band, which bound thy yellow hair,
Is mine, sweet girl! Thy pledge of love;
It claims my warmest, dearest care,
Like relics left of saints above.

Oh! I will wear it next my heart;
'Twill blind my soul in bonds to thee;
From me again 't will ne'er depart,
But mingle in the grave with me.

The dew I gather from thy lip
Is not so dear to me as this;
That I but for a moment sip,
And banquet on a transient bliss: *This* will recall each youthful scene,
E'en when our lives are on the wane;
The leaves of Love will still be green
When Memory bids them bud again.

Oh! little lock of golden hue,
In gently waving ringlet curl'd
By the dear head on which you grow,
I would not lose you for a world.

Not though a thousand more adorn
The polish'd brow where once you shone,
Like rays which gild a cloudless morn,
Beneath Columbia's fervid zone.

1806 [First published 1832, as
a single poem, though the last
two stanzas are apparently
independent of the first four]

LINES

ADDRESSED TO THE REV. J. T. BECHER, ON
HIS ADVISING THE AUTHOR TO MIX MORE
WITH SOCIETY

DEAR Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind;
I cannot deny such a precept is wise;
But retirement accords with the tone of my mind:
I will not descend to a world I despise.

Did the senate or camp my exertions require,
Ambition might prompt me, at once, to go forth
When infancy's years of probation expire,
Perchance I may strive to distinguish my birth

The fire in the cavern of Etna conceal'd
Still mantles unseen in its secret recess;
At length, in a volume terrific reveal'd,
No torrent can quench it, no bounds can repress.

Oh! thus, the desire in my bosom for fame
Bids me live but to hope for posterity's praise.
Could I soar with the phoenix on pinions of flame
With him I would wish to expire in the blaze.

For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the death,
What censure, what danger, what woe would I brave!
Their lives did not end when they yielded their breath;
Their glory illumines the gloom of their grave.

Yet why should I mingle in Fashion's full herd?
Why crouch to her leaders, or cringe to her rules?
Why bend to the proud, or applaud the absurd?
Why search for delight in the friendship of fools?

I have tasted the sweets and the bitters of love;
In friendship I early was taught to believe
My passion the matrons prudence reprove;

I have found that a friend may profess, yet deceive.

To me what is wealth? - it may pass in an hour,
If tyrants prevail, or if Fortune should frown:
To me what is title? - the phantom of power;
To me what is fashion? - I seek but renown.

Deceit is a stranger as yet to my soul:
I still am unpractised to varnish the truth:
Then why should I live in a hateful control?
Why waste upon folly the days of my youth?

1806

REMEMBRANCE

'Tis done! - I saw it in my dreams;
No more with Hope the future beams;
My days of happiness are few:
Chill'd by misfortune's wintry blast,
My dawn of life is overcast;
Love Hope, and Joy, alike adieu!
Would I could add Remembrance too!

1806 [First published 1832]

THE DEATH OF CALMAR AND ORLA

AN IMITATION OF MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

Dear are the days of youth! Age dwells on their remembrance through the mist of time. In the twilight he recalls the sunny hours of morn. He lifts his spear with trembling hand. 'Not thus feebly did I raise the steel before my fathers!' Past is the race of heroes. But their fame rises on the harp; their souls ride on the wings of the wind; they hear the sound through the sighs of the storm, and rejoice in their hall of clouds! Such is Calmar. The gray Stone marks his narrow house. He looks down from eddying tempests: he rolls his form in the whirlwind, and hovers on the blast of the mountain.

In Morven dwelt the chief; a beam of war to Fingal. His steps in the field were marked in blood. Lochim's sons had fled before his angry spear; but mild was the eye of Calmar; soft was the flow of his yellow locks: they streamed like the meteor of the night. No maid was the sigh of his soul; his thoughts were given to friendship,-to dark-haired Orla, destroyer of heroes! Equal were their swords in battle; but fierce was the pride of Orla: -gentle 'alone to Calmar. Together they dwelt in the cave of Oithona.

From Lochlin, Swaran bounded o'er the blue waves. Erin's sons fell beneath his might. Fingal roused his chiefs to combat. Their ships cover the ocean. Their hosts throng on the green hills. They come to the aid of Erin.

Night rose in clouds. Darkness veils the armies: but the blaring oaks gleam through the valley. The sons of Lochlin slept: their dreams were of blood. They lilt the spear in thought, and Fingal flies. Not so the host of Morven. To watch was the post of Orla. Calmar stood by his side. Their spears were in their hands. Fingal called his chiefs: they stood around. The king was in the midst. Gray were his locks, but strong was the arm of the king. Age withered not his powers. 'Sons of Morven,' said the hero, 'to-morrow we meet the foe. But where is Cuthullin, the shield of Erin? He rests in the halls of Tura; he knows not of our coming. Who will speed through Lochlin to the hero, and call the chief to arms? The path is by the swords of foes; but many are my heroes. They are thun derbolts of war. Speak, ye chiefs! Who will arise?'

'Son of Trenmor! mine be the deed,' said dark-haired Orla, 'and mine alone.

What is death to me? I love the sleep of the mighty, but little is the danger. The sons of Lochlin dream. I will seek car-borne Cuthuillin. If I fail, raise the song of bards; and lay me by the stream of Lubar.'

--'And shalt thou fall alone?' said fair-haired Calmar. 'Wilt thou leave thy friend afar? Chief of Oithona! not feeble is my arm in fight. Could I see thee die, and not lift the spear? No, Orla! ours has been the chase of the roebuck, and the feast of shells; ours be the path of danger: ours has been the cave of Oithona; ours be the narrow dwelling on the banks of Lubar.' 'Calmar,' said the chief of Oithona, 'why should thy yellow locks be darkened in the dust of Erin? Let me fall alone. My father dwells in his hall of air: he will rejoice in his boy; but the blue-eyed Mora spreads the feast for her son in Morven. She listens to the steps of the hunter on the heath, and thinks it is the tread of Calmar. Let her not say, "Calmar has fallen by the steel of Lochlin: he died with gloomy Orla, the chief of the dark brow." Why should tears dim the azure eye of Mora? Why should her voice curse Orla, the destroyer of Calmar? Live, Calmar! Live to raise my stone of moss; live to revenge me in the blood of Lochlin. Join the song of bards above my grave. Sweet will be the song of death to Orla, from the voice of Calmar. My ghost shall smile on the notes of praise.' 'Orla,' said the son of Mora, 'could I raise the song of death to my friend? Could I give his fame to the winds? No, my heart would speak in sighs: faint and broken are the sounds of sorrow. Orla! our souls shall hear the song together. One cloud shall be ours on high: the bards will mingle the names of Orla and Calmar.'

They quit the circle of the chiefs. Their steps are to the host of Lochlin. The dying blaze of oak dim twinkles through the night. The northern star points the path to Tura. Swaran, the king, rests on his lonely hill. Here the troops are mixed: they frown in sleep; their shields beneath their heads. Their swords gleam at distance in heaps. The fires are faint; their embers fail in smoke. All is hushed; but the gale sighs on the rocks above. Lightly wheel the heroes through the slumbering band. Half the journey is past, when Mathon, resting on his shield, meets the eye of Orla. It rolls in flame, and glistens through the shade. His spear is raised on high. 'Why dost thou bend thy brow, chief of Oithona?' said fair-haired Calmar: 'we are in the midst of foes. Is this a time for delay?' 'It is a time for vengeance,' said Orla of the gloomy brow. 'Mathon of Lochlin sleeps: seest thou his spear? Its point is dim with the gore of my father. The blood of Mathon shall reek on mine; but shall I slay him sleeping, son of Mora? No! he shall feel his wound: my fame shall not soar on the blood of slumber. Rise, Mathon, rise! The son of Conna calls; thy life is his; rise to combat.'

Mathon starts from sleep, but did he rise alone? No, the northern chief had

Mathon starts from sleep; but did he rise alone? NO: the gathering chiefs bound on the plain. 'Fly! Calmar, fly!' said dark-haired Orla. 'Mathon is mine. I shall die in joy: but Lochlin crowds around. Fly through the shade of night.' Orla turns the helm of Mathon is cleft; his shield falls from his arm: he shudders in his blood. He rolls by the side of the blazing oak. Strumon sees him fall: his wrath rises: his weapon glitters on the head of Orla: but a spear pierced his eye. His brain gushes, and foams on the spear of Calmar. As roll the waves of the Ocean on two mighty barks of the north, so pour the men of Lochlin on the chiefs. As, breaking the surge in foam, proudly steer the barks of the north, so rise the chiefs of Morven on the scattered crests of Lochlin. The din of arms came to the ear of Fingal. He strikes his shield; his sons throng around; the people pour along the heath. Ryno bounds in joy. Ossian stalks in his arms. Oscar shakes the spear. The eagle wing of Fillan floats on the wind. Dreadful is the clang of death! many are the widows of Lochlin! Morven prevails in its strength.

Morn glimmers on the hills: no living foe is seen; but the sleepers are many; grim they lie on Erin. The breeze of ocean lifts their locks; yet they do not awake. The hawks scream above their prey.

Whose yellow locks wave o'er the breast of a chief? Bright as the gold of the stranger, they mingle with the dark hair of his friend. 'Tis Calmar: he lies on the bosom of Orla. Theirs is one stream of blood. Fierce is the look of the gloomy Orla. He breathes not; but his eye is still a flame. It glares in death unclosed. His hand is grasped in Calmar's; but Calmar lives! he lives, though low. 'Rise,' said the king, 'rise, son of Mora: 'tis mine to heal the wounds of heroes. Calmar may yet bound on the hills of Morven.'

'Never more shall Calmar chase the deer of Morven with Orla,' said the hero. 'What were the chase to me alone? Who should share the spoils of battle with Calmar? Orla is at rest! Rough was thy soul, Orla! yet soft to me as the dew of morn. It glared on others in lightning: to me a silver beam of night. Bear my sword to blue-eyed Mora; let it hang in my empty hall. It is not pure from blood: but it could not save Orla. Lay me with my friend. Raise the song when I am dark!'

They are laid by the stream of Lubar. Four gray stones mark the dwelling of Orla and Calmar. When Swaran was bound, our sails rose on the blue waves. The winds gave our barks to Morven: --the bards raised the song.

‘What form rises on the roar of clouds? Whose dark ghost gleams on the red streams of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder. ‘Tis Orla, the brown chief of Oithona. He was unmatched in war. Peace to thy soul, Orla thy fame will not perish. Nor thine, Calmar! Lovely wast thou, son of blue-eyed Mora; but not harmless was thy sword. It hangs in thy cave. The ghosts of Lochlin shriek around its steel. Hear thy praise, Calmar! It dwells on the voice of the mighty. Thy name shakes on the echoes of Morven. Then raise thy fair locks, son of Mora. Spread them on the arch of the rainbow; and smile through the tears of the storm.’

L'AMITTÉ EST L'AMOUR SANS AILES

WHY should my anxious breast repine.
Because my youth is fled?
Days of delight may still be mine;
Affection is not dead.
In tracing back the years of youth,
One firm record, one lasting truth,
Celestial consolation brings;
Bear it, ye breezes, to the seat,
Where first my heart responsive beat,-
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Through few, but deeply chequer'd years,
What moments have been mine!
Now half obscured by clouds of tears,
Now bright in rays divine;
Howe'er my future doom be cast,
My soul, enraptured with the past,
To one idea fondly clings
Friendship! that thought is all thine own,
Worth worlds of bliss, that thought alone -
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Where yonder yew-trees lightly wave
Their branches on the gale,
Unheeded heaves a simple grave,
Which tells the common tale;
Round this unconscious schoolboys stray,
Till the dull knell of childish play
From yonder studious mansion rings;
But here whene'er my footsteps move,
My silent tears too plainly prove
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Oh, Love! before thy glowing shrine
My early vows were paid;
My hopes, my dreams, my heart was thine,

But these are now decay'd;
For thine are pinions like the wind,
No trace of thee remains behind,
Except, alas! thy Jealous stings.
Away, away! delusive power,
Thou shalt not haunt my coining hour;
Unless, indeed, without thy wings.

Seat of my youth! thy distant spire
Recalls each scene of joy;
My bosom glows with former fire,-
In mind again a boy.
Thy grove of elms thy verdant hill,
Thy every path delights me still,
Each flower a double fragrance flings;
Again, as once, in converse gay,
Each dear associate seems to say,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

My Lycus! wherefore dost thou weep?
Thy falling tears restrain;
Affection for a time may sleep,
But, oh, 'twill wake again.
Think, think, my friend, when next we meet
Our long-wish'd interview, how sweet!
From this my hope of rapture springs;
While youthful hearts thus fondly swell,
Absence, my friend, can only tell'
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

In one, and one alone deceived,
Did I my error mourn?
No — from oppressive bonds relieved,
I left the wretch to scorn.
I turn'd to those my childhood knew,
With feelings warm, with bosoms true,
Twined with my heart's according strings;
And till those vital chords shall break,
For none but these my breast shall wake

Friendship the power deprived of wings!

Ye few! my soul, my life is yours,
My memory and my hope;
Your worth a lasting love insures,
Unfetter'd in its scope;
From smooth deceit and terror sprung
With aspect fair and honey'd tongue,
Let Adulation wait on kings;
With joy elate, by snares beset,
We we, my friends, can ne'er forget
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Fictions and dreams inspire the bard
Who rolls the epic song;
Friendship and truth be my reward -
To me no bays belong-
If laurell'd Fame but dwells with lies,
Me the enchantress ever flies,
Whose heart and not whose fancy sings;
Simple and young, I dare not feign;
Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

December 1806

[First published 1832]

THE PRAYER OF NATURE.

Father of Light! great God of Heaven!
Hear'st thou the accents of despair?
Can guilt like man's be e'er forgiven?
Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?

Father of Light, on thee I call!
Thou seest my soul is dark within;
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert from me the death of sin.

No shrine I seek, to sects unknown;
Oh, point to me the path of truth!
Thy dread omnipotence I own;
Spare, yet amend, the faults of youth.

Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
Let superstition hail the pile,
Let priests, to spread their sable reign,
With tales of mystic rites beguile.

Shall man confine his Maker's sway
To Gothic domes of mouldering stone?
Thy temple is the face of the day;
Earth, ocean, heaven, thy boundless throne.

Shall man condemn his race to hell,
Unless they bend in pompous form?
Tell us that all, of one who fell,
Must perish in the mingling storm?

Shall each pretend to reach the skies,
Yet doom his brother to expire,
Whose soul a different hope supplies,
Or doctrines less severe inspire?

Shall these, by creeds they can't expound,
Prepare a fancied bliss or woe?

Shall reptiles, grovelling on the ground,
Their great Creator's purpose know?

Shall those, who live for self alone,
Whose years float on in a daily crime -
Shall they by Faith for guilt atone,
And live beyond the bounds of Time?

Father! no prophet's laws I seek,-
Thy laws in Nature's works appear;-
I own myself corrupt and weak,
Yet will I pray, for thou wilt hear!

Thou, who canst guide the wandering star
Through trackless realms of other's space;
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose hand from pole to pole I trace.

Thou, who in wisdom placed me here,
Who, when thou wilt, canst take me hence,
Ah! whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me thy wide defence.

To Thee, my God, to thee I call!
Whatever weal or woe betide,
By thy command I rise or fall,
In thy protection I confide.

If, when this dust to dust's restored,
My soul shall float on airy wing,
How shall thy glorious name adored
Inspire her feeble voice to sing!

But, if this fleeting spirit share
With clay the gavel's eternal bed,
While life yet throbs I raise my prayer,
Though doom'd no more to quit the dead.

To Thee I breathe my humble strain;
Grateful for all thy mercies past,

And hope, my God, to thee again
This erring life may fly at last.

December 29, 1806

[First published, 1830]

TO EDWARD NOEL LONG, ESQ.

‘Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.’ - HOR.

Dear Long, in this sequester'd scene,
While all around in slumber lie,
The joyous days, which ours have been
Come rolling fresh on Fancy's eye;
Thus, if, amidst the gathering storm,
While clouds the darken'd noon deform,
Yon heaven assumes a varied glow,
I hail the sky's celestial bow,
Which spreads the sign of future peace,
And bids the war of tempests cease.
Ah! though the present brings but pain,
I think those days may come again;
Or if, in melancholy mood,
Some lurking envious fear intrude,
To check my bosom's fondest thought,
And interrupt the golden dream
I crush the fiend with malice fraught,
And, still, indulge my wonted theme.
Although we ne'er again can trace,
In Granta's vale, the pedant's lore,
Nor through the groves of Ida chace
Our raptured visions, as before;
Though Youth has flown on rosy pinion,
And Manhood claims his stern dominion,
Age will not every hope destroy,
But yields some hours of sober joy.

Yes, I will hope that Time's broad wing
Will shed around some dews of spring:
But, if his scythe must sweep the flowers
Which bloom among the fairy bowers,
Where smiling Youth delights to dwell,
And hearts with early rapture swell;
In frowning Age, with cold control,

Confines the current of the soul,
Congeals the tear of Pity's eye,
Or checks the sympathetic sigh,
Or hears, unmov'd, Misfortune's groan,
And bids me feel for self alone;
Oh! may my bosom never learn
To soothe its wonted heedless flow;
Still may I rove untutor'd, wild,
But ne'er forget another's woe.
Yes, as you knew me in the days
O'er which Remembrance yet delays
And even in age, at heart a child.

Though, now, on airy visions borne,
To you my soul is still the same.
Oft has it ben my fate to mourn,
And all my former joys are tame:
But, hence! ye hours of sabl hue!
Your frowns are gone, my sorrows o'er:
By every bliss my childhood knew,
I'll think upon your shade no more.
Thus, when the whirlwind's rage is past,
And caves their sullen roar enclose,
We heed no more the wintery blast,
When lull'd by zephyr to repose.

Full often has my infant Muse
Attun'd to love her languid lyre;
But, now, without a theme to choose,
The strains in stolen sighs expire.
My youthful nympts, alas! are flown;
E — is a wife, and C — a mother,
And Carolina sighs alone,
And Mary's given to another;
And Cora's eye, which roll'd on me,
Can now no more my love recall -
In truth, dear LONG, 'twas time to flee -
For Cora's eye will shine on all.
And though the Sun, with genial rays,

His beams aike to all displays,
And every lady's eye's a sun,
These last should be confin'd to one.
The souls' meridian don't become her,
Whose sun desplays a general *summer*!
Thus faint is every former flame,
And Passion's self is now a name;
As, when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid which once improv'd their light,
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their sparks in night;
Thus has it been with Passion's fires,
As many a boy and girl remembers,
While all the force of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

But now, dear LONG, 'tis midnight's noon,
And clouds obscure the watery moon,
Whose beauties I shall not rehearse,
Describ'd in every stripling's verse;
For why should I the path go o'er
Which every bard has trod before?
Yet ere yon silver lamp of night
Has thrice perform'd her stated round,
Has thrice retraced her path of light,
And chased away the gloom profound,
I trust that we, my gentle Friend,
Shall see her rolling orbit wend,
Above the dear-loved peaceful seat,
Which once contain'd our youth's retreat;
And then, with those our childhood knew,
We'll mingle in the festive crew;
While many a tale of former day
Shall wing the laughing hours away;
And all the flow of souls shall pour
Tha sacred intellectual shower,
Nor cease, till Luna's waning horn
Scarce glimmers through the mist of Morn.

TO A LADY

O! had my Fate been join'd with thine,
As once this pledge appear'd a token,
These follies had not, then, been mine,
For, then, my peace had not been broken.

To thee, these early faults I owe,
To thee, the wise and old reproving:
They know my sins, but do not know
'Twas thine to break the bonds of loving.

For once my soul, like thine, was pure,
And all its rising fires could smother;
But, now, thy vows no more endure,
Bestow'd by thee upon another.

Perhaps, his peace I could destroy,
And spoil the blisses that await him;
Yet let my Rival smile in joy,
For thy dear sake, I cannot hate him.

Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
My heart no more can rest with any;
But what it sought in thee alone,
Attempts, alas! to find in many.

Then, fare thee well, deceitful Maid!
'Twere vain and fruitless to regret thee;
Nor Hope, nor Memory yield their aid,
But Pride may teach me to forget thee.

Yet all this giddy waste of years,
This tiresome round of palling pleasures;
These varied loves, these matrons' fears,
These thoughtless strains to Passion's measures -

If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd:-
This cheek, now pale from early riot,

With Passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

Yes, once the rural Scene was sweet,
For Nature seem'd to smile before thee;
And once my Breast abhorr'd deceit,-
For then it beat but to adore thee.

But, now, I seek for other joys -
To think, would drive my soul to madness;
In thoughtless throngs, and empty noise,
I conquer half my Bosom's sadness.

Yet, even in these, a thought will steal,
In spite of every vain endeavor;
And fiends might pity what I feel -
To know that thou art lost for ever.

I WOULD I WERE A CARELESS CHILD

I would I were a careless child,
Still dwelling in my Highland cave,
Or roaming through the dusky wild,
Or bounding o'er the dark blue wave;
The cumbrous pomp of Saxon pride
Accords not with the freeborn soul,
Which loves the mountain's craggy side,
And seeks the rocks where billows roll.

Fortune! Take back these cultured lands,
Take back this name of splendid sound!
I hate the touch of servile hands,
I hate the slaves that cringe around.
Place me among the rocks I love,
Which sound to Ocean's wildest roar;
I ask but this - again to rove
Through scenes my youth hath known before.

Few are my years, and yet I feel
The world was ne'er designed for me:
Ah! why do dark'ning shades conceal
The hour when man must cease to be?
Once I beheld a splendid dream,
A visionary scene of bliss:
Truth!- wherefore did thy hated beam
Awake me to a world like this?

I loved - but those I loved are gone;
Had friends - my early friends are fled:
How cheerless feels the heart alone,
When all its former hopes are dead!
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
The heart - the heart - is lonely still.

How dull! to hear the voice of those
Whom rank or chance, whom wealth or power,
Have made, though neither friends nor foes
Associates of that festive hour.
Give me again the faithful few,
In years and feelings still the same,
And I will fly the midnight crew,
Where boist'rous joy is but a name.

And woman, lovely woman! thou,
My hope, my comfortet, my all!
How cold must be my bosom now,
When e'en thy smiles begin to pall!
Without a sigh would I resign
This busy scene of splendid woe,
To make that calm contentment mine,
Which virtue knows, or seems to know.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men -
I seek to shun, not hate mankind;
My breast requires the sullen glen,
Whose gloom may suit a darken'd mind.
Oh! that to me the wings were given
Which bear the turtle to her nest!
Then I would cleave the vault of heaven,
To flee away, and be at rest.

WHEN I ROVED A YOUNG HIGHLANDER

WHEN I roved a young Highlander o'er the dark heath,
And climb'd thy steep summnit, oh Morven of snow!
To gaze on the torrent that thunder'd beneath,
Or the mist of the tempest that gather'd below,
Untutor'd by science, a stranger to fear,
And rude as the rocks where my infancy grew,
No feeling, save one, to my bosom was dear
Need I say, my sweet Mary, 'twas centred in you?

Yet it could not be love, for I knew not the name,-
What passion can dwell in the heart of a child?
But still I pereceive an emotion the same
As I felt, when a boy, on the crag cover'd wild:
One image alone on my bosom impress'd
I loved my bleak regions, nor panted for new;
And few were my wants, for my wishes were bless'd;
And pure were my thoughts, for my soul was with you.

I arose with the dawn; with my dog as my guide,
From mountain to mountain I bounded along
I breasted the billows of Dee's rushing tide,
And heard at a distance the Highlander's song:
At eve, on my heath-cover'd couch of repose,
No dreams, save of Mary, were spread to my view;
And warm to the skies my devotions aoose,
For the first of my prayers was a blessing on you.

I left my bleak home, and my visions are gone;
The mountains are vanish'd, my youth is no more;
As the last of my race, I must wither alone,
And delight but in days I have witness'd before:
Ah! splendour has raised but embitter'd my lot;
More dear were the scenes which my infancy knew:
Though my hopes may have fail'd, yet they are not forgot;
Though cold is my heart, still it lingers with you.

When I see some dark hill point its crest to the sky,
I think of the rocks that o'ershadow Colbleen
When I see the soft blue of a love-speaking eye
I think of those eyes that endear'd the rude scene;
When, haply, some light-waving locks I behold,
That faintly resemble my Mary's in hue,
I think on the long, flowing ringlets of gold,
The locks that were sacred to beauty, and you.

Yet the day may arrive when the mountains once more
Shall rise to my sight In their mantles of snow:
But while these soar above me, unchanged as before
Will Mary be there to receive me? - ah, no!
Adieu, then, ye hills, where my childhood was bred!
Thou sweet flowing Dee, to thy waters adieu!
No home in the forest shall shelter my head,-
Ah! Mary, what home could be mine but with you?

TO GEORGE, EARL DELAWARR

Oh! yes, I will own we were dear to each other;
The friendships of childhood, though fleeting are true;
The love which you felt was the love of a brother,
Nor less the affection I cherish'd for you.

But Friendship can vary her gentle dominion;
The attachment of years in a moment expires:
Like Love, too, she moves on a swift-waving pinion,
But glows not, like Love, with unquenchable fires.

Full oft have we wander'd through Ida together,
And blest were the scenes of our youth, I allow:
In the spring of our life, how serene is the weather!
But winter's rude tempests are gathering now.

No more with affection shall memory blending,
The wonted delights of our childhood retrace:
When pride steels the bosom, the heart is unbending,
And what would be Justice appears a disgrace.

However, dear George, for I still must esteem you;
The few whom I love I can never upbraid:
The chance which has lost may in future redeem you,
Repentance will cancel the vow you have made.

I will not complain, and though chill'd is affection,
With me no corroding resentment shall live:
My bosom is calm'd by the simple reflection,
That both may be wrong, and that both should forgive.

You knew that my soul, that my heart, my existence,
If danger demanded, were wholly your own.
You knew me unalter'd by years or by distance
Devoted to love and to friendship alone.

You knew - but away with the vain retropection!
The bond of affection no longer endures;

Too late you may droop o'er the fond recollection,
And sigh for the friend who was formerly yours.

For the present, we part, - I will hope not for ever;
For time and regret will restore you at last:
To forget our dimension we both should endeavour,
I ask no atonement, but days like the past.

TO THE EARL OF CLARE

'Tu semper amoris
Sisd memor, etcari comitis ne abscedat imago'
Val Flac

Friend of my youth! when young we roved,
Like striplings mutually beloved,
With friendship's purest glow,
The bliss which wing'd those rosy hours
Was such as pleasure seldom showers
On mortals here below.

The recollecclon seems alone
Dearer than all the joys I've known,
When distant far from you:
Though pain, 'tis still a pleasing pain,
To trace those days and hours again,
And sigh again, adieu!

My pensive memory lingers o'er
Those scenes to be enjoy'd no more,
Those scenes regretted ever
The measure of our youth is full,
Life's evening dream is dark and dull,
And we may meet - ah! never!

As when one parent spring supplies
Two streams which from one fountain rise
Together join'd in 'vain;
How soon' diverging from their source,
Each murmuring, seeks another course,
Till mingled in the main!

Our vital streams of weal or woe,
Though near, alas! distinctly flow,
Nor mingle as before:
Now swift or slow, now black or clear,

Till death's unfathom'd gulf appear,
And both shall quit the shore.

Our souls, my friend! which once supplied
One wish, nor breathed a thought beside,
Now flow in different channels:
Disdaining humbler rural sports,
'Tis yours to mix in polish'd courts,
And shine in fashion's annals; 'Tis mine to waste on love my time,
Or vent my reveries in rhyme,
Without the aid of reason;
For sense and reason (critics know it)
Have quitted every amorous poet,
Nor left a thought to seize on.

Poor LITTLE! sweet, melodious bard!
Of late esteem'd it monstrous hard
That he, who sang before all,-
He who the lore of love expanded,-
By dire reviewers should be branded
As void of wit and moral.

And yet, while Beauty's praise is thine,
Harmonious favourite of the nine,
Repine not at thy lot.
Thy soothing lays may still be read,
When Persecution's arm is dead,
And critics are forgot.

Still I must yield those worthies merit,
Who chasten, with unsparing spirit,
Bad rhymes, and those who write them;
And though myself may be the next
By criticism to be vext,
I really will not fight them.

Perhaps they would do quite as well
To break the rudely sounding shell
Of such a young beginner:

He who offends at pert nineteen,
Ere thirty may become, I ween,
A very harden'd sinner.

Now, Clare, I must return to you;
And, sure, apologies are due:
Accept, then, my concession
In truth dear Clare, in fancy's flight
I soar along from left to right;
My muse admires digression

I think I said 'twould be your fate
To add one star to royal state;-
May regal smiles attend you!
And should a noble monarch reign,
You will not seek his smiles in vain,
If worth can recommend you.

Yet since in danger courts abound,
Where specious rivals glitter round,
From snares may saints preserve you;
And grant your love or friendship ne'er
From any claim a kindred care,
But those who best deserve you!

Not for a moment may you stray
From truth's secure, unerring way!
May no delights decoy!
O'er roses may your footsteps move,
Your smiles be ever smiles of love,
Your tears be tears of joy!

Oh! if you wish that happiness
Your coming days and years may bless,
And virtues crown your brow;
Be still as you were wont to be,
Spotless as you've been known to me,-
Be still as you are now.

And though some trifling share of praise,
To cheer my last declining days,
To me were doubly dear;
Whilst blessing your beloved name
I'd waive at once a *poet's* fame,
To prove a *prophet* here.

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH AN ELM IN THE CHURCHYARD OF HARROW

Spot of my youth! whose hoary branches sigh,
Swept by the breeze that fans thy cloudless sky;
Where now alone I muse, who oft have trod,
With those I loved, thy soft and verdant sod;
With those who, scattered far, perchance deplore,
Like me, the happy scenes they knew before:
Oh! as I trace again thy winding hill,
Mine eyes admire, my heart adores thee still,
Thou drooping Elm! beneath whose boughs I lay,
And frequent mused the twilight hours away;
Where, as they once were wont, my limbs recline,
But ah! without the thoughts which then were mine.
How do thy branches, moaning to the blast,
Invite the bosom to recall the past,
And seem to whisper, as the gently swell,
'Take, while thou canst, a lingering, last farewell!'

When fate shall chill, at length, this fevered breast,
And calm its cares and passions into rest,
Oft have I thought, 'twould soothe my dying hour, -
If aught may soothe when life resigns her power, -
To know some humbler grave, some narrow cell,
Would hide my bosom where it loved to dwell.
With this fond dream, methinks, 'twere sweet to die -
And here it lingered, here my heart might lie;
Here might I sleep, where all my hopes arose,
Scene of my youth, and couch of my repose;
For ever stretched beneath this mantling shade,
Pressed by the turf where once my childhood played;
Wrapped by the soil that veils the spot I loved,
Mixed with the earth o'er which my footsteps moved;
Blest by the tongues that charmed my youthful ear,
Mourned by the few my soul acknowledged here;
Deplored by those in early days allied,
And unremembered by the world beside.

September 2 1807

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE



This long narrative poem is comprised of four cantos, published between 1812 and 1818. The cantos are written in Spenserian stanzas, consisting of eight iambic pentameter lines, followed by an alexandrine. The word *childe* was a medieval title for a young man preparing for the rigorous training of knighthood. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* concerns the travels and reflections of a world-weary novice, who is disillusioned with his life of revelry and so seeks distraction in foreign lands. The poem is now viewed by many critics as an expression of the disillusionment felt by people at the time, who were weary of the wars of the post-Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras.

On 2 July 1809, Byron sailed from Falmouth for Lisbon, embarking on a Grand Tour with his friend John Cam Hobhouse. Together they travelled through Portugal, Spain, Malta and Albania, reaching Athens at the end of the year. It was during this journey that Byron composed the first Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which was originally titled *Childe Burun*. Many elements of the poem are now considered to be autobiographical, based on the experiences Byron gained during his travels between 1809 and 1811. The poem is dedicated Ianthe, a term of endearment used by the poet for Charlotte Harley, the 13-year-old daughter of Lady Oxford.

Initially Byron was reluctant to publish the first two cantos of the poem, concerned they revealed too much of himself. Nevertheless, after the constant urgings of friends, the poem was published and achieved immediate and unexpected public attention. Byron later wrote to a friend, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous".

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage portrays the first example of what would later be termed the Byronic hero. Among the hero's characteristics, he must be cunning, charming, well-educated and sophisticated in style. However, the Byronic hero is also depicted as struggling with his integrity, being prone to mood swings or what would be termed nowadays as bipolar tendencies. Generally, the hero has disrespect for any figure of authority, depicting the Byronic hero as an exile or outcast. The hero also has a tendency to be arrogant and cynical, indulging in self-destructive behaviour, leading to the need to seduce women. Ever since the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the character of the Byronic hero has re-appeared in novels, plays, films and many other art forms across the world.



The frontispiece to the 1825 edition



'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' by J.M.W. Turner, 1823

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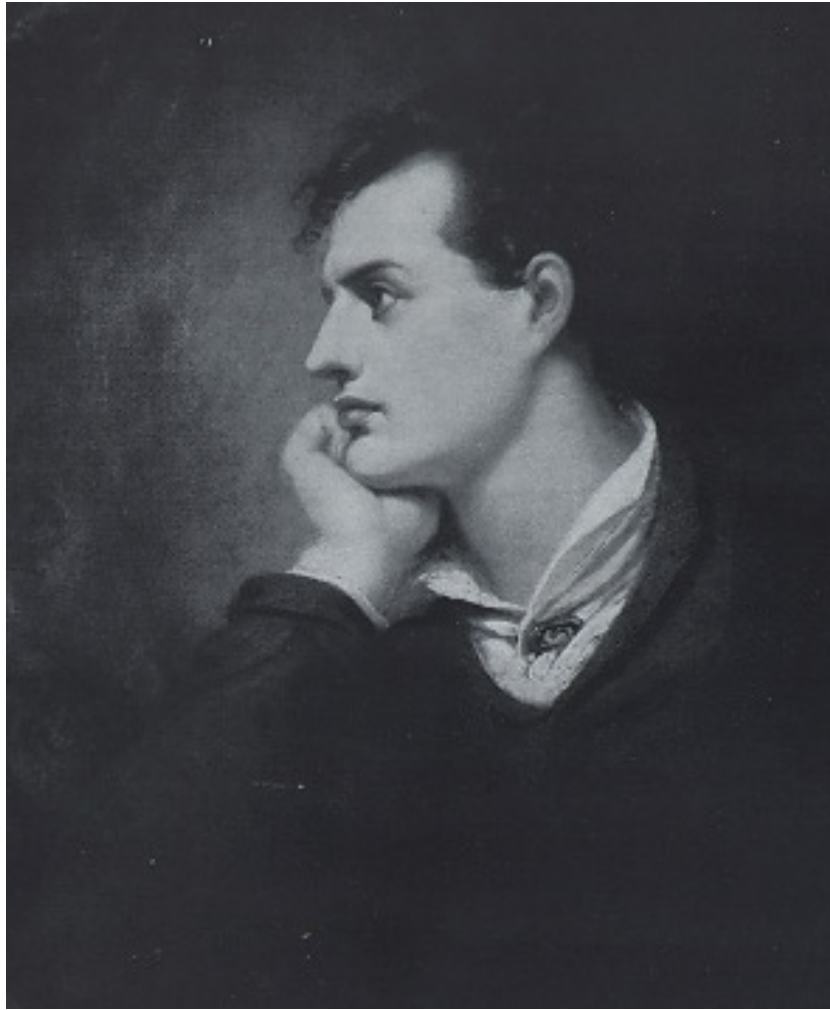
TO IANTHE.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE FIRST.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE SECOND.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE THIRD.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE FOURTH.



Byron, close to the time of publication



John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869), Byron's travelling companion

TO IANTHE.

Not in those climes where I have late been straying,
Though Beauty long hath there been matchless deemed,
Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs but to have only dreamed,
Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy seemed:
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek
To paint those charms which varied as they beamed -
To such as see thee not my words were weak;
To those who gaze on thee, what language could they speak?

Ah! mayst thou ever be what now thou art,
Nor unbeseem the promise of thy spring,
As fair in form, as warm yet pure in heart,
Love's image upon earth without his wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!
And surely she who now so fondly rears
Thy youth, in thee, thus hourly brightening,
Beholds the rainbow of her future years,
Before whose heavenly hues all sorrow disappears.

Young Peri of the West! - 'tis well for me
My years already doubly number thine;
My loveless eye unmoved may gaze on thee,
And safely view thy ripening beauties shine:
Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline;
Happier, that while all younger hearts shall bleed
Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign
To those whose admiration shall succeed,
But mixed with pangs to Love's even loveliest hours decreed.

Oh! let that eye, which, wild as the gazelle's,
Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,
Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells,
Glance o'er this page, nor to my verse deny
That smile for which my breast might vainly sigh,
Could I to thee be ever more than friend:

This much, dear maid, accord; nor question why
To one so young my strain I would commend,
But bid me with my wreath one matchless lily blend.

Such is thy name with this my verse entwined;
And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast
On Harold's page, Ianthe's here enshrined
Shall thus be first beheld, forgotten last:
My days once numbered, should this homage past
Attract thy fairy fingers near the lyre
Of him who hailed thee, loveliest as thou wast,
Such is the most my memory may desire;
Though more than Hope can claim, could Friendship less require?



Charlotte Harley, 'Ianthé'

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

Oh, thou, in Hellas deemed of heavenly birth,
Muse, formed or fabled at the minstrel's will!
Since shamed full oft by later lyres on earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred hill:
Yet there I've wandered by thy vaunted rill;
Yes! sighed o'er Delphi's long-deserted shrine
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still;
Nor mote my shell awake the weary Nine
To grace so plain a tale - this lowly lay of mine.

II.

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
Ah, me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
Few earthly things found favour in his sight
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

III.

Childe Harold was he hight: - but whence his name
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day:
But one sad losel soils a name for aye,
However mighty in the olden time;
Nor all that heralds rake from confined clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honeyed lines of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

IV.

Childe Harold basked him in the noontide sun,
Disporting there like any other fly,
Nor deemed before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his passed by,
Worse than adversity the Childe befell;
He felt the fulness of satiety:
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seemed to him more lone than eremite's sad cell.

V.

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sighed to many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas, could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoiled her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deigned to taste.

VI.

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But pride congealed the drop within his e'e:
Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

VII.

The Childe departed from his father's hall;

It was a vast and venerable pile;
So old, it seemèd only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome! condemned to uses vile!
Where superstition once had made her den,
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
And monks might deem their time was come agen,
If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

VIII.

Yet ofttimes in his maddest mirthful mood,
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurked below:
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

IX.

And none did love him: though to hall and bower
He gathered revellers from far and near,
He knew them flatterers of the festal hour;
The heartless parasites of present cheer.
Yea, none did love him - not his lemans dear -
But pomp and power alone are woman's care,
And where these are light Eros finds a feere;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair.

X.

Childe Harold had a mother - not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage begun:

If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel;
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.

XI.

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands,
Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite;
His goblets brimmed with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass earth's central line.

XII.

The sails were filled, and fair the light winds blew
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam;
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept,
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

XIII.

But when the sun was sinking in the sea,
He seized his harp, which he at times could string,
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deemed he no strange ear was listening:
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tuned his farewell in the dim twilight,
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,

And fleeting shores receded from his sight,
Thus to the elements he poured his last 'Good Night.'

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My Native Land - Good Night!

A few short hours, and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall,
My dog howls at the gate.

'Come hither, hither, my little page:
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billow's rage,
Or tremble at the gale?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye,
Our ship is swift and strong;
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.'

'Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind;
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friend, save these alone,
But thee - and One above.

‘My father blessed me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.’ -
‘Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry.

‘Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman,
Or shiver at the gale?’ -
‘Deem’st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I’m not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

‘My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake;
And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make?’ -
‘Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.’

For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feeres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o’er.
For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

And now I’m in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea;
But why should I for others groan,

When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands.

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My Native Land - Good Night!

XIV.

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

XV.

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand:
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge.

XVI.

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford
A nation swoll'n with ignorance and pride,
Who lick, yet loathe, the hand that waves the sword.
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

XVII.

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
Mid many things unsightly to strange e'e;
For hut and palace show like filthily;
The dingy denizens are reared in dirt;
No personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout or shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwashed, unhurt.

XVIII.

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born midst noblest scenes -
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken
Than those whereof such things the bard relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlocked Elysium's gates?

XIX.

The horrid crags, by toppling convent crowned,

The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain moss by scorching skies imbrowned,
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mixed in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow.

XX.

Then slowly climb the many-winding way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's House of Woe;'
Where frugal monks their little relics show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punished been; and lo,
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth a Hell.

XXI.

And here and there, as up the crags you spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path;
Yet deem not these devotion's offering -
These are memorials frail of murderous wrath;
For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
Poured forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
Throughout this purple land, where law secures not life!

XXII.

On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
Are domes where whilom kings did make repair;
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe:
Yet ruined splendour still is lingering there.

And yonder towers the prince's palace fair:
There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.

XXIII.

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan.
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow;
But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide.

XXIV.

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!
Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
With diadem hight foolscap, lo! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe arrayed, and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazoned glare names known to chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
Whereat the urchin points, and laughs with all his soul.

XXV.

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foiled the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
Here Folly dashed to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regained what Arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!

Woe to the conquering, not the conquered host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast.

XXVI.

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra, at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year?

XXVII.

So deemed the Childe, as o'er the mountains he
Did take his way in solitary guise:
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
More restless than the swallow in the skies:
Though here awhile he learned to moralise,
For Meditation fixed at times on him,
And conscious Reason whispered to despise
His early youth misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gazed on Truth, his aching eyes grew dim.

XXVIII.

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
Onward he flies, nor fixed as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll,
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

XXIX.

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;
And church and court did mingle their array,
And mass and revel were alternate seen;
Lordlings and freres - ill-sorted fry, I ween!
But here the Babylonian whore had built
A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to garnish guilt.

XXX.

O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills,
(Oh that such hills upheld a free-born race!)
Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills,
Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place.
Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace.
Oh, there is sweetness in the mountain air
And life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share.

XXXI.

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend:
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear, whereon her shepherds tend
Flocks, whose rich fleece right well the trader knows -
Now must the pastor's arm his lambs defend:
For Spain is compassed by unyielding foes,
And all must shield their all, or share Subjection's woes.

XXXII.

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,

Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
Or e'er the jealous queens of nations greet,
Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark sierras rise in craggy pride?
Or fence of art, like China's vasty wall? -
Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall
Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul

XXXIII.

But these between a silver streamlet glides,
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foemen flow:
For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low.

XXXIV.

But ere the mingling bounds have far been passed,
Dark Guadiana rolls his power along
In sullen billows, murmuring and vast,
So noted ancient roundelays among.
Whilome upon his banks did legions throng
Of Moor and Knight, in mailèd splendour drest;
Here ceased the swift their race, here sunk the strong;
The Paynim turban and the Christian crest
Mixed on the bleeding stream, by floating hosts oppressed.

XXXV.

Oh, lovely Spain! renowned, romantic land!
Where is that standard which Pelagio bore,
When Cava's traitor-sire first called the band
That dyed thy mountain-streams with Gothic gore?

Where are those bloody banners which of yore
Waved o'er thy sons, victorious to the gale,
And drove at last the spoilers to their shore?
Red gleamed the cross, and waned the crescent pale,
While Afric's echoes thrilled with Moorish matrons' wail.

XXXVI.

Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale?
Ah! such, alas, the hero's amplest fate!
When granite moulders and when records fail,
A peasant's plaint prolongs his dubious date.
Pride! bend thine eye from heaven to thine estate,
See how the mighty shrink into a song!
Can volume, pillar, pile, preserve thee great?
Or must thou trust Tradition's simple tongue,
When Flattery sleeps with thee, and History does thee wrong?

XXXVII.

Awake, ye sons of Spain! awake! advance
Lo! Chivalry, your ancient goddess, cries,
But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies:
Now on the smoke of blazing bolts she flies,
And speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar!
In every peal she calls - 'Awake! arise!'
Say, is her voice more feeble than of yore,
When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?

XXXVIII.

Hark! heard you not those hoofs of dreadful note?
Sounds not the clang of conflict on the heath?
Saw ye not whom the reeking sabre smote;
Nor saved your brethren ere they sank beneath
Tyrants and tyrants' slaves? - the fires of death,
The bale-fires flash on high: - from rock to rock
Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe:

Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red Battle stamps his foot, and nations feel the shock.

XXXIX.

Lo! where the Giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deepening in the sun,
With death-shot glowing in his fiery hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon;
Restless it rolls, now fixed, and now anon
Flashing afar, - and at his iron feet
Destruction cowers, to mark what deeds are done;
For on this morn three potent nations meet,
To shed before his shrine the blood he deems most sweet.

XL.

By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there)
Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery,
Their various arms that glitter in the air!
What gallant war-hounds rouse them from their lair,
And gnash their fangs, loud yelling for the prey!
All join the chase, but few the triumph share:
The Grave shall bear the chiefest prize away,
And Havoc scarce for joy can cumber their array.

XLI.

Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high;
Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies.
The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!
The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
Are met - as if at home they could not die -
To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
And fertilise the field that each pretends to gain.

XLII.

There shall they rot - Ambition's honoured fools!
Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps their clay!
Vain Sophistry! in these behold the tools,
The broken tools, that tyrants cast away
By myriads, when they dare to pave their way
With human hearts - to what? - a dream alone.
Can despots compass aught that hails their sway?
Or call with truth one span of earth their own,
Save that wherein at last they crumble bone by bone?

XLIII.

O Albuera, glorious field of grief!
As o'er thy plain the Pilgrim pricked his steed,
Who could foresee thee, in a space so brief,
A scene where mingling foes should boast and bleed.
Peace to the perished! may the warrior's meed
And tears of triumph their reward prolong!
Till others fall where other chieftains lead,
Thy name shall circle round the gaping throng,
And shine in worthless lays, the theme of transient song.

XLIV.

Enough of Battle's minions! let them play
Their game of lives, and barter breath for fame:
Fame that will scarce reanimate their clay,
Though thousands fall to deck some single name.
In sooth, 'twere sad to thwart their noble aim
Who strike, blest hirelings! for their country's good,
And die, that living might have proved her shame;
Perished, perchance, in some domestic feud,
Or in a narrower sphere wild Rapine's path pursued.

XLV.

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way

Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsubdued:
Yet is she free - the spoiler's wished-for prey!
Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot intrude,
Blackening her lovely domes with traces rude.
Inevitable hour! 'Gainst fate to strive
Where Desolation plants her famished brood
Is vain, or Ilion, Tyre, might yet survive,
And Virtue vanquish all, and Murder cease to thrive.

XLVI.

But all unconscious of the coming doom,
The feast, the song, the revel here abounds;
Strange modes of merriment the hours consume,
Nor bleed these patriots with their country's wounds;
Nor here War's clarion, but Love's rebeck sounds;
Here Folly still his votaries enthralls,
And young-eyed Lewdness walks her midnight rounds:
Girt with the silent crimes of capitals,
Still to the last kind Vice clings to the tottering walls.

XLVII.

Not so the rustic: with his trembling mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of war.
No more beneath soft Eve's consenting star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, monarchs! could ye taste the mirth ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and Man be happy yet.

XLVIII.

How carols now the lusty muleteer?
Of love, romance, devotion is his lay,
As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the way?

No! as he speeds, he chants 'Viva el Rey!'
And checks his song to execrate Godoy,
The royal wittol Charles, and curse the day
When first Spain's queen beheld the black-eyed boy,
And gore-faced Treason sprung from her adulterate joy.

XLIX.

On yon long level plain, at distance crowned
With crags, whereon those Moorish turrets rest,
Wide scattered hoof-marks dint the wounded ground;
And, scathed by fire, the greensward's darkened vest
Tells that the foe was Andalusia's guest:
Here was the camp, the watch-flame, and the host,
Here the brave peasant stormed the dragon's nest;
Still does he mark it with triumphant boast,
And points to yonder cliffs, which oft were won and lost.

L.

And whomsoe'er along the path you meet
Bears in his cap the badge of crimson hue,
Which tells you whom to shun and whom to greet:
Woe to the man that walks in public view
Without of loyalty this token true:
Sharp is the knife, and sudden is the stroke;
And sorely would the Gallic foemen rue,
If subtle poniards, wrapt beneath the cloak,
Could blunt the sabre's edge, or clear the cannon's smoke.

LI.

At every turn Morena's dusky height
Sustains aloft the battery's iron load;
And, far as mortal eye can compass sight,
The mountain-howitzer, the broken road,
The bristling palisade, the fosse o'erflowed,
The stationed bands, the never-vacant watch,
The magazine in rocky durance stowed,

The holstered steed beneath the shed of thatch,
The ball-piled pyramid, the ever-blazing match,

LII.

Portend the deeds to come: - but he whose nod
Has tumbled feebler despots from their sway,
A moment pauseth ere he lifts the rod;
A little moment deigneth to delay:
Soon will his legions sweep through these the way;
The West must own the Scourger of the world.
Ah, Spain! how sad will be thy reckoning day,
When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his wings unfurled,
And thou shalt view thy sons in crowds to Hades hurled.

LIII.

And must they fall - the young, the proud, the brave -
To swell one bloated chief's unwholesome reign?
No step between submission and a grave?
The rise of rapine and the fall of Spain?
And doth the Power that man adores ordain
Their doom, nor heed the suppliant's appeal?
Is all that desperate Valour acts in vain?
And Counsel sage, and patriotic Zeal,
The veteran's skill, youth's fire, and manhood's heart of steel?

LIV.

Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused,
Hangs on the willow her unstrung guitar,
And, all unsexed, the anlace hath espoused,
Sung the loud song, and dared the deed of war?
And she, whom once the semblance of a scar
Appalled, an owlet's larum chilled with dread,
Now views the column-scattering bayonet jar,
The falchion flash, and o'er the yet warm dead
Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars might quake to tread.

LV.

Ye who shall marvel when you hear her tale,
Oh! had you known her in her softer hour,
Marked her black eye that mocks her coal-black veil,
Heard her light, lively tones in lady's bower,
Seen her long locks that foil the painter's power,
Her fairy form, with more than female grace,
Scarce would you deem that Saragoza's tower
Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon face,
Thin the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's fearful chase.

LVI.

Her lover sinks - she sheds no ill-timed tear;
Her chief is slain - she fills his fatal post;
Her fellows flee - she checks their base career;
The foe retires - she heads the sallying host:
Who can appease like her a lover's ghost?
Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
What maid retrieve when man's flushed hope is lost?
Who hang so fiercely on the flying Gaul,
Foiled by a woman's hand, before a battered wall?

LVII.

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Amazons,
But formed for all the witching arts of love:
Though thus in arms they emulate her sons,
And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
'Tis but the tender fierceness of the dove,
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er her mate:
In softness as in firmness far above
Remoter females, famed for sickening prate;
Her mind is nobler sure, her charms perchance as great.

LVIII.

The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impressed

Denotes how soft that chin which bears his touch:
Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave their nest,
Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
Her glance, how wildly beautiful! how much
Hath Phoebus wooed in vain to spoil her cheek
Which glows yet smoother from his amorous clutch!
Who round the North for paler dames would seek?
How poor their forms appear? how languid, wan, and weak!

LIX.

Match me, ye climes! which poets love to laud;
Match me, ye harems! of the land where now
I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
Beauties that even a cynic must avow!
Match me those houris, whom ye scarce allow
To taste the gale lest Love should ride the wind,
With Spain's dark-glancing daughters - deign to know,
There your wise Prophet's paradise we find,
His black-eyed maids of Heaven, angelically kind.

LX.

O thou, Parnassus! whom I now survey,
Not in the frenzy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty!
What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
Would gladly woo thine echoes with his string,
Though from thy heights no more one muse will wave her wing.

LXI.

Oft have I dreamed of thee! whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore:
And now I view thee, 'tis, alas, with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.

When I recount thy worshippers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on thee!

LXII.

Happier in this than mightiest bards have been,
Whose fate to distant homes confined their lot,
Shall I unmoved behold the hallowed scene,
Which others rave of, though they know it not?
Though here no more Apollo haunts his grot,
And thou, the Muses' seat, art now their grave,
Some gentle spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melodious wave.

LXIII.

Of thee hereafter. - Even amidst my strain
I turned aside to pay my homage here;
Forgot the land, the sons, the maids of Spain;
Her fate, to every free-born bosom dear;
And hailed thee, not perchance without a tear.
Now to my theme - but from thy holy haunt
Let me some remnant, some memorial bear;
Yield me one leaf of Daphne's deathless plant,
Nor let thy votary's hope be deemed an idle vaunt.

LXIV.

But ne'er didst thou, fair mount, when Greece was young,
See round thy giant base a brighter choir;
Nor e'er did Delphi, when her priestess sung
The Pythian hymn with more than mortal fire,
Behold a train more fitting to inspire
The song of love than Andalusia's maids,
Nurst in the glowing lap of soft desire:

Ah! that to these were given such peaceful shades
As Greece can still bestow, though Glory fly her glades.

LXV.

Fair is proud Seville; let her country boast
Her strength, her wealth, her site of ancient days,
But Cadiz, rising on the distant coast,
Calls forth a sweeter, though ignoble praise.
Ah, Vice! how soft are thy voluptuous ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who can 'scape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?
A cherub-hydra round us dost thou gape,
And mould to every taste thy dear delusive shape.

LXVI.

When Paphos fell by Time - accursèd Time!
The Queen who conquers all must yield to thee -
The Pleasures fled, but sought as warm a clime;
And Venus, constant to her native sea,
To nought else constant, hither deigned to flee,
And fixed her shrine within these walls of white;
Though not to one dome circumscribeth she
Her worship, but, devoted to her rite,
A thousand altars rise, for ever blazing bright.

LXVII.

From morn till night, from night till startled morn
Peeps blushing on the revel's laughing crew,
The song is heard, the rosy garland worn;
Devices quaint, and frolics ever new,
Tread on each other's kibes. A long adieu
He bids to sober joy that here sojourns:
Nought interrupts the riot, though in lieu
Of true devotion monkish incense burns,
And love and prayer unite, or rule the hour by turns.

LXVIII.

The sabbath comes, a day of blessed rest;
What hallows it upon this Christian shore?
Lo! it is sacred to a solemn feast:
Hark! heard you not the forest monarch's roar?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spouting gore
Of man and steed, o'erthrown beneath his horn:
The thronged arena shakes with shouts for more;
Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly torn,
Nor shrinks the female eye, nor e'en affects to mourn.

LXIX.

The seventh day this; the jubilee of man.
London! right well thou know'st the day of prayer:
Then thy spruce citizen, washed artizan,
And smug apprentice gulp their weekly air:
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one-horse chair,
And humblest gig, through sundry suburbs whirl;
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow, make repair;
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedestrian churl.

LXX.

Some o'er thy Thamis row the ribboned fair,
Others along the safer turnpike fly;
Some Richmond Hill ascend, some scud to Ware,
And many to the steep of Highgate hie.
Ask ye, Bæotian shades, the reason why?
'Tis to the worship of the solemn Horn,
Grasped in the holy hand of Mystery,
In whose dread name both men and maids are sworn,
And consecrate the oath with draught and dance till morn.

LXXI.

All have their fooleries; not alike are thine,

Fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea!
Soon as the matin bell proclaimeth nine,
Thy saint adorers count the rosary:
Much is the Virgin teased to shrive them free
(Well do I ween the only virgin there)
From crimes as numerous as her beadsmen be;
Then to the crowded circus forth they fare:
Young, old, high, low, at once the same diversion share.

LXXII.

The lists are oped, the spacious area cleared,
Thousands on thousands piled are seated round;
Long ere the first loud trumpet's note is heard,
No vacant space for lated wight is found:
Here dons, grandees, but chiefly dames abound,
Skilled in the ogle of a roguish eye,
Yet ever well inclined to heal the wound;
None through their cold disdain are doomed to die,
As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.

LXXIII.

Hushed is the din of tongues - on gallant steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-poised lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds,
And lowly bending to the lists advance;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance:
If in the dangerous game they shine to-day,
The crowd's loud shout, and ladies' lovely glance,
Best prize of better acts, they bear away,
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

LXXIV.

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak arrayed,
But all afoot, the light-limbed matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
The lord of lowing herds; but not before

The ground, with cautious tread, is traversed o'er,
Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart his speed:
His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor more
Can man achieve without the friendly steed -
Alas! too oft condemned for him to bear and bleed.

LXXV.

Thrice sounds the clarion; lo! the signal falls,
The den expands, and expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

LXXVI.

Sudden he stops; his eye is fixed: away,
Away, thou heedless boy! prepare the spear;
Now is thy time to perish, or display
The skill that yet may check his mad career.
With well-timed croupe the nimble coursers veer;
On foams the bull, but not unscathed he goes;
Streams from his flank the crimson torrent clear:
He flies, he wheels, distracted with his throes:
Dart follows dart; lance, lance; loud bellowings speak his woes.

LXXVII.

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,
Nor the wild plunging of the tortured horse;
Though man and man's avenging arms assail,
Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.
One gallant steed is stretched a mangled corse;
Another, hideous sight! unseamed appears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source;

Though death-struck, still his feeble frame he rears;
Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharmed he bears.

LXXVIII.

Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,
And foes disabled in the brutal fray:
And now the matadores around him play,
Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:
Once more through all he bursts his thundering way -
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge hand,
Wraps his fierce eye - 'tis past - he sinks upon the sand.

LXXIX.

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon lies.
He stops - he starts - disdaining to decline:
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,
Without a groan, without a struggle dies.
The decorated car appears on high:
The corse is piled - sweet sight for vulgar eyes;
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,
Hurl the dark bull along, scarce seen in dashing by.

LXXX.

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain:
Nurtured in blood betimes, his heart delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
What private feuds the troubled village stain!
Though now one phalanxed host should meet the foe,
Enough, alas, in humble homes remain,
To meditate 'gainst friends the secret blow,
For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm stream must flow.

LXXXI.

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His withered sentinel, duenna sage!
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,
Which the stern dotard deemed he could encage,
Have passed to darkness with the vanished age.
Who late so free as Spanish girls were seen
(Ere War uprose in his volcanic rage),
With braided tresses bounding o'er the green,
While on the gay dance shone Night's lover-loving Queen?

LXXXII.

Oh! many a time and oft had Harold loved,
Or dreamed he loved, since rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream:
And lately had he learned with truth to deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,
Full from the fount of joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

LXXXIII.

Yet to the beauteous form he was not blind,
Though now it moved him as it moves the wise;
Not that Philosophy on such a mind
E'er deigned to bend her chastely-awful eyes:
But Passion raves itself to rest, or flies;
And Vice, that digs her own voluptuous tomb,
Had buried long his hopes, no more to rise:
Pleasure's palled victim! life-abhorring gloom
Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom.

LXXXIV.

Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng;

But viewed them not with misanthropic hate;
Fain would he now have joined the dance, the song,
But who may smile that sinks beneath his fate?
Nought that he saw his sadness could abate:
Yet once he struggled 'gainst the demon's sway,
And as in Beauty's bower he pensive sate,
Poured forth this unpremeditated lay,
To charms as fair as those that soothed his happier day.

TO INEZ.

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow,
Alas! I cannot smile again:
Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

And dost thou ask what secret woe
I bear, corroding joy and youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
A pang even thou must fail to soothe?

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:
To me no pleasure Beauty brings;
Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me.

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore,
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for rest before.

What exile from himself can flee?
To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life - the demon Thought.

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
And taste of all that I forsake:
Oh! may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er, at least like me, awake!

Through many a clime 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.

What is that worst? Nay, do not ask -
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on - nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the hell that's there.

LXXXV.

Adieu, fair Cadiz! yea, a long adieu!
Who may forget how well thy walls have stood?
When all were changing, thou alone wert true,
First to be free, and last to be subdued.
And if amidst a scene, a shock so rude,
Some native blood was seen thy streets to dye,
A traitor only fell beneath the feud:
Here all were noble, save nobility;
None hugged a conqueror's chain save fallen Chivalry!

LXXXVI.

Such be the sons of Spain, and strange her fate!
They fight for freedom, who were never free;
A kingless people for a nerveless state,
Her vassals combat when their chieftains flee,
True to the veriest slaves of Treachery;
Fond of a land which gave them nought but life,
Pride points the path that leads to liberty;
Back to the struggle, baffled in the strife,
War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the knife!'

LXXXVII.

Ye, who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest strife:
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on foreign foe
Can act, is acting there against man's life:
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,
War mouldeth there each weapon to his need -
So may he guard the sister and the wife,
So may he make each curst oppressor bleed,
So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed!

LXXXVIII.

Flows there a tear of pity for the dead?
Look o'er the ravage of the reeking plain:
Look on the hands with female slaughter red;
Then to the dogs resign the unburied slain,
Then to the vulture let each corpse remain;
Albeit unworthy of the prey-bird's maw,
Let their bleached bones, and blood's unbleaching stain,
Long mark the battle-field with hideous awe:
Thus only may our sons conceive the scenes we saw!

LXXXIX.

Nor yet, alas, the dreadful work is done;
Fresh legions pour adown the Pyrenees:
It deepens still, the work is scarce begun,
Nor mortal eye the distant end foresees.
Fall'n nations gaze on Spain: if freed, she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once enchained.
Strange retribution! now Columbia's ease
Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons sustained,
While o'er the parent clime prowls Murder unrestrained.

XC.

Not all the blood at Talavera shed,

Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight,
Not Albuera lavish of the dead,
Have won for Spain her well-asserted right.
When shall her Olive-Branch be free from blight?
When shall she breathe her from the blushing toil?
How many a doubtful day shall sink in night,
Ere the Frank robber turn him from his spoil,
And Freedom's stranger-tree grow native of the soil?

XCI.

And thou, my friend! since unavailing woe
Bursts from my heart, and mingles with the strain -
Had the sword laid thee with the mighty low,
Pride might forbid e'en Friendship to complain:
But thus unlaurelled to descend in vain,
By all forgotten, save the lonely breast,
And mix unbleeding with the boasted slain,
While glory crowns so many a meaner crest!
What hadst thou done, to sink so peacefully to rest?

XCII.

Oh, known the earliest, and esteemed the most!
Dear to a heart where nought was left so dear!
Though to my hopeless days for ever lost,
In dreams deny me not to see thee here!
And Morn in secret shall renew the tear
Of Consciousness awaking to her woes,
And Fancy hover o'er thy bloodless bier,
Till my frail frame return to whence it rose,
And mourned and mourner lie united in repose.

XCIII.

Here is one fytte of Harold's pilgrimage.
Ye who of him may further seek to know,
Shall find some tidings in a future page,
If he that rhymeth now may scribble moe.

Is this too much? Stern critic, say not so:
Patience! and ye shall hear what he beheld
In other lands, where he was doomed to go:
Lands that contain the monuments of eld,
Ere Greece and Grecian arts by barbarous hands were quelled.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven! - but thou, alas,
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire -
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of war and wasting fire,
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the drear sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polished breasts bestow.

II.

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might, thy grand in soul?
Gone - glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and passed away - is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, grey flits the shade of power.

III.

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
Come - but molest not yon defenceless urn!
Look on this spot - a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
E'en gods must yield - religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's - 'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.

IV.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven -
Is't not enough, unhappy thing, to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That being, thou wouldst be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies!
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies:
That little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

V.

Or burst the vanished hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps;
He fell, and falling nations mourned around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appeared, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scattered heaps:
Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
Why, e'en the worm at last disdains her shattered cell!

VI.

Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the Palace of the Soul.
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit,
And Passion's host, that never brooked control:
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

VII.

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!

‘All that we know is, nothing can be known.’
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each hath its pang, but feeble sufferers groan
With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.
Pursue what chance or fate proclaimeth best;
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.

VIII.

Yet if, as holiest men have deemed, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we feared to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!

IX.

There, thou! - whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain -
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy memory flashes on my brain?
Well - I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 'twere bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!

X.

Here let me sit upon this mossy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken base!
Here, son of Saturn, was thy favourite throne!
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace

The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-place.
It may not be: nor even can Fancy's eye
Restore what time hath laboured to deface.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

XI.

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane
On high, where Pallas lingered, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign -
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
England! I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy freeborn men should spare what once was free;
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long reluctant brine.

XII.

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

XIII.

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia, bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose generous aid her name endears,

Tore down those remnants with a harpy's hand.
Which envious eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

XIV.

Where was thine aegis, Pallas, that appalled
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain enthralled,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wandered on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to shield before.

XV.

Cold is the heart, fair Greece, that looks on thee,
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatched thy shrinking gods to northern climes abhorred!

XVI.

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?
Little recked he of all that men regret;
No loved one now in feigned lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold stranger passed to other climes.
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

XVII.

He that has sailed upon the dark blue sea,
Has viewed at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sails set, the gallant frigate tight,
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

XVIII.

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are manned on high:
Hark to the boatswain's call, the cheering cry,
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides
Or schoolboy midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe, as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

XIX.

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks,
Silent and feared by all: not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever baulks
Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve
From law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

XX.

Blow, swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale,

Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sails hauled down to halt for logs like these!

XXI.

The moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand!
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love:
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure featly move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

XXII.

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric, on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-eyed maid and dusky Moor,
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase:
But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII.

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.

Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah, happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

XXIV.

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possessed
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV.

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean:
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

XXVI.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less

Of all that flattered, followed, sought, and sued:
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII.

More blest the life of godly eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at eve upon the giant height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been,
Will wistful linger on that hallowed spot;
Then slowly tear him from the witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII.

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well-known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Cooped in their wingèd sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall, and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn - lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX.

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a haven smiles,
Though the fair goddess long has ceased to weep,
And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dared prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essayed the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urged from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the nymph-queen doubly sighed.

XXX.

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy youth, beware!
A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou mayst find a new Calypso there.
Sweet Florence! could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But checked by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine.

XXXI.

Thus Harold deemed, as on that lady's eye
He looked, and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper no more,
And ne'er again the boy his bosom sought:
Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
Well deemed the little god his ancient sway was o'er.

XXXII.

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 'twas said, still sighed to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hailed with real or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their law:
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvelled that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feigned at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger dames.

XXXIII.

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,

Now masked by silence or withheld by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turned aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lover's whining crew.

XXXIV.

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
What careth she for hearts when once possessed?
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes,
But not too humbly, or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes;
Disguise e'en tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.

XXXV.

'Tis an old lesson: Time approves it true,
And those who know it best deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early hope is crossed,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

XXXVI.

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led -

Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought;
Or e'er in new Utopias were read:
To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

XXXVII.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still;
Though always changing, in her aspect mild:
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-weaned, though not her favoured child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polished dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have marked her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

XXXVIII.

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose;
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes,
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

XXXIX.

Childe Harold sailed, and passed the barren spot
Where sad Penelope o'erlooked the wave;
And onward viewed the mount, not yet forgot,
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
Dark Sappho! could not verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?

If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's children may aspire.

XL.

'Twas on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve,
Childe Harold hailed Leucadia's cape afar;
A spot he longed to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanished war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar:
Mark them unmoved, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant fight,
But loathed the bravo's trade, and laughed at martial wight.

XLI.

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hailed the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deemed he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watched the billows' melancholy flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seemed his eye, and smooth his pallid front.

XLII.

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania's hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak,
Robed half in mist, bedewed with snowy rills,
Arrayed in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer;
Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak,
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the closing year.

XLIII.

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu:
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to view:
His breast was armed 'gainst fate, his wants were few:
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet:
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast; and welcomed summer's heat.

XLIV.

Here the red cross, for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoffed at by the circumcised,
Forgets that pride to pampered priesthood dear;
Churchman and votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross.

XLV.

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter, bring
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose,
Now, like the hands that reared them, withering;
Imperial anarchs, doubling human woes!
God! was thy globe ordained for such to win and lose?

XLVI.

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,

E'en to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold passed o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales:
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground, and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

XLVII.

He passed bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

XLVIII.

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favoured spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX.

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deemed of dignity,

The convent's white walls glisten fair on high;
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer: the passer-by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

L.

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:
The plain is far beneath - oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon, the eve away.

LI.

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
Chimera's alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain fir
Nodding above; behold black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none.

LII.

No city's towers pollute the lovely view;
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
Veiled by the screen of hills: here men are few,
Scanty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot;
But, peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth: and, pensive o'er his scattered flock,
The little shepherd in his white capote

Doth lean his boyish form along the rock,
Or in his cave awaits the tempest's short-lived shock.

LIII.

Oh! where, Dodona, is thine aged grove,
Prophetic fount, and oracle divine?
What valley echoed the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the Thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten - and shall man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, fool! the fate of gods may well be thine:
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak,
When nations, tongues, and worlds must sink beneath the stroke?

LIV.

Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains fail;
Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale
As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye:
E'en on a plain no humble beauties lie,
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,
And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moonbeam sleep in Midnight's solemn trance.

LV.

The sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
The Laos wide and fierce came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When, down the steep banks winding wearily
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sighed along the lengthening glen.

LVI.

He passed the sacred harem's silent tower,
And underneath the wide o'erarching gate
Surveyed the dwelling of this chief of power
Where all around proclaimed his high estate.
Amidst no common pomp the despot sate,
While busy preparation shook the court;
Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and santons wait;
Within, a palace, and without a fort,
Here men of every clime appear to make resort.

LVII.

Richly caparisoned, a ready row
Of armèd horse, and many a warlike store,
Circled the wide-extending court below;
Above, strange groups adorned the corridor;
And ofttimes through the area's echoing door,
Some high-capped Tartar spurred his steed away;
The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Moor,
Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day.

LVIII.

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroidered garments, fair to see:
The crimson-scarfèd men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive; the lively, supple Greek;
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek,

LIX.

Are mixed conspicuous: some recline in groups,

Scanning the motley scene that varies round;
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops,
And some that smoke, and some that play are found;
Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground;
Half-whispering there the Greek is heard to prate;
Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound,
The muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
'There is no god but God! - to prayer - lo! God is great!'

LX.

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain.
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assumed the rule again:
Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepared and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant gallery now seemed made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
As page and slave anon were passing out and in.

LXI.

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart
And scarce permitted, guarded, veiled, to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove;
For, not unhappy in her master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares.

LXII.

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,

Ali reclined, a man of war and woes:
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

LXIII.

It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard
Ill suits the passions which belong to youth:
Love conquers age - so Hafiz hath averred,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth -
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of ruth,
Beseeming all men ill, but most the man
In years, have marked him with a tiger's tooth:
Blood follows blood, and through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

LXIV.

Mid many things most new to ear and eye,
The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
And gazed around on Moslem luxury,
Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
And were it humbler, it in sooth were sweet;
But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

LXV.

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were those virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous need:
Their wrath how deadly! but their friendship sure,

When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed,
Unshaken rushing on where'er their chief may lead.

LXVI.

Childe Harold saw them in their chieftain's tower,
Thronging to war in splendour and success;
And after viewed them, when, within their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress;
That saddening hour when bad men hotlier press:
But these did shelter him beneath their roof,
When less barbarians would have cheered him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof -
In aught that tries the heart how few withstand the proof!

LXVII.

It chanced that adverse winds once drove his bark
Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn more;
Yet for awhile the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where treachery might lurk:
At length they ventured forth, though doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient butcher-work.

LXVIII.

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretched the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dangerous swamp,
Kinder than polished slaves, though not so bland,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And filled the bowl, and trimmed the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare: though homely, all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp -
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at least the bad.

LXIX.

It came to pass, that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain land,
Combined marauders half-way barred egress,
And wasted far and near with glaive and brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania forest wide,
In war well-seasoned, and with labours tanned,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his farther bank Ætolia's wolds espied.

LXX.

Where lone Utraikey forms its circling cove,
And weary waves retire to gleam at rest,
How brown the foliage of the green hill's grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's breast,
As winds come whispering lightly from the west,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's serene:
Here Harold was received a welcome guest;
Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from night's soft presence glean.

LXXI.

On the smooth shore the night-fires brightly blazed,
The feast was done, the red wine circling fast,
And he that unawares had there ygazed
With gaping wonderment had stared aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour was past,
The native revels of the troop began;
Each palikar his sabre from him cast,
And bounding hand in hand, man linked to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long danced the kirtled clan.

LXXII.

Childe Harold at a little distance stood,

And viewed, but not displeased, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee:
And as the flames along their faces gleamed,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles streamed,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half screamed:

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of war;
All the sons of the mountains arise at the note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
To his snowy camese and his shaggy capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream from the rock.

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the chase:
But those scarves of blood-red shall be redder, before
The sabre is sheathed and the battle is o'er.

Then the pirates of Parga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on shore.

I ask not the pleasure that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must buy:
Shall win the young bride with her long flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall tear.
I love the fair face of the maid in her youth;
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall soothe:

Let her bring from her chamber the many-toned lyre,
And sing us a song on the fall of her sire.

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquered, the conqueror's yell;
The roofs that we fired, and the plunder we shared,
The wealthy we slaughtered, the lovely we spared.

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier;
Since the days of our prophet, the crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pasha.

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped,
Let the yellow-haired Giaours view his horsetail with dread;
When his Delhis come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

Selictar! unsheath then our chief's scimitar:
Tambourgi! thy larum gives promise of war.
Ye mountains that see us descend to the shore,
Shall view us as victors, or view us no more!

LXXIII.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral strait -
Oh, who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

LXXIV.

Spirit of Freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Couldst thou forbode the dismal hour which now

Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned.

LXXV.

In all save form alone, how changed! and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
Who would but deem their bosom burned anew
With thy unquenched beam, lost Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers' heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's mournful page.

LXXVI.

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No!
True, they may lay your proud despoilers low,
But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.
Shades of the Helots! triumph o'er your foe:
Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thy years of shame.

LXXVII.

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
Or Wahab's rebel brood, who dared divest
The Prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,

May wind their path of blood along the West;
But ne'er will Freedom seek this fated soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

LXXVIII.

Yet mark their mirth - ere lenten days begin,
That penance which their holy rites prepare
To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin,
By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

LXXIX.

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,
O Stamboul! once the empress of their reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain:
(Alas! her woes will still pervade my strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must feign;
Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard such song,
As wooed the eye, and thrilled the Bosphorus along.

LXXX.

Loud was the lightsome tumult on the shore;
Oft Music changed, but never ceased her tone,
And timely echoed back the measured oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:
The Queen of tides on high consenting shone;
And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
'Twas as if, darting from her heavenly throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
Till sparkling billows seemed to light the banks they lave.

LXXXI.

Glanced many a light caique along the foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of the land,
No thought had man or maid of rest or home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling hand
Exchanged the look few bosoms may withstand,
Or gently pressed, returned the pressure still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeemed Life's years of ill!

LXXXII.

But, midst the throng in merry masquerade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain,
E'en through the closest searment half-betrayed?
To such the gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

LXXXIII.

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot can boast:
Not such as prate of war but skulk in peace,
The bondsman's peace, who sighs for all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
Ah, Greece! they love thee least who owe thee most -
Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record
Of hero sires, who shame thy now degenerate horde!

LXXXIV.

When riseth Lacedæmon's hardihood,

When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,
When Athens' children are with hearts endued,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men,
Then mayst thou be restored; but not till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust: and when
Can man its shattered splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?

LXXXV.

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and godlike men, art thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now;
Thy fanes, thy temples to the surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough:
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded worth;

LXXXVI.

Save where some solitary column mourns
Above its prostrate brethren of the cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten grave,
Where the grey stones and unmolested grass
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
While strangers only not regardless pass,
Lingering like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh 'Alas!'

LXXXVII.

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild:
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olives ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honeyed wealth Hymettus yields;

There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

LXXXVIII.

Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold,
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

LXXXIX.

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign lord -
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame;
The battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which uttered, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career.

XC.

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene - what now remaineth here?
What sacred trophy marks the hallowed ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?

The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger! spurns around.

XCi.

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng:
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore:
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

XCII.

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;
He that is lonely, hither let him roam,
And gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth;
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side,
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

XCIII.

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste:
But spare its relics - let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed.
Revere the remnants nations once revered;
So may our country's name be undisgraced,
So mayst thou prosper where thy youth was reared,
By every honest joy of love and life endeared!

XCIV.

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hath soothed thine idlesse with inglorious lays,
Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder minstrels in these later days:
To such resign the strife for fading bays -
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen reproach nor partial praise,
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve,
And none are left to please where none are left to love.

XCV.

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!
Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my being? thou hast ceased to be!
Nor stayed to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see -
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er returned to find fresh cause to roam!

XCVI.

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death, thou hast:
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend;
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatched the little joy that life had yet to lend.

XCVII.

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,

And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak!
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique;
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

XCVIII.

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.
Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
O'er hearts divided and o'er hopes destroyed:
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoyed,
And with the ills of eld mine earlier years alloyed.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE THIRD.

I.

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes, they smiled,
And then we parted, - not as now we part,
But with a hope. -

Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II.

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III.

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life - where not a flower appears.

IV.

Since my young days of passion - joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar: it may be, that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness - so it fling
Forgetfulness around me - it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V.

He who, grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI.

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.

VII.

Yet must I think less wildly: I have thought

Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time cannot abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing fate.

VIII.

Something too much of this: but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long-absent Harold reappears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX.

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual; but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

X.

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,

That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI.

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

XII.

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled,
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebelled;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome

Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV.

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight,
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV.

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI.

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With naught of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild - as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck -
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

XVII.

Stop! for thy tread is on an empire's dust!
An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be; -
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

XVIII.

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through:
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

XIX.

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit,
And foam in fetters, but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make One submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving thralldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; prove before ye praise!

XX.

If not, o'er one fall'n despot boast no more!

In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.

Did ye not hear it? - No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.
But hark! - that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is - it is - the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII.

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound, the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;

And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated: who would guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

XXV.

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips - 'The foe! They come! they come!'

XXVI.

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose,
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils

The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears.

XXVII.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, - alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, - the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse, - friend, foe, - in one red burial blent!

XXIX.

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when showered
The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lowered,
They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!

XXX.

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wild field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI.

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honoured, but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

XXXII.

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall:
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on: **XXXIII.**

E'en as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,

The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shattered guise, and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

XXXIV.

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison, - a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were
As nothing did we die; but life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life, - say, would he name threescore?

XXXV.

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man:
They are enough: and if thy tale be true,
Thou, who didst grudge him e'en that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say,
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!'
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI.

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixed
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixed;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;

For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to reassume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII.

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII.

Oh, more or less than man - in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield:
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skilled,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX.

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;
When Fortune fled her spoiled and favourite child,
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL.

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steeled thee on to far too show
That just habitual scorn, which could condemn
Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turned unto thine overthrow:
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.

XLI.

If, like a tower upon a headland rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had helped to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

XLII.

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And there hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul, which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII.

This makes the madmen who have made men mad

By their contagion! Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule: **XLIV.**

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

XLV.

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

XLVI.

Away with these; true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and dells,

Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, corn-field, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From grey but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

XLVII.

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles passed below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII.

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have
But History's purchased page to call them great?
A wider space, an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

XLIX.

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L.

But thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever,
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict, - then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me
Even now what wants thy stream? - that it should Lethe be.

LI.

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,
But these and half their fame have passed away,
And Slaughter heaped on high his weltering ranks:
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide washed down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glassed with its dancing light the sunny ray;
But o'er the blackened memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

LII.

Thus Harold inly said, and passed along,
Yet not insensible to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made e'en exile dear:
Though on his brow were graven lines austere,
And tranquil sternness which had ta'en the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

LIII.

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days

Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust
Hath weaned it from all worldlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV.

And he had learned to love, - I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood, -
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipped affections have to grow,
In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV.

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above disguise,
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine.
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine,
And hills all rich with blossomed trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,

And scattered cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strewed a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert thou with me!

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of grey,
And many a rock which steeply lours,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage bowers:
But one thing want these banks of Rhine, -
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must withered be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherished them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine e'en here,
When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
And know'st them gathered by the Rhine,
And offered from my heart to thine!

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round;
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To Nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's, - but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

LVI.

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career, -
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

LVIII.

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light;
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watched along the plain;
But Peace destroyed what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain -
On which the iron shower for years had poured in vain.

LIX.

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long, delighted,
The stranger fain would linger on his way;
Thine is a scene alike where souls united

Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, not too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow earth as autumn to the year.

LX.

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is coloured by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise - more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft; - the glories of old days.

LXI.

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though empires near them fall.

LXII.

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche - the thunderbolt of snow!

All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gathers around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

LXIII.

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be passed in vain, -
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument; - the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roamed, and shrieked each wandering ghost.

LXIV.

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entailed Corruption; they no land
Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making king's rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

LXV.

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A grey and grief-worn aspect of old days
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild bewildered gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands,
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levelled Aventicum, hath strewed her subject lands.

LXVI.

And there - oh! sweet and sacred be the name! -
Julia - the daughter, the devoted - gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust.

LXVII.

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth,
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII.

Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

LXIX.

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind;

All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In one hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX.

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul, turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be.

LXXI.

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake; -
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?

LXXII.

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me,
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see

Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXIII.

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert Past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I felt to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

LXXIV.

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm, -
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

LXXV.

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm

Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

LXXVI.

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for awhile - a passing guest,
Where he became a being, - whose desire
Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII.

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII.

His love was passion's essence - as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamoured, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of Ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

LXXIX.

This breathed itself to life in Julie, this
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet:
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest,
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.

LXXX.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was frenzied, - wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was frenzied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI.

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
Did he not this for France, which lay before
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?
Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII.

They made themselves a fearful monument!

The wreck of old opinions - things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refilled,
As heretofore, because ambition was self-willed.

LXXXIII.

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
On one another; Pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in Oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourished with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV.

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
Silence, but not submission: in his lair
Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come, - the power
To punish or forgive - in one we shall be slower.

LXXXV.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.

This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI.

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen.
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more; **LXXXVII.**

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII.

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven,
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, - 'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

LXXXIX.

All heaven and earth are still - though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: -
All heaven and earth are still: from the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
All is centered in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are least alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; - 'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI.

Nor vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

XCII.

The sky is changed! - and such a change! O night,

And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue;
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII.

And this is in the night: - Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight -
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black, - and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters - war within themselves to wage.

XCV.

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand;
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunderbolts from hand to hand,

Flashing and cast around: of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings, as if he did understand
That in such gaps as desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

XCVI.

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye,
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, - if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII.

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me, - could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe - into one word,
And that one word were lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

XCVIII.

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb, -
And glowing into day: we may resume
The march of our existence: and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room

And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

XCIX.

Clarens! sweet Clarens! birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;
Thy trees take root in love; the snows above
The very glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.

C.

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, -
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light, - so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

CI.

All things are here of him; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude.

CII.

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-formed and many coloured things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

CIII.

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit: he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

CIV.

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne.

CV.

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes

Of names which unto you bequeathed a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven, again assailed, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CVI.

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, - gay, grave, sage, or wild, -
Historian, bard, philosopher combined:
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule, - which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, -
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony, - that master spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII.

Yet, peace be with their ashes, - for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge, far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made

Known unto all, - or hope and dread allayed
By slumber on one pillow, in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decayed;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

CIX.

But let me quit man's works, again to read
His Maker's spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

CX.

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still,
The fount at which the panting mind assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI.

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices: - to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love or hate, or aught, -
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal, -

Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul: - No matter, - it is taught.

CXII.

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile, -
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth, - but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone, - remembered or forgot.

CXIII.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee, -
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me, -
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, - hopes which will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the falling: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they seem, -
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

CXV.

My daughter! with thy name this song begun -
My daughter! with thy name this much shall end -
I see thee not, I hear thee not, - but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart, when mine is cold, -
A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

CXVI.

To aid thy mind's development, - to watch
Thy dawn of little joys, - to sit and see
Almost thy very growth, - to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects, wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss, -
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me
Yet this was in my nature: - As it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

CXVII.

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim:
Though the grave closed between us, - 'twere the same,
I know that thou wilt love me: though to drain
My blood from out thy being were an aim,
And an attainment, - all would be in vain, -
Still thou wouldst love me, still that more than life retain.

CXVIII.

The child of love, - though born in bitterness,

And nurtured in convulsion. Of thy sire
These were the elements, and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee; but thy fire
Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou mightst have been to me!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE: CANTO THE FOURTH.

I.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Looked to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was; her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

III.

In Venice, Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone - but beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade - but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanished sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away -
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore.

V.

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

VII.

I saw or dreamed of such, - but let them go -

They came like truth, and disappeared like dreams;
And whatso'er they were - are now but so;
I could replace them if I would: still teems
My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found;
Let these too go - for waking reason deems
Such overweening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

VIII.

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A country with - ay, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

IX.

Perhaps I loved it well: and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it - if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language: if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline, -
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar.

X.

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honoured by the nations - let it be -
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me -

‘Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.’
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted, - they have torn me, and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

XI.

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And, annual marriage now no more renewed,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,
Over the proud place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequalled dower.

XII.

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns -
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
From power’s high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosened from the mountain’s belt:
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
The octogenarian chief, Byzantium’s conquering foe.

XIII.

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria’s menace come to pass?
Are they not bridled? - Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a seaweed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun,

Even in Destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV.

In youth she was all glory, - a new Tyre, -
Her very byword sprung from victory,
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite:
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

XV.

Statues of glass - all shivered - the long file
Of her dead doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthrals,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

XVI.

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermastered victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands - his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt - he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII.

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations, - most of all,
Albion! to thee: the Ocean Queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII.

I loved her from my boyhood: she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,
Had stamped her image in me, and e'en so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance e'en dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX.

I can repeople with the past - and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chastened down, enough;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

XX.

But from their nature will the tannen grow

Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, grey granite, into life it came,
And grew a giant tree; - the mind may grow the same.

XXI.

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolate bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence. Not bestowed
In vain should such examples be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear, - it is but for a day.

XXII.

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed,
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends: - Some, with hope replenished and rebuoyed,
Return to whence they came - with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bowed and bent,
Wax grey and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were formed to sink or climb.

XXIII.

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring

Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound -
A tone of music - summer's eve - or spring -
A flower - the wind - the ocean - which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound.

XXIV.

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renewed, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesigned,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind, -
The cold - the changed - perchance the dead - anew,
The mourned, the loved, the lost - too many! - yet how few!

XXV.

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which was the mightiest in its old command,
And is the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave - the lords of earth and sea.

XXVI.

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;

Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII.

The moon is up, and yet it is not night -
Sunset divides the sky with her - a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be -
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,
Where the day joins the past eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air - an island of the blest!

XXVIII.

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaimed her order: - gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within it glows,

XXIX.

Filled with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till - 'tis gone - and all is grey.

XXX.

There is a tomb in Arquà; - reared in air,
Pillared in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes:
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI.

They keep his dust in Arquà, where he died;
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 'tis their pride -
An honest pride - and let it be their praise,
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain,
Than if a pyramid formed his monumental fane.

XXXII.

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain displayed,
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday.

XXXIII.

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers

And shining in the brawling brook, where-by,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality,
If from society we learn to live,
'Tis solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone - man with his God must strive:

XXXIV.

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest day,
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV.

Ferrara! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seat's
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impelled, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI.

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
Hark to his strain! and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earned Torquato's fame,
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell.

The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scattered the clouds away - and on that name attend

XXXVII.

The tears and praises of all time, while thine
Would rot in its oblivion - in the sink
Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing; but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn -
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou mad'st to mourn:

XXXVIII.

Thou! formed to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
Hadst a more splendid trough, and wider sty:
He! with a glory round his furrowed brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow
No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth - monotony in wire!

XXXIX.

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 'twas his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aimed with their poisoned arrows - but to miss.
Oh, victor unsurpassed in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng

Compose a mind like thine? Though all in one
Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a sun.

XL.

Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan father's comedy divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
The Southern Scott, the minstrel who called forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

XLI.

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurel's mimicked leaves;
Nor was the ominous element unjust,
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
Know that the lightning sanctifies below
Whate'er it strikes; - yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII.

Italia! O Italia! thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIII.

Then mightst thou more appal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armèd torrents poured
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nationed spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV.

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
The Roman friend of Rome's least mortal mind,
The friend of Tully: as my bark did skim
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
Came Megara before me, and behind
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined
Along the prow, and saw all these unite
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight;

XLV.

For time hath not rebuilt them, but upreared
Barbaric dwellings on their shattered site,
Which only make more mourned and more endeared
The few last rays of their far-scattered light,
And the crushed relics of their vanished might.
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
These sepulchres of cities, which excite
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI.

That page is now before me, and on mine

His country's ruin added to the mass
Of perished states he mourned in their decline,
And I in desolation: all that was
Of then destruction is; and now, alas!
Rome - Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
The skeleton of her Titanic form,
Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII.

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts! as once of Arms; thy hand
Was then our Guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our religion! whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentant of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII.

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps,
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new morn.

XLIX.

There, too, the goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty; we inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality; the veil

Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond idolaters of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould:

L.

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there - for ever there -
Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives, and would not depart.
Away! - there need no words, nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly - we have eyes:
Blood, pulse, and breast, confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.

LI.

Appearedst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War?
And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn,
Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!

LII.

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love,
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express, or to improve,
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest! but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us; - let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create

From what has been, or might be, things which grow,
Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

LIII.

I leave to learnèd fingers, and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable:
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell;
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV.

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
E'en in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: - here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.

LV.

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation: - Italy!
Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin: - thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVII.

But where repose the all Etruscan three -
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit! he
Of the Hundred Tales of love - where did they lay
Their bones, distinguished from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust?

LVIII.

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore;
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled - not thine own.

LIX.

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeathed
His dust, - and lies it not her great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No; - even his tomb
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigots' wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for whom?

LX.

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust;

Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
Did but of Rome's best son remind her more:
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire! honoured sleeps
The immortal exile; - Arqua, too, her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banished dead, and weeps.

LX.

What is her pyramid of precious stones?
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? the momentary dew
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently preste with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI.

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
There be more marvels yet - but not for mine;
For I have been accustomed to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields
Than Art in galleries: though a work divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII.

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles

Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain, with legions scattered o'er,

LXIII.

Like to a forest felled by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An earthquake reeled unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding-sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet.

LXIV.

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
The motions of their vessel: Nature's law,
In them suspended, recked not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no words.

LXV.

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en -
A little rill of scanty stream and bed -
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;

And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red.

LXVI.

But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes; the purest god of gentle waters!
And most serene of aspect, and most clear:
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters,
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

LXVII.

And on thy happy shore a temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scattered water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

LXVIII.

Pass not unblest the genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 'tis his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism, - 'tis to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX.

The roar of waters! - from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX.

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald. How profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

LXXI.

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings through the vale: - Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread, - a matchless cataract,

LXXII.

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,

From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a deathbed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn:
Resembling, mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII.

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which - had I not before
Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
The thundering lawine - might be worshipped more;
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV.

The Acroceraunian mountains of old name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame,
For still they soared unutterably high:
I've looked on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height displayed,
Not now in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

LXXV.

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing: not in vain
May he who will his recollections rake,

And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhorred
Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
The drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

LXXVI.

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turned
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught
My mind to meditate what then it learned,
Yet such the fixed inveteracy wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That, with the freshness wearing out before
My mind could relish what it might have sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

LXXVII.

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel, thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse,
Although no deeper moralist rehearse
Our little life, nor bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier satirist the conscience pierce,
Awakening without wounding the touched heart,
Yet fare thee well - upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII.

O Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!

Whose agonies are evils of a day -
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

LXXX.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dwelt upon the seven-hilled city's pride:
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site; -
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'Here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

LXXXI.

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt, and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath its chart, the stars their map;
And knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections: now we clap
Our hands, and cry, 'Eureka!' it is clear -
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII.

Alas, the lofty city! and alas
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! But these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside - decay.
Alas for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII.

O thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; - thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates - Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown -

LXXXIV.

The dictatorial wreath, - couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named eternal, and arrayed
Her warriors but to conquer - she who veiled
Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed
Until the o'er-canopied horizon failed,
Her rushing wings - Oh! she who was almighty hailed!

LXXXV.

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,

The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell! - he
Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne
Down to a block - immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! But beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI.

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crowned him, on the self-same day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

LXXXVII.

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in
The austere form of naked majesty,
Thou who beheldest, mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII.

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,

Thou standest: - Mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder sucked from thy wild teat,
Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs blacked with lightning - dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX.

Thou dost; - but all thy foster-babes are dead -
The men of iron; and the world hath reared
Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled
In imitation of the things they feared,
And fought and conquered, and the same course steered,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could, the same supremacy have neared,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave,

XC.

The fool of false dominion - and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeemed
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold.
Alcides with the distaff now he seemed
At Cleopatra's feet, and now himself he beamed.

XCI.

And came, and saw, and conquered. But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a trained falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seemed to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness - vanity:

Coquettish in ambition, still he aimed
At what? Can he avouch, or answer what he claimed?

XCII.

And would be all or nothing - nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread: For this the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! - Renew thy rainbow, God!

XCIII.

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weighed in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

XCIV.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCIV.

I speak not of men's creeds - they rest between
Man and his Maker - but of things allowed,
Averred, and known, - and daily, hourly seen -
The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed,
And the intent of tyranny avowed,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII.

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamant wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips Life's tree, and dooms man's worst - his second fall.

XCVIII.

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,

Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind;
Thy trumpet-voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, - and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX.

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown:
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so locked, so hid? - A woman's grave.

C.

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's - or more - a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived - how loved - how died she? Was she not
So honoured - and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI.

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,

Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy; or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? - for such the affections are.

CII.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites - early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII.

Perchance she died in age - surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children - with the silver grey
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome - But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know - Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!

CIV.

I know not why - but standing thus by thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou Tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone

Till I had bodied forth the heated mind,
Forms from the floating wreck which ruin leaves behind;

CV.

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI.

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owl's cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answer each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes, all glistening grey and bright,
And sailing pinions. - Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? - let me not number mine.

CVII.

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescoes steeped
In subterranean damps, where the owl peeped,
Deeming it midnight: - Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reaped
From her research hath been, that these are walls -
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

CVIII.

There is the moral of all human tales:
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory - when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption - barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but one page, - 'tis better written here,
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask - Away with words! draw near,

CIX.

Admire, exult - despise - laugh, weep - for here
There is such matter for all feeling: - Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were filled!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX.

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's? No; 'tis that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace,
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI.

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,

And looking to the stars; they had contained
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned,
The Roman globe, for after none sustained
But yielded back his conquests: - he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and unstained
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues - still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII.

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep
Tarpeian - fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the traitor's leap
Cured all ambition? Did the Conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep -
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes - burns with Cicero!

CXIII.

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer failed;
But long before had Freedom's face been veiled,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes:
Till every lawless soldier who assailed
Trode on the trembling Senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV.

Then turn we to our latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame -
The friend of Petrarch - hope of Italy -

Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be -
The forum's champion, and the people's chief -
Her new-born Numa thou, with reign, alas! too brief.

CXV.

Egeria! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
Or wert, - a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI.

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prisoned in marble, bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII.

Fantastically tangled; the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;

The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

CXVIII.

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy, and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love - the earliest oracle!

CXIX.

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart -
The dull satiety which all destroys -
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy?

CXX.

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert: whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI.

O Love! no habitant of earth thou art -
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee, -
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see,
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquenched soul - parched - wearied - wrung - and riven.

CXXII.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation; - where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreached Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again.

CXXIII.

Who loves, raves - 'tis youth's frenzy - but the cure
Is bitterer still; as charm by charm unwinds
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize - wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV.

We wither from our youth, we gasp away -

Sick - sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first -
But all too late, - so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice - 'tis the same -
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst -
For all are meteors with a different name,
And death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV.

Few - none - find what they love or could have loved:
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies - but to recur, ere long,
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns hope to dust - the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI.

Our life is a false nature - 'tis not in
The harmony of things, - this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew -
Disease, death, bondage, all the woes we see -
And worse, the woes we see not - which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII.

Yet let us ponder boldly - 'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought - our last and only place
Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine:

Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chained and tortured - cabined, cribbed, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

CXXVIII.

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illumine
This long explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX.

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX.

O Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled -
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, - sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists, from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer -

Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI.

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years - though few, yet full of fate:
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain - shall they not mourn?

CXXXII.

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancients paid thee homage long -
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution - just,
Had it but been from hands less near - in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? - Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII.

It is not that I may not have incurred
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound.
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it - thou shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if I have not taken for the sake -
But let that pass - I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV.

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV.

That curse shall be forgiveness. - Have I not -
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! -
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:

My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain,
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire:
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII.

The seal is set. - Now welcome, thou dread Power
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear:
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow-man.
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. - Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms - on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand - his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low -

And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him: he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

CXLI.

He heard it, but he heeded not - his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother - he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday -
All this rushed with his blood - Shall he expire,
And unavenged? - Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

CXLII.

But here, where murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roared or murmured like a mountain-stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much - and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void - seats crushed, walls bowed,
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII.

A ruin - yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been reared;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is neared:

It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all, years, man, have reft away.

CXLIV.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air,
The garland-forest, which the grey walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene, but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot - 'tis on their dust ye tread.

CXLV.

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls - the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den - of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI.

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime -
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus - spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes - glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? - Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee - sanctuary and home
Of art and piety - Pantheon! - pride of Rome!

CXLVII.

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts!
Despoiled yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts -
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honoured forms, whose busts around them close.

CXLVIII.

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadowed on my sight -
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so: I see them full and plain -
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar: - but what doth she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX.

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
Where on the heart and from the heart we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves -
What may the fruit be yet? - I know not - Cain was Eve's.

CL.

But here youth offers to old age the food,

The milk of his own gift: - it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: - from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! heaven's realm holds no such tide.

CLI.

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds: - Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII.

Turn to the mole which Hadrian reared on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travelled phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model, doomed the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunk ashes, raise this dome: How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

CLIII.

But lo! the dome - the vast and wondrous dome,
To which Diana's marvel was a cell -
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle -

Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have surveyed
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem prayed;

CLIV.

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
Standest alone - with nothing like to thee -
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true,
Since Zion's desolation, when that he
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV.

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessened; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI.

Thou movest - but increasing with th' advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows - but grows to harmonise -
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles - richer painting - shrines where flame
The lamps of gold - and haughty dome which vies

In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground - and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII.

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break
To separate contemplation, the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,
That ask the eye - so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart.

CLVIII.

Not by its fault - but thine: Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp - and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; e'en so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX.

Then pause and be enlightened; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX.

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoön's torture dignifying pain -
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending: - Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenomed chain
Rivets the living links, - the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI.

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light -
The Sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot - the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII.

But in his delicate form - a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Longed for a deathless lover from above,
And maddened in that vision - are expressed
All that ideal beauty ever blessed
The mind within its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest -
A ray of immortality - and stood
Starlike, around, until they gathered to a god?

CLXIII.

And if it be Prometheus stole from heaven

The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath arrayed
With an eternal glory - which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought
And Time himself hath hallowed it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust - nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 'twas wrought.

CLXIV.

But where is he, the pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more - these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: - if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be classed
With forms which live and suffer - let that pass -
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV.

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Thro' which all things grow phantoms; and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glowed,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allowed
To hover on the verge of darkness; rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI.

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the frame
Shall be resolved to something less than this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,

And wipe the dust from off the idle name
We never more shall hear, - but never more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough, in sooth, that once we bore
These fardels of the heart - the heart whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII.

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long, low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground.
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII.

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hushed that pang for ever: with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which filled the imperial isles so full it seemed to cloy.

CLXIX.

Peasants bring forth in safety. - Can it be,
O thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for One; for she had poured
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. - Thou, too, lonely lord,

And desolate consort - vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX.

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made:
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust
The fair-haired Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did entrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deemed
Our children should obey her child, and blessed
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seemed
Like star to shepherd's eyes; 'twas but a meteor beamed.

CLXXI.

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstrung
Nations have armed in madness, the strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late, -

CLXXII.

These might have been her destiny; but no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother - and now there!
How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
Is linked the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and oppressed
The land which loved thee so, that none could love thee best.

CLXXIII.

Lo, Nemi! navelled in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And, calm as cherished hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV.

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; - and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose reascending star
Rose o'er an empire, - but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; - and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight,
The Sabine farm was tilled, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV.

But I forget. - My pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part, - so let it be, -
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea:
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine rolled

CLXXVI.

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years -

Long, though not very many - since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run,
We have had our reward - and it is here;
That we can yet feel gladdened by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII.

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements! - in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted - can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

CLXXVIII.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

CLXXIX.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean - roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin - his control
Stops with the shore; - upon the watery plain

The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

CLXXX.

His steps are not upon thy paths, - thy fields
Are not a spoil for him, - thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: - there let him lay.

CLXXXI.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals.
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee -
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free
And many a tyrant since: their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play -

Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow -
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed - in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; - boundless, endless, and sublime -
The image of Eternity - the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee: thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers - they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror - 'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane - as I do here.

CLXXXV.

My task is done - my song hath ceased - my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit
My midnight lamp - and what is writ, is writ -
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been - and my visions flit
Less palpably before me - and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been -
A sound which makes us linger; yet, farewell!
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop shell;
Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain,
If such there were - with you, the moral of his strain.

HEBREW MELODIES



This book of songs with lyrics was first published in 1815, containing works set to Jewish tunes by Isaac Nathan, as well as some songs by Byron alone. Although the first edition was expensive, costing one guinea, over 10,000 copies were sold. Among the various poems, the famous melodies *She Walks in Beauty* and *The Destruction of Sennacherib* are included.

HEBREW MELODIES.

BY LORD BYRON.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1815.

The first edition

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Byron, close to the time of publication

INTRODUCTION

According to the “Advertisement” prefixed to Murray’s First Edition of the *Hebrew Melodies*, London, 1815 (the date, January, 1815, was appended in 1832), the “poems were written at the request of the author’s friend, the Hon. D. Kinnaird, for a selection of Hebrew Melodies, and have been published, with the music, arranged by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan.”

Byron’s engagement to Miss Milbanke took place in September, 1814, and the remainder of the year was passed in London, at his chambers in the Albany. The so-called *Hebrew Melodies* were, probably, begun in the late autumn of that year, and were certainly finished at Seaham, after his marriage had taken place, in January-February, 1815. It is a natural and pardonable conjecture that Byron took to writing sacred or, at any rate, scriptural verses by way of giving pleasure and doing honour to his future wife, “the girl who gave to song What gold could never buy.” They were, so to speak, the first-fruits of a seemlier muse.

It is probable that the greater number of these poems were in MS. before it occurred to Byron’s friend and banker, the Honble. Douglas James William Kinnaird (1788-1830), to make him known to Isaac Nathan (1792-1864), a youthful composer of “musical farces and operatic works,” who had been destined by his parents for the Hebrew priesthood, but had broken away, and, after some struggles, succeeded in qualifying himself as a musician.

Byron took a fancy to Nathan, and presented him with the copyright of his “poetical effusions,” on the understanding that they were to be set to music and sung in public by John Braham. “Professional occupations” prevented Braham from fulfilling his part of the engagement, but a guinea folio (Part. I.) (*Selections of Hebrew Melodies, Ancient and Modern*, with appropriate symphonies and accompaniments, by I. Braham and I. Nathan, the poetry written expressly for the work by the Right Honourable Lord Byron”) — with an ornamental title-page designed by the architect Edward Blore (1789-1879), and dedicated to the Princess Charlotte of Wales — was published in April, 1815. A second part was issued in 1816.

The preface, part of which was reprinted (p. vi.) by Nathan, in his *Fugitive Pieces and Reminiscences of Lord Byron*, London, 1829, is not without interest — “The Hebrew Melodies are a selection from the favourite airs which are still sung in the religious ceremonies of the Jews. Some of these have, in common with all their Sacred airs, been preserved by memory and tradition alone, without the assistance of written characters. Their age and originality, therefore, must be

left to conjecture. But the latitude given to the taste and genius of their performers has been the means of engrafting on the original Melodies a certain wildness and pathos, which have at length become the chief characteristics of the sacred songs of the Jews....

“Of the poetry it is necessary to speak, in order thus publicly to acknowledge the kindness with which Lord Byron has condescended to furnish the most valuable part of the work. It has been our endeavour to select such melodies as would best suit the style and sentiment of the poetry.”

Moore, for whose benefit the Melodies had been rehearsed, was by no means impressed by their “wildness and pathos,” and seems to have twitted Byron on the subject, or, as he puts it (*Life*, p. 276), to have taken the liberty of “laughing a little at the manner in which some of the Hebrew Melodies had been set to music.” The author of *Sacred Songs* (1814) set to airs by Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, etc., was a critic not to be gainsaid, but from the half-comical petulance with which he “curses” and “sun-burns” (Letters to Moore, February 22, March 8, 1815, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 179, 183) Nathan, and his “vile Ebrew nasalities,” it is evident that Byron winced under Moore’s “chaff.”

Apart from the merits or demerits of the setting, the title *Hebrew Melodies* is somewhat misleading. Three love-songs, “She walks in Beauty like the Night,” “Oh! snatched away in Beauty’s Bloom,” and “I saw thee weep,” still form part of the collection; and, in Nathan’s folio (which does not contain “A spirit passed before me”), two fragments, “It is the hour when from the boughs” and “Francesca walks in the shadow of night,” which were afterwards incorporated in *Parisina*, were included. The *Fugitive Pieces*, 1829, retain the fragments from *Parisina*, and add the following hitherto unpublished poems: “I speak not, I trace not,” etc., “They say that Hope is Happiness,” and the genuine but rejected Hebrew Melody “In the valley of waters we wept on the day.”

It is uncertain when Murray’s first edition appeared. Byron wrote to Nathan with regard to the copyright in January, 1815 (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 167), but it is unlikely that the volume was put on the market before Nathan’s folio, which was advertised for the first time in the *Morning Chronicle*, April 6, 1815; and it is possible that the first public announcement of the *Hebrew Melodies*, as a separate issue, was made in the *Courier*, June 22, 1815.

The *Hebrew Melodies* were reviewed in the *Christian Observer*, August, 1815, vol. xiv. p. 542; in the *Analectic Magazine*, October, 1815, vol. vi. p. 292; and were noticed by Jeffrey [The *Hebrew Melodies*, though “obviously inferior” to Lord Byron’s other works, “display a skill in versification and a mastery in diction which would have raised an inferior artist to the very summit of

distinction"] in the *Edinburgh Review*, December, 1816, vol. xxvii. p. 291.

ADVERTISEMENT

The subsequent poems were written at the request of my friend, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaid, for a Selection of Hebrew Melodies, and have been published, with the music, arranged by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan.

January, 1815.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.

I.

She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

II.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

III.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

June 12, 1814.

THE HARP THE MONARCH MINSTREL SWEPT.

I.

The Harp the Monarch Minstrel swept,
The King of men, the loved of Heaven!
Which Music hallowed while she wept
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given —
Redoubled be her tears, its chords are riven!
It softened men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
That felt not — fired not to the tone,
Till David's Lyre grew mightier than his Throne!

II.

It told the triumphs of our King,
It wafted glory to our God;
It made our gladdened valleys ring,
The cedars bow, the mountains nod;
Its sound aspired to Heaven and there abode!
Since then, though heard on earth no more,
Devotion and her daughter Love
Still bid the bursting spirit soar
To sounds that seem as from above,
In dreams that day's broad light can not remove.

IF THAT HIGH WORLD.

I.

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherished heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears —
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy light — Eternity!

II.

It must be so: 'tis not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And striving to o'erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to Being's severing link.
Oh! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares,
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!

THE WILD GAZELLE.

I.

The wild gazelle on Judah's hills
Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
That gush on holy ground;
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by: —

II.

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
Hath Judah witnessed there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
Inhabitants more fair.
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone!

III.

More blest each palm that shades those plains
Than Israel's scattered race;
For, taking root, it there remains
In solitary grace:
It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

IV.

But we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
Our own may never lie:
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

OH! WEEP FOR THOSE.

I.

Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
Mourn — where their God hath dwelt the godless dwell!

II.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leaped before its heavenly voice?

III.

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country — Israel but the grave!

ON JORDAN'S BANKS.

I.

On Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep —
Yet there — even there — Oh God! thy thunders sleep:

II.

There — where thy finger scorched the tablet stone!
There — where thy shadow to thy people shone!
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself — none living see and not expire!

III.

Oh! in the lightning let thy glance appear;
Sweep from his shivered hand the oppressor's spear!
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod?
How long thy temple worshipless, Oh God?

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

I.

Since our Country, our God — Oh, my Sire!
Demand that thy Daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow —
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now!

II.

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow!

III.

And of this, oh, my Father! be sure —
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

IV.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent!
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my Father and Country are free!

V.

When this blood of thy giving hath gushed,
When the voice that thou lovest is hushed,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM.

I.

Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

II.

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

III.

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou — who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

[Published in the *Examiner*, April 23, 1815.]

MY SOUL IS DARK.

I.

My soul is dark — Oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain.

II.

But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let thy notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst;
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence long;
And now 'tis doomed to know the worst,
And break at once — or yield to song.

I SAW THEE WEEP.

I.

I saw thee weep — the big bright tear
Came o'er that eye of blue;
And then methought it did appear
A violet dropping dew:
I saw thee smile — the sapphire's blaze
Beside thee ceased to shine;
It could not match the living rays
That filled that glance of thine.

II.

As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky,
Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
That lightens o'er the heart.

THY DAYS ARE DONE.

I.

Thy days are done, thy fame begun;
Thy country's strains record
The triumphs of her chosen Son,
The slaughters of his sword!
The deeds he did, the fields he won,
The freedom he restored!

II.

Though thou art fall'n, while we are free
Thou shall not taste of death!
The generous blood that flowed from thee
Disdained to sink beneath:
Within our veins its currents be,
Thy spirit on our breath!

III.

Thy name, our charging hosts along,
Shall be the battle-word!
Thy fall, the theme of choral song
From virgin voices poured!
To weep would do thy glory wrong:
Thou shalt not be deplored.

SAUL.

I.

Thou whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the Prophet's form appear.
"Samuel, raise thy buried head!
King, behold the phantom Seer!"
Earth yawned; he stood the centre of a cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye;
His hand was withered, and his veins were dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glittered there,
Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare;
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,
Like caverned winds, the hollow accents came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.

II.

"Why is my sleep disquieted?
Who is he that calls the dead?
Is it thou, O King? Behold,
Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
Such are mine; and such shall be
Thine to-morrow, when with me:
Ere the coming day is done,
Such shalt thou be — such thy Son.
Fare thee well, but for a day,
Then we mix our mouldering clay.
Thou — thy race, lie pale and low,
Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
And the falchion by thy side
To thy heart thy hand shall guide:
Crownless — breathless — headless fall,
Son and Sire — the house of Saul!"

Seaham, *Feb.*, 1815.

SONG OF SAUL BEFORE HIS LAST BATTLE.

I.

Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a King's, in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

II.

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

III.

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my Royalty — Son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day!

Seaham, 1815.

ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER.

I.

Fame, Wisdom, Love, and Power were mine,
And Health and Youth possessed me;
My goblets blushed from every vine,
And lovely forms caressed me;
I sunned my heart in Beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All Earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

II.

I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that Life or Earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there rolled no hour
Of pleasure unembittered;
And not a trapping decked my Power
That galled not while it glittered.

III.

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath power of charming?
It will not list to Wisdom's lore,
Nor Music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.

Seaham, 1815.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY.

I.

When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darkened dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

II.

Eternal — boundless, — undecayed,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies displayed,
Shall it survey, shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that Memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the Soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears.

III.

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the farthest heaven had birth,
The Spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While Sun is quenched — or System breaks,
Fixed in its own Eternity.

IV.

Above or Love — Hope — Hate — or Fear,
It lives all passionless and pure:

An age shall fleet like earthly year;
Its years as moments shall endure.
Away — away — without a wing,
O'er all — through all — its thought shall fly,
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

Seaham, 1815.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR.

I.

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps thronged the hall:
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deemed divine —
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!

II.

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man; —
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

III.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless waxed his look,
And tremulous his voice.
“Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.”

IV.

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;

And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw — but knew no more.

V.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the King's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night, —
The morrow proved it true.

VI.

“Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom passed away.
He, in the balance weighed,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud, his robe of state,
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!”

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS!

Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star!
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
That show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like art thou to Joy remembered well!
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays:
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant — clear — but, oh how cold!

WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE.

I.

Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be,
I need not have wandered from far Galilee;
It was but abjuring my creed to efface
The curse which, thou say'st, is the crime of my race.

II.

If the bad never triumph, then God is with thee!
If the slave only sin — thou art spotless and free!
If the Exile on earth is an Outcast on high,
Live on in thy faith — but in mine I will die.

III.

I have lost for that faith more than thou canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope — and in thine
The land and the life which for him I resign.

Seaham, 1815.

HEROD'S LAMENT FOR MARIAMNE.

I.

Oh, Mariamne! now for thee
The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding;
Revenge is lost in Agony
And wild Remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh, Mariamne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading:
Ah! could'st thou — thou would'st pardon now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

II.

And is she dead? — and did they dare
Obey my Frenzy's jealous raving?
My Wrath but doomed my own despair:
The sword that smote her 's o'er me waving. —
But thou art cold, my murdered Love!
And this dark heart is vainly craving
For he who soars alone above,
And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

III.

She's gone, who shared my diadem;
She sunk, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem,
Whose leaves for me alone were blooming;
And mine's the guilt, and mine the hell,
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earned those tortures well,
Which unconsumed are still consuming!

Jan. 15, 1815.

ON THE DAY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS.

I.

From the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome,
I beheld thee, oh Sion! when rendered to Rome:
'Twas thy last sun went down, and the flames of thy fall
Flashed back on the last glance I gave to thy wall.

II.

I looked for thy temple — I looked for my home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy fane,
And the fast-fettered hands that made vengeance in vain.

III.

On many an eve, the high spot whence I gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone on thy shrine.

IV.

And now on that mountain I stood on that day,
But I marked not the twilight beam melting away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the Conqueror's head!

V.

But the Gods of the Pagan shall never profane
The shrine where Jehovah disdained not to reign;
And scattered and scorned as thy people may be,
Our worship, oh Father! is only for thee.

1815.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON WE SAT DOWN AND WEPT.

I.

We sate down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey;
And Ye, oh her desolate daughters!
Were scattered all weeping away.

II.

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which rolled on in freedom below,
They demanded the song; but, oh never
That triumph the Stranger shall know!
May this right hand be withered for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

III.

On the willow that harp is suspended,
Oh Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
But left me that token of thee:
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
With the voice of the Spoiler by me!

Jan. 15, 1813.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

I.

In the valley of waters we wept on the day
When the host of the Stranger made Salem his prey;
And our heads on our bosoms all droopingly lay,
And our hearts were so full of the land far away!

II.

The song they demanded in vain — it lay still
In our souls as the wind that hath died on the hill —
They called for the harp — but our blood they shall spill
Ere our right hands shall teach them one tone of their skill.

III.

All stringlessly hung in the willow's sad tree,
As dead as her dead-leaf, those mute harps must be:
Our hands may be fettered — our tears still are free
For our God — and our Glory — and Sion, Oh *Thee!*

1815.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

I.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

II.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

III.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved — and for ever grew still!

IV.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

V.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent — the banners alone —
The lances unlifted — the trumpet unblown.

VI.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Seaham, Feb. 17, 1815.

A SPIRIT PASSED BEFORE ME.

FROM JOB.

I.

A spirit passed before me: I beheld
The face of Immortality unveiled —
Deep Sleep came down on every eye save mine —
And there it stood, — all formless — but divine:
Along my bones the creeping flesh did quake;
And as my damp hair stiffened, thus it spake:

II.

“Is man more just than God? Is man more pure
Than he who deems even Seraphs insecure?
Creatures of clay — vain dwellers in the dust!
The moth survives you, and are ye more just?
Things of a day! you wither ere the night,
Heedless and blind to Wisdom’s wasted light!”

STANZAS FOR MUSIC



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NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL.

THERE BE NONE OF BEAUTY'S DAUGHTERS

1.

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed Ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

2.

And the midnight Moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

THERE'S NOT A JOY THE WORLD CAN GIVE LIKE THAT IT TAKES AWAY

“O Lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo: quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.”

Gray's *Poemata*.

[Motto to “The Tear,” *Poetical Works*, 1898, i. 49.]

1.

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in Feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on Youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere Youth itself be past.

2.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

3.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like Death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

4.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.

5.

Oh, could I feel as I have felt, — or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanished scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears would flow to me.

ON NAPOLEON'S ESCAPE FROM ELBA.

ONCE fairly set out on his party of pleasure,
Taking towns at his liking, and crowns at his leisure,
From Elba to Lyons and Paris he goes,
Making *balls for* the ladies, and *bows to* his foes.

March 27, 1815.

ODE FROM THE FRENCH.

I.

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 'twas shed, but is not sunk —
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion —
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost La Bédoyère —
With that of him whose honoured grave
Contains the "bravest of the brave."
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 'tis full 'twill burst asunder —
Never yet was heard such thunder
As then shall shake the world with wonder —
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

II.

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Swayed not o'er his fellow-men —
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son —
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till goaded by Ambition's sting

him, guided by Ambition's song,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell: — so perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

III.

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks.
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,
Shone and shivered fast around thee —
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once — as the Moon sways o'er the tide,
It rolled in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy, —
And, as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strewed beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagle's burning crest —
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest —
Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;

There be sure was Murat charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!

IV.

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levelled arch —
But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The "moral lesson" dearly bought —
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause —
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though guilt would sweep it from the earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

V.

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion —
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued —
Man may die — the soul's renewed:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit —
When once more her hosts assemble,

Tyrants shall believe and tremble —
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

[First published, *Morning Chronicle*, March 15, 1816.]

FROM THE FRENCH.

I.

Must thou go, my glorious Chief,
Severed from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief,
Maddening o'er that long adieu?
Woman's love, and Friendship's zeal,
Dear as both have been to me —
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?

II.

Idol of the soldier's soul!
First in fight, but mightiest now;
Many could a world control;
Thee alone no doom can bow.
By thy side for years I dared
Death; and envied those who fell,
When their dying shout was heard,
Blessing him they served so well.

III.

Would that I were cold with those,
Since this hour I live to see;
When the doubts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee,
Dreading each should set thee free!
Oh! although in dungeons pent,
All their chains were light to me,
Gazing on thy soul unbent.

IV.

Would the sycophants of him
Now so deaf to duty's prayer,

Were his borrowed glories dim,
In his native darkness share?
Were that world this hour his own,
All thou calmly dost resign,
Could he purchase with that throne
Hearts like those which still are thine?

V.

My Chief, my King, my Friend, adieu!
Never did I droop before;
Never to my Sovereign sue,
As his foes I now implore:
All I ask is to divide
Every peril he must brave;
Sharing by the hero's side
His fall — his exile — and his grave.

[First published, *Poems*, 1816,]

ON THE STAR OF “THE LEGION OF HONOUR.”

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

1.

Star of the brave! — whose beam hath shed
Such glory o’er the quick and dead —
Thou radiant and adored deceit!
Which millions rushed in arms to greet, —
Wild meteor of immortal birth!
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

2.

Souls of slain heroes formed thy rays;
Eternity flashed through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here;
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a Volcano of the skies.

3.

Like lava rolled thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rocked beneath thee to her base,
As thou didst lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

4.

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, each divine,
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom’s hand had blended them,

Like tints in an immortal gem.

5.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes;
One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes;
One, the pure Spirit's veil of white
Had robed in radiance of its light:
The three so mingled did beseem
The texture of a heavenly dream.

6.

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale,
And darkness must again prevail!
But, oh thou Rainbow of the free!
Our tears and blood must flow for thee.
When thy bright promise fades away,
Our life is but a load of clay.

7.

And Freedom hallows with her tread
The silent cities of the dead;
For beautiful in death are they
Who proudly fall in her array;
And soon, oh, Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them or thee!

[First published, *Examiner*, April 7, 1816.]

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

1.

Farewell to the Land, where the gloom of my Glory
Arose and o'ershadowed the earth with her name —
She abandons me now — but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is filled with my fame.
I have warred with a World which vanquished me only
When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus lonely,
The last single Captive to millions in war.

2.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crowned me,
I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth, —
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
Decayed in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.
Oh! for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were won —
Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was blasted
Had still soared with eyes fixed on Victory's sun!

3.

Farewell to thee, France! — but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then, —
The Violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys;
Though withered, thy tear will unfold it again —
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that surround us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice —
There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!

July 25, 1815. London.

[First published, *Examiner*, July 30, 1815.]

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REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!
TO TIME
TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG
THOU ART NOT FALSE, BUT THOU ART FICKLE
ON BEING ASKED WHAT WAS THE 'ORIGIN OF LOVE'
REMEMBER HIM, WHOM PASSION'S POWER

ON LORD THURLOW'S POEMS

TO LORD THURLOW

TO THOMAS MOORE

IMPROMPTU, IN REPLY TO A FRIEND

SONNET, TO GENEVRA

SONNET TO GENEVRA

SONNET, TO THE SAME (GENEVRA)

FROM THE PORTUGUESE, 'TU MI CHAMAS'

THE DEVIL'S DRIVE: AN UNFINISHED RHAPSODY

WINDSOR POETICS

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

I SPEAK NOT, I TRACE NOT, I BREATHE NOT THY NAME

ADDRESS INTENDED TO BE RECITED AT THE CALEDONIAN
MEETING.

FRAGMENT OF AN EPISTLE TO THOMAS MOORE

CONDOLATORY ADDRESS TO SARAH

ELEGIAC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF SIR PETER PARKER, BART.

TO BELSHAZZAR

THE ADIEU

Written Under The Impression That The Author Would Soon Die.

Adieu, thou Hill! where early joy
Spread roses o'er my brow;
Where Science seeks each loitering boy
With knowledge to endow.
Adieu, my youthful friends or foes,
Partners of former bliss or woes;
No more through Ida's paths we stray;
Soon must I share the gloomy cell,
Whose ever-slumbering inmates dwell
Unconscious of the day.

Adieu, ye hoary Regal Fanes,
Ye spires of Granta's vale,
Where Learning robed in sable reigns,
And Melancholy pale.
Ye comrades of the jovial hour,
Ye tenants of the classic bower,
On Cama's verdant margin placed,
Adieu! while memory still is mine,
For, offerings on Oblivion's shrine,
These scenes must be effaced.

Adieu, ye mountains of the clime
Where grew my youthful years;
Where Loch na Garr in snows sublime
His giant summit rears.
Why did my childhood wander forth
From you, ye regions of the North,
With sons of pride to roam?
Why did I quit my Highland cave,
Mar's dusky heath, and Dee's clear wave,
To seek a Sotheron home!

Hall of my Sires! a long farewell —
Yet whv to thee adieu?

Thy vaults will echo back my knell,
Thy towers my tomb will view:
The faltering tongue which sung thy fall,
And former glories of thy Hall,
Forgets its wonted simple note —
But yet the Lyre retains the strings,
And sometimes, on Æolian wings,
In dying strains may float.

Fields which surround yon rustic cot,
While yet I linger here,
Adieu! you are not now forgot,
To retrospection dear.
Streamlet! along whose rippling surge
My youthful limbs were wont to urge,
At noontide heat, their pliant course;
Plunging with ardour from the shore,
Thy springs will lave these limbs no more,
Deprived of active force.

And shall I here forget the scene,
Still nearest to my breast?
Rocks rise and rivers roll between
The spot which passion blest;
Yet, Mary, all thy beauties seem
Fresh as in Love's bewitching dream,
To me in smiles display'd;
Till slow disease resigns his prey
To Death, the parent of decay,
Thine image cannot fade.

And thou, my Friend! whose gentle love
Yet thrills my bosom's chords,
How much thy friendship was above
Description's power of words!
Still near my breast thy gift I wear
Which sparkled once with Feeling's tear,
Of Love the pure, the sacred gem;
Our souls were equal, and our lot

In that dear moment quite forgot;
Let Pride alone condemn!

All, all is dark and cheerless now!
No smile of Love's deceit
Can warm my veins with wonted glow,
Can bid Life's pulses beat:
Not e'en the hope of future fame
Can wake my faint, exhausted frame,
Or crown with fancied wreaths my head.
Mine is a short inglorious race, —
To humble in the dust my face,
And mingle with the dead.

Oh Fame! thou goddess of my heart;
On him who gains thy praise,
Pointless must fall the Spectre's dart,
Consumed in Glory's blaze;
But me she beckons from the earth,
My name obscure, unmark'd my birth,
My life a short and vulgar dream:
Lost in the dull, ignoble crowd,
My hopes recline within a shroud,
My fate is Lathe's stream.
When I repose beneath the sod,
Unheeded in the clay,
Where once my playful footsteps trod,
Where now my head must lay,
The weed of Pity will be shed
In dew-drops o'er my narrow bed,
By nightly skies, and storms alone;
No mortal eye will deign to steep
With tears the dark sepulchral deep
Which hides a name unknown.
Forget this world, my restless sprite,
Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heaven:
There must thou soon direct thy flight,
If errors are forgiven.
To bigots and to sects unknown,
Row down beneath the Almighty's Throne.

Bow down beneath the Almighty's Throne,
To Him address thy trembling prayer:
He, who is merciful and just,
Will not reject a child of dust,
Although his meanest care.

Father of Light! to Thee I call;
My soul is dark within:
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert the death of sin.
Thou, who canst guide the wandering star,
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,
My thoughts, my words, my crimes forgive:
And, since I soon must cease to live,
Instruct me how to die.

TO A VAIN LADY

Ah! heedless girl! why thus disclose
What ne'er was meant for other ears:
Why thus destroy thine own repose
And dig the source of future tears?

Oh, thou wilt weep, imprudent maid,
While lurking envious foes will smile,
For all the follies thou hast said
Of those who spoke but to beguile.

Vain girl! thy ling'ring woes are nigh,
If thou believ'st what striplings say:
Oh, from the deep temptation fly,
Nor fall the specious spoiler's prey.

Dost thou repeat, in childish boast,
The words man utters to deceive?
Thy peace, thy hope, thy all is lost,
If thou canst venture to believe.

While now amongst thy female peers
Thou tell'st again the soothing tale,
Canst thou not mark the rising sneers
Duplicity in vain would veil?

These tales in secret silence hush,
Nor make thyself the public gaze:
What modest maid without a blush
Recounts a flattering coxcomb's praise?

Will not the laughing boy despise
Her who relates each fond conceit -
Who, thinking Heaven is in her eyes,
Yet cannot see the slight deceit?

For she who takes a soft delight
These amorous nothings in revealing,

Must credit all we say or write,
While vanity prevents concealing.

Cease, if you prize your beauty's reign!
No jealousy bids me reprove:
One, who is thus from nature vain,
I pity, but I cannot love.

January 15, 1807.

TO ANNE

Oh, Anne, your offences to me have been grievous:
I thought from my wrath no atonement could save you:
But woman is made to command and deceive us —
I look 'd in your face, and I almost forgave you.

I vow'd I could ne'er for a moment respect you,
Yet thought that a day's separation was long;
When we met, I determined again to suspect you
Your smile soon convinced me suspicion was wrong.

I swore, in a transport of young indignation,
With fervent contempt evermore to disdain you:
I saw you - my anger became admiration;
And now, all my wish, all my hope's to regain you.

With beauty like yours, oh, how vain the contention!
Thus lowly I sue for forgiveness before you;
At once to conclude such a fruitless dissension,
Be false, my sweet Anne, when I cease to adore you!

January 16, 1807.

TO ANNE: OH, SAY NOT, SWEET ANNE

Oh, say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
The heart which adores you should wish to dissever;
Such Fates were to me most unkind ones indeed,
To bear me from love and from beauty for ever.

Your frowns, lovely girl, are the Fates which alone
Could bid me from fond admiration refrain;
By these, every hope, every wish were o'erthrown,
Till smiles should restore me to rapture again.

As the ivy and oak, in the forest entwined,
The rage of the tempest united must weather;
My love and my life were by nature design'd
To flourish alike, or to perish together.

Then say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
Your lover should bid you a lasting adieu;
Till Fate can ordain that his bosom shall bleed,
His soul, his existence, are centred in you.

**TO THE AUTHOR OF A SONNET, BEGINNING "SAD IS MY VERSE,
YOU SAY, AND YET NO TEAR"**

Thy verse is 'sad' enough, no doubt:
A devilish deal more sad than witty!
Why we should weep I can't find out,
Unless for thee we weep in pity.

Yet there is one I pity more;
And much, alas! I think he needs it;
For he, I'm sure, will suffer sore,
Who, to his own misfortune, reads it.

Thy rhymes, without the aid of magic,
May once be read - but never after:
Yet their effect's by no means tragic,
Although by far too dull for laughter.

But would you make our bosoms bleed,
And of no common pang complain -
If you would make us weep indeed,
Tell us, you'll read them o'er again.

March 8, 1807

ON FINDING A FAN

In one who felt as once he felt
This might, perhaps, have fann'd the flame;
But now his heart no more will melt,
Because that heart is not the same.

As when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid which once improved their light,
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their blaze in night.

Thus has it been with passion's fires-
As many a boy and girl remembers
While every hope of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

The first, though not a spark survive,
Some careful hand may teach to burn;
The last, alas I can ne'er survive;
No touch can bid its warmth reform Or, if it chance to wake again.
Not always doom 'd its heat to smother,
It sheds (so wayward fates ordain)
Its former warmth around another.

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE

Thou Power! who hast ruled me through Infancy's days,
Young offspring of Fancy, 'tis time we should part;
Then rise on the gale this the last of my lays,
The coldest effusion which springs from my heart.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no more,
Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore thee to sing;
The feelings of childhood, which taught thee to soar,
Are wafted far distant on Apathy's wing.

Though simple the themes of my rude flowing Lyre,
Yet even these themes are departed for ever;
No more beam the eyes which my dream could inspire,
My visions are flown, to return, alas, never!

When drain'd is the nectar which gladdens the bowl,
How vain is the effort delight to prolong!
When cold is the beauty which dwelt in my soul,
What magic of Fancy can lengthen my song?

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert alone,
Of kisses and smiles which they now must resign?
Or dwell with delight on the hours that are flown?
Ah, no! for those hours can no longer be mine.

Can they speak of the friends that I lived but to love?
Ah, surely Affection ennobles the strain!
But how can my numbers in sympathy move,
When I scarcely can hope to behold them again?

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers have done,
And raise my loud harp to the fame of my Sires?
For glories like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!
For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

Untouch'd, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast —
'Tis hush'd; and my feeble endeavors are o'er;

And those who have heard it will pardon the past,
When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,
Since early affection and love is o'er cast:
Oh! blest had my Fate been, and happy my lot,
Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;
If our songs have been languid, they surely are few:
Let us hope that the present at least will be sweet —
The present — which seals our eternal Adieu.

TO AN OAK AT NEWSTEAD

Young Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground,
I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine;
That thy dark-waving branches would flourish around,
And ivy thy trunk with its mantle entwine.

Such, such was my hope, when in infancy's
On the land of my fathers I rear'd thee with pride;
They are past, and I water thy stem with my tears,
Thy decay not the weeds that surround thee can hide.

I left thee, my Oak, and, since that fatal hour,
A stranger has dwelt in the hall of my sire;
Till manhood shall crown me, not mine is the power,
But his, whose neglect may have bade thee expire.

Oh! hardy thou went — even now little care
Might revive thy young head, and thy wounds gently heal:
But thou went not fated affection to share —
For who could suppose that a stranger would feel!

Ah, droop not, my Oak! lift thy head for a while;
Ere twice round yon Glory this planet shall run,
The hand of thy Master will teach thee to smile,
When Infancy's years of probation are done.

Oh, live then, my Oak! tow'r aloft from the weeds,
That clog thy young growth, and assist thy decay,
For still in thy bosom are life's early seeds,
And still may thy branches their beauty display.

Oh! yet, if maturity's years may be thine,
Though I shall lie low in the cavern of death,
On thy leaves yet the day-beam of ages may shine,
Uninjured by time, or the rude winter's breath.

For centuries still may thy boughs lightly wave
O'er the Gorse of thy lord in thy canopy laid;

While the branches thus gratefully shelter his grave,
The chief who survives may recline in thy shade.

And as he, with his boys, shall revisit this spot,
He will tell them or whispers more softly to tread.
Oh! surely, by these I shall ne'er be forgot;
Remembrance still hallows the dust of the dead.

And here, will they say, when in life's glowing prime,
Perhaps he has pour'd forth his young simple lay,
And here must he sleep, till the moments of time
Are lost in the hours of Eternity's day.

ON REVISITING HARROW

Here once engaged the stranger's view
Young Friendship's record simply traced;
Few were her words; but yet, though few,
Resentment's hand the line defaced.

Deeply she cut — but not erased,
The characters were still so plain,
That Friendship once return'd, and gazed, —
Till Memory hail'd the words again.

Repentance placed them as before;
Forgiveness join'd her gentle name;
So fair the inscription seem'd once more,
That Friendship thought it still the same.

Thus might the Record now have been;
But, ah, in spite of Hopes endeavour,
Or Friendships tears, Pride rush'd between
And blotted out the line for ever.

**EPITAPH ON JOHN ADAMS, OF SOUTHWELL - A CARRIER,
WHO DIED OF DRUNKENNESS**

JOHN ADAMS lies here, of the parish of Southwell,
A Carrier who carried his can to his mouth well:
He carried so much, and he carried so fast,
He could carry no more-so was carried at last;
For, the liquor he drank, being too much for one,
He could not carry off, — so he's now carrion.

TO MY SON

Those flaxen locks, those eyes of blue
Bright as thy mother's in their hue;
Those rosy lips, whose dimples play
And smile to steal the heart away,
Recall a scene of former joy,
And touch thy fathers heart, my Boy!

And thou canst lisp a father's name —
Ah, William, were thine own the same,
No self-reproach — but, let me cease —
My care for thee shall purchase peace;
Thy mother's shade shall smile in joy,
And pardon all the past, my Boy!

Her lowly grave the turf has prest,
And thou hast known a stranger's breast;
Derision sneers upon thy birth,
And yields thee scarce a name on earth;
Yet shall not these one hops destroy, —
A Father's heart is throe, my Boy!

Why, let the world unfeeling frown,
Must I fond Nature's claim disown?
Ah, no — though moralists reprove,
I hail thee, dearest child of love,
Fair cherub, pledge of youth and joy
A Father guards thy birth, my Boy!

Oh, 'twill be sweet in thee to trace,
Ere age has wrinkled o'er my face,
Ere half my glass of life is run,
At once a brother and a son;
And all my wane of years employ
In justice done to thee, my Boy!

Although so young thy heedless sire,
Youth will not damp parental fire;

And, wert thou still less dear to me,
While Helen's form revives in thee,
The breast which beat to former joy,
Will ne'er desert its pledge, my Boy!

FAREWELL! IF EVER FONDEST PRAYER

Farewell! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal avail'd on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,
But waft thy name beyond the sky.
Twere vain to speak, to weep, to sigh:
Oh! more than tears of blood can tell,
When wrung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word — Farewell! — Farewell!

These lips are mute, these eyes are dry;
But in my breast and in my brain,
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns nor dares complain
Though grief and passion there rebel;
I only know we loved in vain —
I only feel — Farewell! — Farewell!

BRIGHT BE THE PLACE OF THY SOUL!

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be:
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow —
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me —
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee so well —
Long, long I shall rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met —
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.

TO A YOUTHFUL FRIEND

Few years have pass'd since thou and I
Were firmest friends, at least in name,
And childhood's gay sincerity
Preserved our feelings long the same.

But now, like me, too well thou know'st
What trifles oft the heart recall;
And those who once have loved the most
Too soon forget they loved at all.

And such the change the heart displays,
So frail is early friendship's reign,
A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,
Will view thy mind estranged again.

If so, it never shall be mine
To mourn the loss of such a heart;
The fault was Nature's fault, not thine
Which made thee fickle as thou art.

As rolls the ocean's changing tide,
So human feelings ebb and flow;
And who would in a breast confide
Where stormy passions ever glow?

It boots not that, together bred,
Our childish days were days of joy:
My spring of life has quickly fled;
Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.

And when we bid adieu to youth,
Slaves to the specious world's control,
We sigh a long farewell to truth;
That world corrupts the noblest soul.

Ah, joyous season! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie;

When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye.

Not so in Man's maturer years,
When Man himself is but a tool;
When interest sways our hopes and fears,
And all must love and hate by rule.

With fools in kindred vice the same,
We learn at length our faults to blend;
And those, and those alone, may claim
The prostituted name of friend.

Such is the common lot of man:
Can we then 'scape from folly free?
Can we reverse the general plan,
Nor be what all in turn must be?

No; for myself, so dark my fate
Through every turn of life hath been;
Man and the world so much I hate,
I care not when I quit the scene.

But thou, with spirit frail and light,
Wilt shine awhile, and pass away;
As glow-worms sparkle through the night,
But dare not stand the test of day.

Alas! whenever folly calls
Where parasites and princes meet
(For cherish'd first in royal halls,
The welcome vices kindly greet),

Ev'n now thou'rt nightly seen to add
One insect to the fluttering crowd;
And still thy trifling heart is glad
To join the vain and court the proud.

There dost thou glide from fair to fair,
Still simpering on with eager haste,

As flies along the gay parterre
That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

But say, what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame,
An ignis-fatuus gleam of love?

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,
Will deign to own a kindred care?
Who will debase his manly mind,
For friendship every fool may share?

In time forbear; amidst the throng
No more so base a thing be seen;
No more so idly pass along;
Be something, anything, but — mean.

LINES INSCRIBED UPON A CUP FORMED FROM A SKULL

Start not — nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

I lived, I loved, I quaffed like thee;
I died: let earth my bones resign:
Fill up — thou canst not injure me;
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape
Than nurse the earthworm's slimy brood,
And circle in the goblet's shape
The drink of gods than reptile's food.

Where once my wit, perchance, hath shone,
In aid of others' let me shine;
And when, alas! our brains are gone,
What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst; another race,
When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not — since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce?
Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs to be of use.

WELL! THOU ART HAPPY

Well! thou art happy, and I feel
That I should thus be happy too;
For still my heart regards thy weal
Warmly, as it was wont to do.

Thy husband's blest — and 'twill impart
Some pangs to view his happier lot:
But let them pass — Oh! how my heart
Would hate him if he loved thee not!

When late I saw thy favourite child,
I thought my jealous heart would break;
But when the unconscious infant smiled,
I kiss'd it for its mother's sake.

I kiss'd it, — and repress'd my sighs
Its father in its face to see;
But then it had its mother's eyes,
And they were all to love and me.

Mary, adieu! I must away:
While thou art blest I'll not repine;
But near thee I can never stay;
My heart would soon again be thine.

I deem'd that time, I deem'd that pride,
Had quench'd at length my boyish flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side
My heart in all, — save hope, — the same.

Yet was I calm: I knew the time
My breast would thrill before thy look;
But now to tremble were a crime
We met, — and not a nerve was shook.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there:

One only feeling could'st thou trace;
The sullen calmness of despair.

Away! away! my early dream
Remembrance never must awake:
Oh! where is Lethe's fabled stream?
My foolish heart, be still, or break.

November 2, 1808

INSCRIPTION ON THE MONUMENT OF A NEWFOUNDLAND DOG

When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rest below:
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been:
But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart, is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth,
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.
Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.
Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on — it honours none you wish to mourn:
To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one, — and here he lies.

TO A LADY, ON BEING ASKED MY REASONS FOR QUITTING ENGLAND IN THE SPRING

When Man, expell'd from Eden's bowers,
A moment linger'd near the gate,
Each scene recall'd the vanish'd hours,
And bade him curse his future fate.

But, wandering on through distant climes,
He learnt to bear his load of grief;
Just gave a sigh to other times,
And found in busier scenes relief.

Thus, lady! will it be with me,
And I must view thy charms no more;
For, while I linger near to thee,
I sigh for ail I knew before.

In flight I shall be surely wise,
Escaping from temptation's snare;
I cannot view my paradise
Without the wish of dwelling there.

December 2, 1808

REMINDE ME NOT, REMINDE ME NOT

Remind me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved, those vanish'd hours,
When all my soul was given to thee;
Hours that may never be forgot,
Till Time unnerves our vital powers,
And thou and I shall cease to be.

Can I forget — canst thou forget,
When playing with thy golden hair,
How quick thy fluttering heart did move?
Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet,
With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
And lips, though silent, breathing love.

When thus reclining on my breast,
Those eyes threw back a glance so sweet,
As half reproach'd yet rais'd desire,
And still we near and nearer prest,
And still our glowing lips would meet,
As if in kisses to expire.

And then those pensive eyes would close,
And bid their lids each other seek,
Veiling the azure orbs below;
While their long lashes' darken'd gloss
Seem'd stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,
Like raven's plumage smooth'd on snow.

I dreamt last night our love return'd,
And, sooth to say, that very dream
Was sweeter in its phantasy,
Than if for other hearts I burn'd,
For eyes that ne'er like thine could beam
In Rapture's wild reality.

Then tell me not, remind me not,
Of hours which, though for ever gone,

Can still a pleasing dream restore,
Till Thou and I shall be forgot,
And senseless, as the mouldering stone
Which tells that we shall be no more.

THERE WAS A TIME, I NEED NOT NAME

There was a time, I need not name,
Since it will ne'er forgotten be,
When all our feelings were the same
As still my soul hath been to thee.

And from that hour when first thy tongue
Confess'd a love which equall'd mine,
Though many a grief my heart hath wrung,
Unknown, and thus unfelt, by thine, None, none hath sunk so deep as this —
To think how all that love hath flown;
Transient as every faithless kiss,
But transient in thy breast alone.

And yet my heart some solace knew,
When late I heard thy lips declare,
In accents once imagined true,
Remembrance of the days that were.

Yes! my adored, yet most unkind!
Though thou wilt never love again,
To me 'tis doubly sweet to find
Remembrance of that love remain.

Yes! 'tis a glorious thought to me,
Nor longer shall my soul repine,
Whate'er thou art or e'er shalt be,
Thou hast been dearly, solely mine.

AND WILT THOU WEEP WHEN I AM LOW?

And wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so —
I would not give that bosom pain.

My heart is sad, my hopes are gone,
My blood runs coldly through my breast;
And when I perish, thou alone
Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

And yet, methinks, a gleam of peace
Doth through my cloud of anguish shine:
And for a while my sorrows cease,
To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

Oh lady! blessd be that tear —
It falls for one who cannot weep;
Such precious drops are doubly dear
To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm
With every feeling soft as thine;
But Beauty's self hath ceased to charm
A wretch created to repine.

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so —
I would not give that bosom pain.

FILL THE GOBLET AGAIN

A Song

Fill the goblet again! for I never before
Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core;
Let us drink! — who would not? — since, through life's varied round,
In the goblet alone no deception is found.

I have tried in its turn all that life can supply;
I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling eye;
I have loved! — who has not? — but what heart can declare
That pleasure existed while passion was there?

In the days of my youth, when the heart's in its spring,
And dreams that affection can never take wing,
I had friends! — who has not? — but what tongue will avow,
That friends, rosy wine! are so faithful as thou?

The heart of a mistress some boy may estrange,
Friendship shifts with the sunbeam — thou never canst change;
Thou grow'st old — who does not? — but on earth what appears,
Whose virtues, like thine, still increase with its years?

Yet if blest to the utmost that love can bestow,
Should a rival bow down to our idol below,
We are jealous! — who is not? — thou hast no such alloy;
For the more that enjoy thee, the more we enjoy.

Then the season of youth and its vanities past,
For refuge we fly to the goblet at last;
There we find — do we not? — in the flow of the soul,
That truth, as of yore, is confined to the bowl.

When the box of Pandora was opened on earth,
And Misery's triumph commenced over Mirth,
Hope was left, — was she not? — but the goblet we kiss,
And care not for Hope, who are certain of bliss.

Long life to the grape! for when summer is flown,
The age of our nectar shall gladden our own:

We must die — who shall not? — May our sins be forgiven,
And Hebe shall never be idle in heaven.

STANZAS TO A LADY, ON LEAVING ENGLAND

'Tis done — and shivering in the gale
The bark unfurls her snowy sail;
And whistling o'er the bending mast,
Loud sings on high the fresh'ning blast;
And I must from this land be gone,
Because I cannot love but one.

But could I be what I have been,
And could I see what I have seen —
Could I repose upon the breast
Which once my warmest wishes blest —
I should not seek another zone,
Because I cannot love but one.

'Tis long since I beheld that eye
Which gave me bliss or misery;
And I have striven, but in vain,
Never to think of it again:
For though I fly from Albion,
I still can only love but one.

As some lone bird, without a mate,
My weary heart is desolate;
I look around, and cannot trace
One friendly smile or welcome face,
And ev'n in crowds am still alone,
Because I cannot love but one.

And I will cross the whitening foam,
And I will seek a foreign home;
Till I forget a false fair face,
I ne'er shall find a resting-place;
My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,
But ever love, and love but one.

The poorest, veriest wretch on earth
Still finds some hospitable hearth,

Where Friendship's or Love's softer glow
May smile in joy or soothe in woe;
But friend or leman I have none,'
Because I cannot love but one.

I go — but wheresoe'er I flee
There's not an eye will weep for me;
There's not a kind congenial heart,
Where I can claim the meanest part;
Nor thou, who hast my hopes undone,
Wilt sigh, although I love but one.

To think of every early scene,
Of what we are, and what we've been,
Would overwhelm some softer hearts with woe —
But mine, alas! has stood the blow;
Yet still beats on as it begun,
And never truly loves but one.

And who that dear lov'd one may be,
Is not for vulgar eyes to see;
And why that early love was cross'd,
Thou know'st the best, I feel the most;
But few that dwell beneath the sun
Have loved so long, and loved but one.

I've tried another's fetters too,
With charms perchance as fair to view;
And I would fain have loved as well,
But some unconquerable spell
Forbade my bleeding breast to own
A kindred care for aught but one.

'Twould soothe to take one lingering view,
And bless thee in my last adieu;
Yet wish I not those eyes to weep
For him that wanders o'er the deep;
His home, his hope, his youth are gone,
Yet still he loves, and loves but one.

LINES ON MR. HODGSON WRITTEN ON BOARD THE LISBON PACKET

Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo's off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvass o'er the mast.
From aloft the signal's streaming,
Hark! the farewell gun is fir'd;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time's expir'd.
Here's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the custom-house;
Trunks unpacking
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We're impatient — push from shore.
“Have a care! that case holds liquor —
Stop the boat — I'm sick — oh Lord!”
“Sick, ma'am, damme, you'll be sicker,
Ere you've been an hour on board.”
Thus are screaming
Men and women,
Gemmen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,
Stuck together close as wax. —
Such the genial noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we've reach'd her, lo! the captain,
Call out Kidd, command the crew —

Gallant Kidd, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapt in,
Some to grumble, some to spew.
“Hey day! call you that a cabin?
Why ‘t is hardly three feet square;
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in —
Who the deuce can harbour there?”
“Who, sir? plenty —
Nobles twenty
Did at once my vessel fill.”
“Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us!
Would to God they did so still:
Then I’d ‘scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship, Lisbon Packet.”

Fletcher! Murray! Bob! where are you?
Stretch’d along the deck like logs —
Bear a hand, you jolly tar, you!
Here’s a rope’s end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
As the hatchway down he rolls,
Now his breakfast, now his verses,
Vomits forth — and damns our souls.
“Here’s a stanza
On Braganza —
Help!” — “A couplet?” — “No, a cup
Of warm water — ”
“What’s the matter?”
“Zounds! my liver’s coming up;
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet.”

Now at length we’re off for Turkey,
Lord knows when we shall come back!
Breezes foul and tempests murky
May unship us in a crack.
But, since life at most a jest is,
As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is.

Then laugh on — as I do now.
Laugh at all things,
Great and small things,
Sick or well, at sea or shore;
While we're quaffing,
Let's have laughing —
Who the devil cares for more? —
Some good wine! and who would lack it,
Ev'n on board the Lisbon Packet?

TO FLORENCE

Oh Lady! when I left the shore,
The distant shore which gave me birth,
I hardly thought to grieve once more
To quit another spot on earth: Yet here, amidst this barren isle,
Where panting Nature droops the head,
Where only thou art seen to smile,
I view my parting hour with dread.

Though far from Albin's craggy shore,
Divided by the dark?blue main;
A few, brief, rolling seasons o'er,
Perchance I view her cliffs again: But wheresoe'er I now may roam,
Through scorching clime, and varied sea,
Though Time restore me to my home,
I ne'er shall bend mine eyes on thee: On thee, in whom at once conspire
All charms which heedless hearts can move,
Whom but to see is to admire,
And, oh! forgive the word - to love.

Forgive the word, in one who ne'er
With such a word can more offend;
And since thy heart I cannot share,
Believe me, what I am, thy friend.

And who so cold as look on thee,
Thou lovely wand'rer, and be less?
Nor be, what man should ever be,
The friend of Beauty in distress?

Ah! who would think that form had past
Through Danger's most destructive path
Had braved the death-wing'd tempest's blast,
And 'scaped a tyrant's fiercer wrath?

Lady! when I shall view the walls
Where free Byzantium once arose,
And Stamboul's Oriental halls

The Turkish tyrants now enclose;

Though mightiest in the lists of fame,
That glorious city still shall be;
On me 'twill hold a dearer claim,
As spot of thy nativity:

And though I bid thee now farewell,
When I behold that wondrous scene,
Since where thou art I may not dwell,
'Twill soothe to be where thou hast been.

September 1809.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM, AT MALTA As o'er the cold
sepulchral stone

Some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye!

And when by thee that name is read,
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

September 14, 1809.

STANZAS COMPOSED DURING A THUNDERSTORM

Chill and mirk is the nightly blast,
Where Pindus' mountains rise,
And angry clouds are pouring fast
The vengeance of the skies.

Our guides are gone, our hope is lost,
And lightnings, as they play,
But show where rocks our path have crost,
Or gild the torrent's spray.

Is yon a cot I saw, though low?
When lightning broke the gloom —
How welcome were its shade! — ah, no!
'Tis but a Turkish tomb.

Through sounds of foaming waterfalls,
I hear a voice exclaim —
My way-worn countryman, who calls
On distant England's name.

A shot is fired — by foe or friend?
Another — 'tis to tell
The mountain-peasants to descend,
And lead us where they dwell.

Oh! who in such a night will dare
To tempt the wilderness?
And who 'mid thunder-peals can hear
Our signal of distress?

And who that heard our shouts would rise
To try the dubious road?
Nor rather deem from nightly cries
That outlaws were abroad.

Clouds burst, skies flash, oh, dreadful hour!
More fiercely pours the storm!

Yet here one thought has still the power
To keep my bosom warm.

While wandering through each broken path,
O'er brake and craggy brow;
While elements exhaust their wrath,
Sweet Florence, where art thou?

Not on the sea, not on the sea —
Thy bark hath long been gone:
Oh, may the storm that pours on me,
Bow down my head alone!

Full swiftly blew the swift Siroc,
When last I pressed thy lip;
And long ere now, with foaming shock,
Impelled thy gallant ship.

Now thou art safe; nay, long ere now
Hast trod the shore of Spain;
'Twere hard if aught so fair as thou
Should linger on the main.

And since I now remember thee
In darkness and in dread,
As in those hours of revelry
Which Mirth and Music sped;

Do thou, amid the fair white walls,
If Cadiz yet be free,
At times from out her latticed halls
Look o'er the dark blue sea; Then think upon Calypso's isles,
Endeared by days gone by;
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh.

And when the admiring circle mark
The paleness of thy face,
A half-formed tear, a transient spark
Of melancholy grace,

Again thou'lt smile, and blushing shun
Some coxcomb's raillery;
Nor own for once thou thought'st on one,
Who ever thinks on thee.

Though smile and sigh alike are vain,
When severed hearts repine
My spirit flies o'er Mount and Main
And mourns in search of thine.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN PASSING THE AMBRACIAN GULF

Through cloudless skies, in silvery sheen,
Full beams the moon on Actium's coast:
And on these waves for Egypt's queen,
The ancient world was won and lost.

And now upon the scene I look,
The azure grave of many a Roman;
Where stem Ambition once forsook
His wavering crown to follow woman.

Florence! whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell),
Whilst thou art fair and I am young; Sweet Florence! those were pleasant times;
When worlds were staked for ladies'
Had bards as many realms as rhymes;
Thy charms might raise new Antonies.

Though Fate forbids such things to be
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curl'd!
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.

THE SPELL IS BROKE, THE CHARM IS FLOWN!

The spell is broke; the charm is flown!
Thus is it with life's fitful fever:
We madly smile when we should groan:
Delirium is our best deceiver.

Each lucid interval of thought
Recalls the woes of Nature's charter;
And he that acts as wise men ought,
But lives, as saints have died, a martyr.

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roar'd,
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For me, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat today.

But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo, — and — Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory; 'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague you!
He lost his labour, I my jest;
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague.

LINES IN THE TRAVELLERS' BOOK AT ORCHOMENUS

In this book a traveller had written:
'Fair Albion, smiling, sees her son depart
To trace the birth and nursery of art:
Noble his object, glorious is his aim;
He comes to Athens, and he writes his name.'

BENEATH WHICH LORD BYRON INSERTED THE FOLLOWING.

The modest bard, like many a bard unknown,
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,
His name would bring more credit than his verse.

MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

By those tresses unconfined,
Wood by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe.
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

TRANSLATION OF THE NURSE'S DOLE IN THE MEDEA OF EURIPIDES

Oh how I wish that an embargo
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!
Who, still unlaunch'd from Grecian docks,
Had never pass'd the Azure rocks;
But now I fear her trip will be a
Damned business for my Miss Medea, &c. &c.

June 1810.

MY EPITAPH

Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove,
To keep my Lamp in strongly strove;
But Romanelli was so stout,
He beat all three, and blew it out.

Oct. 1810.

SUBSTITUTE FOR AN EPITAPH

Kind Reader! take your choice to cry or laugh;
Here HAROLD lies, but where's his Epitaph?
If such you seek, try Westminster, and view
Ten thousand just as fit for him as you.

Athens

LINES WRITTEN BENEATH A PICTURE

Dear object of defeated care!
Though now of Love and thee bereft,
To reconcile me with despair,
Thing image and any tears are left.

'Tis said with Sorrow Time can cope;
But this I feel can ne'er be true:
For by the death?blow of my Hope
My Memory immortal grew.

Athens, January 1811.

TRANSLATION OF THE FAMOUS GREEK WAR SONG

Sons of the Greeks, arise!
The glorious hour's gone forth,
And, worthy of such ties,
Display who gave us birth.

CHORUS.

Sons of Greeks! let us go
In arms against the foe,
Till their hated blood shall flow
In a river past our feet.

Then manfully despising
The Turkish tyrant's yoke,
Let your country see you rising,
And all her chains are broke.
Brave shades of chiefs and sages,
Behold the coming strife!
Hellenes of past ages,
Oh, start again to life!
At the sound of my trumpet, breaking
Your sleep, oh, loin with me!
And the seven-hill'd city seeking,
Fight, conquer, till we're free.

Sons of Greeks, &c.

Sparta, Sparta, why in slumbers
Lethargic dolt thou lie?
Awake, and join thy numbers
With Athens, old ally!
Leonidas recalling,
That chief of ancient song,
Who saved ye once from falling,
The terrible! the strong!
Who made that bold diversion
In old Thermopylæ
And warring with the Persian

To keep his country free;
With his three hundred waging
The battle, long he stood,
And like a lion raging,
Expired in seas of blood.
Sons of Greeks, &c.

TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG

Ah! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my woe,
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows well I knew;
Alas! I find them poison'd too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set;
Or, circled by his fatal fire,
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare,
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

In flattering dreams I deem'd thee mine;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline'
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion, and thy power.

My light of life! ah, tell me why
That pouting lip, and alter'd eye?
My bird of love! my beauteous mate!
And art thou changed, and canst thou hate?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow:
What wretch with me would barter woe?

My bird! relent: one note could give
A charm to bid thy lover live.

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults - while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison; fear not thou!
Thou canst not murder more than now:
I've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest?
Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe.

ON PARTING

The kiss, dear maid! thy lip has left
Shall never part from mine,
Till happier hours restore the gift
Untainted back to thine.

Thy parting glance, which fondly beams,
An equal love may see:
The tear that from thy eyelid streams
Can weep no change in me.

I ask no pledge to make me blest
In gazing when alone;
Nor one memorial for a breast,
Whose thoughts are all thine own.

Nor need I write to tell the tale
My pen were doubly weak:
Oh! what can idle words avail,
Unless the heart could speak?

By day or night, in weal or woe,
That heart, no longer free,
Must bear the love it cannot show,
And silent ache for thee.

March 1811.

EPITAPH FOR JOSEPH BLACKETT, LATE POET AND SHOEMAKER

Stranger! behold, interr'd together,
The souls of learning and of leather.
Poor Joe is gone, but left his all:
You'll find his relics in a stall.
His works were neat, and often found
Well stitch'd, and with morocco bound.
Tread lightly — where the bard is laid
He cannot mend the shoe he made;
Yet is he happy in his hole,
With verse immortal as his sole.
But still to business he held fast,
And stuck to Phobus to the last.
Then who shall say so good a fellow
Was only 'leather and prunella?'
For character - he did not lack it
And if he did, 'twere shame to 'Black it.
Malta, May 16, 1811.

FAREWELL TO MALTA

Adieu, ye joys of La Valette!
Adieu, sirocco, sun, and sweat!
Adieu, thou palace rarely enter'd!
Adieu, ye mansions where I've ventured!
Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs!
(How surely he who mounts you swears!)
Adieu, ye merchants often failing!
Adieu, thou mob for ever railing!
Adieu, ye packets without letters!
Adieu, ye fools who ape your betters!
Adieu, thou damned'st quarantine,
That gave me fever, and the spleen!
Adieu, that stage which makes us yawn, Sirs,
Adieu, his Excellency's dancers!
Adieu to Peter — whom no fault's in,
But could not teach a colonel waltzing;
Adieu, ye females fraught with graces!
Adieu, red coats, and redder faces!
Adieu, the supercilious air
Of all that strut 'en militaire'!
I go — but God knows when, or why,
To smoky towns and cloudy sky,
To things (the honest truth to say)
As bad — but in a different way.

Farewell to these, but not adieu,
Triumphant sons of truest blue!
While either Adriatic shore,
And fallen chiefs, and fleets no more,
And nightly smiles, and daily dinners,
Proclaim you war and woman's winners.
Pardon my Muse, who apt to prate is,
And take my rhyme — because 'tis 'gratis.'

And now I've got to Mrs. Fraser,
Perhaps you think I mean to praise her
And were I vain enough to think

And were I vain enough to think
My praise was worth this drop of ink,
A line — or two — were no hard matter,
As here, indeed, I need not flatter:
But she must be content to shine
In better praises than in mine,
With lively air, and open heart,
And fashion's ease, without its art;
Her hours can gaily glide along,
Nor ask the aid of idle song.

And now, O Malta! since thou'st got us,
Thou little military hothouse!
I'll not offend with words uncivil,
And wish thee rudely at the Devil,
But only stare from out my casement,
And ask, for what is such a place meant?
Then, in my solitary nook,
Return to scribbling, or a book,
Or take my physic while I'm able
(Two spoonfuls hourly by the label),
Prefer my nightcap to my beaver,
And bless the gods I've got a fever.

May 26, 1811.

TO DIVES.

A Fragment

Unhappy Dives! in an evil hour
‘Gainst Nature’s voice seduced to deeds accurst!
Once Fortune’s minion, now thou feel’st her power;
Wrath’s vial on thy lofty head bath burst.
In Wit, in Genius, as in Wealth the first,
How wondrous bright thy blooming morn arose!
But thou went smitten with th’ unhallow’d thirst
Of crime un-named, and thy sad noon must close
In scorn, and solitude unsought, the worst of woes.

ON MOORE'S LAST OPERATIC FARCE, OR FARCICAL OPERA

Good plays are scarce:
So Moore writes farce.
The poet's fame grows brittle —
We knew before
That Little's Moore,
But now 'tis Moore that's little.

September 14, 1811.

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

IN ANSWER TO SOME LINES EXHORTING THE AUTHOR TO BE
CHEERFUL, AND TO BANISH CARE

‘OH! banish care’ — such ever be
The motto of thy revelry!
Perchance of mine, when wassail nights
Renew those riotous delights,
Wherewith the children of Despair
Lull the lone heart, and `banish care.’
But not in morn’s reflecting hour,
When present, past, and future lower,
When all I loved is changed or gone,
Mock with such taunts the woes of one,
Whose every thought — but let them pass
Thou know’st I am not what I was.
But, above all, if thou wouldst hold
Place in a heart that ne’er was cold,
By all the powers that men revere,
By all unto thy bosom dear,
Thy joys below, thy hopes above,
Speak — speak of anything but love.

‘Twere long to tell, and vain to hear,
The tale of one who scorns a tear;
And there is little in that tale
Which better bosoms would bewail.
But mine has suffer’d more than well
‘Twould suit philosophy to tell.
I’ve seen my bride another’s bride, —
Have seen her seated by his side,
Have seen the infant, which she bore,
Wear the sweet smile the mother wore,
When she and I in youth have smiled,
As fond and faultless as her child;
Have seen her eyes, in cold disdain,
Ask if I felt no secret pain
And I have acted well my part

And I have acted well my part,
And made my cheek belie my heart,
Return'd the freezing glance she gave:
Yet felt the while that woman's slave; —
Have kiss'd, as if without design,
The babe which ought to have been mine,
And show'd, alas! in each caress
Time had not made me love the less.

But let this pass — I'll whine no more,
Nor seek again an eastern shore;
The world befits a busy brain, —
I'll hie me to its haunts again.
But if, in some succeeding year,
When Britain's May is in the sere,
Thou hear'st of one whose deepening crimes
Suit with the sablest of the times,
Of one, whom love nor pity sways,
Nor hope of fame, nor good men's praise;
One, who in stern ambition's pride,
Perchance not blood shall turn aside;
One rank'd in some recording page
With the worst anarchs of the age,
Him wile thou know — and knowing pause,
Nor with the effect forget the cause.

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 11, 1811.

TO THYRZA

Without a stone to mark the spot,
And say, what Truth might well have said,
By all, save one, perchance forgot,
Ah! wherefore art thou lowly laid?

By many a shore and many a sea
Divided, yet beloved in vain;
The past, the future fled to thee,
To bid us meet no ne'er again!

Could this have been — a word, a look,
That softly said, 'We part in peace,'
Had taught my bosom how to brook,
With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.

And didst thou not, since Death for thee
Prepared a light and pangless dart,
Once long for him thou ne'er shaft see,
Who held, and holds thee in his heart?

Oh! who like him had watch'd thee here?
Or sadly mark'd thy glazing eye,
In that dread hour ere death appear,
When silent sorrow fears to sigh, Till all was past; But when no more
'Twas thine to reek of human woe,
Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
Had flow'd as fast — as now they flow.

Shall they not flow, when many a day
In these, to me, deserted towers,
Ere call'd but for a time away,
Affection's mingling tears were ours?

Ours too the glance none saw beside;
The smile none else might understand;
The whisper'd thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand; The kiss, so guiltless and refined,

That Love each warmer wish forbore;
Those eyes proclaim'd so pure a mind,
Even Passion blush'd to plead for more.

The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine;
The song, celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine; The pledge we wore — I wear it still,
But where is thine? — Ah! where art thou?
Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
But never bent beneath till now!

Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
The cup of woe for me to drain.
If rest alone be in the tomb,
I would not wish thee here again.

But if in worlds more blest than this
Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
Impart some portion of thy bliss,
To wean me from mine anguish here.

Teach me — too early taught by thee!
To bear, forgiving and forgiven:
On earth by love was such to me —
It fain would form my hope in heaven!

October 11, 1811.

AWAY, AWAY, YE NOTES OF WOE!

Away, away, ye notes of woe!
Be silent, thou once soothing strain,
Or I must flee from hence — for, oh!
I dare not trust those sounds again.
To me they speak of brighter days
But lull the chords, for now, alas!
I must not think, I may not gaze,
On what I am — on what I was.

The voice that made those sounds more sweet
Is hush'd, and all their charms are fled
And now their softest notes repeat
A dirge, an anthem o'er the dead!
Yes, Thyrza! yes, they breathe of thee,
Beloved dust! since dust thou art;
And all that once was harmony
Is worse than discord to my heart!

'Tis silent all! — but on my ear
The well remember'd echoes thrill;
I hear a voice I would not hear,
A voice that now might well be still:
Yet oft my doubting soul 'twill shake;
Even slumber owns its gentle tone,
Till consciousness will vainly wake
To listen, though the dream be flown.

Sweet Thyrza! waking as in sleep,
Thou art but now a lovely dream;
A star that trembled o'er the deep,
Then turn'd from earth its tender beam.
But he who through life's dreary way
Must pass, when heaven is veil'd in wrath,
Will long lament the vanish'd ray
That scatter'd gladness o'er his path.

December 6, 1811.

ONE STRUGGLE MORE, AND I AM FREE

One struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One last long sigh to love and thee,
Then back to busy life again.
It suits me well to mingle now
With things that never pleased before!
Though every joy is fled below,
What future grief can touch me more?

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring;
Man was not form'd to live alone:
I'll be that light, unmeaning thing
That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
It was not thus in days more dear,
It never would have been, but thou
Hast fled, and left me lonely here;
Thou'rt nothing — all are nothing now.

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
The smile that sorrow fain would wear
But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
Like roses o'er a sepulchre.
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill:
Though pleasure fires the maddening soul,
The heart, — the heart is lonely still!

On many a lone and lovely night
It sooth'd to gaze upon the sky;
For then I deem'd the heavenly light
Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye:
And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
When sailing o'er the Ægean wave,
'Now Thyrsa gazes on that moon'
Alas, it gleam'd upon her grave!

When stretch'd on fever's sleepless bed.

And sickness shrunk my throbbing veins,
'Tis comfort still,' I faintly said,
'That Thyrza cannot know my pains:'
Like freedom to the time-worn slave,
A boon 'tis idle then to give,
Relenting Nature vainly gave
My life, when Thyrza ceased to live!

My Thyrza's pledge in better days,
When love and life alike were new!
How different now thou meet'st my gaze!
How tinged by time with sorrow's hue!
The heart that gave itself with thee
Is silent — ah, were mine as still!
Though cold as e'en the dead can be,
It feels, it sickens with the chill.

Thou bitter pledge! thou mournful token!
Though painful, welcome to my breast!
Still, still preserve that love unbroken,
Or break the heart to which thou'rt press'd.
Time tempers love, but not removes,
More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
Oh! what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead?

EUTHANASIA

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep, or wish, the coming blow:
No maiden, with dishevelled hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe.

But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near:
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
In her who lives, and him who dies.

'Twere sweet, my Psyche! to the last
Thy features still serene to see:
Forgetful of its struggles past,
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

But vain the wish?for Beauty still
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;
And women's tears, produced at will,
Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan;
For thousands Death hath ceas'd to lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

'Ay, but to die, and go,' alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!

To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be.

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine

Not need to repine,
That all those charms have pass'd away
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that followed such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath passed
And thou wert lovely to the last;
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity

Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.

IF SOMETIMES IN THE HAUNTS OF MEN

If sometimes in the haunts of men
Thine image from my breast may fade,
The lonely hour presents again
The semblance of thy gentle shade:
And now that sad and silent hour
Thus much of thee can still restore,
And sorrow unobserved may pour
The plaint she dare not speak before.

Oh, pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And self-condemn'd, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory:
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly thine.

If not the goblet pass unquaff'd,
It is not drain'd to banish care;
The cup must hold a deadlier draught,
That brings a Lethe for despair.
And could Oblivion set my soul
From all her troubled visions free,
I'd dash to earth the sweetest bowl
That drown'd a single thought of thee.

For wert thou vanish'd from my mind,
Where could my vacant bosom turn?
And who would then remain behind
To honour thine abandon'd Um?
No, no - it is my sorrow's pride
That last dear duty to fulfil:
Though all the world forget beside,
'Tis meet that I remember still.

For well I know. that such had been

Thy gentle care for him, who now
Unmourn'd shall quit this mortal scene,
Where none regarded him, but thou:
And, oh! I feel in that was given
A blessing never meant for me;
Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven
For earthly Love to merit thee.

FROM THE FRENCH

ÆGLE, beauty and poet, has two little crimes;
She makes her own face, and does not make her rhymes.

ON A CORNELIAN HEART WHICH WAS BROKEN

Ill-fated Heart! And can it be,
That thou should'st thus be rent in vain?
Have years of care for thine and thee
Alike been all employ'd in vain?

Yet precious seems each shatter'd part
And every fragment dearer grown
Since he who wears thee feels thou art
A fitter emblem of his own.

March 16, 1812

LINES TO A LADY WEEPING

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away!

Weep — for thy tears are Virtue's tears
Auspicious to these suffering isles;
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles!

THE CHAIN I GAVE: FROM THE TURKISH

The chain I gave was fair to view,
The lute I added sweet in sound;
The heart that offer'd both was true,
And ill deserved the fate it found.

These gifts were charm'd by secret spell,
Thy truth in absence to divine;
And they have done their duty well,
Alas! they could not teach the thine.

That chain was firm in every link,
But not to bear a stranger's touch;
That lute was sweet, till thou could'st think
In other hands its notes were such.

Let him who from thy neck unbound
The chain which shiver'd in his grasp,
Who saw that lute refuse to sound,
Restring the chords, renew the clasp.

When thou wert changed, they alter'd too;
The chain is broke, the music mute.
'Tis past, to them and thee adieu
False heart, frail chain, and silent lute.

LINES WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF 'THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY'

Absent or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell, who share, like me,
In turn thy converse and thy song.

But when the dreaded hour shall come
By Friendship ever deem'd too nigh,
And 'MEMORY' o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die, How fondly will she then repay
Thy homage offer'd at her shrine, to
And blend, while ages roll away,
Her name immortally with thine!

April 19, 1812

**ADDRESS, SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF DRURY-LANE
THEATRE. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1812**

In one dread night our city saw, and sigh'd,
Bow'd to the dust, the Drama's tower of pride
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.

Ye who beheld, (oh! sight admired and mourn'd,
Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it adorn'd!)
Through clouds of fire the massy fragments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven;
Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames, While thousands, throng'd
around the burning dome,
Shrank back appall'd, and trembled for their home,
As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly shone
The skies, with lightnings awful as their own,
Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurp 'd the Muse's realm, and mark'd her fall;
Say - shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,
Rear'd where once rose the mightiest in our isle,
Know the same favour which the former knew,
A shrine for Shakspeare — worthy him and you?

Yes — it shall be — the magic of that name
Defies the scythe of time, the torch of flame;
On the same spot still consecrates the scene,
And bids the Drama be where she hath been:
This fabric's birth attests the potent spell —
Indulge our honest pride, and say, How well!

As soars this fare to emulate the last,
Oh! might we draw our omens from the past,
Some hour propitious to our prayers may boast
Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.
On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
O'erwhelm'd the gentlest, storm'd the sternest heart.
On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grow;

On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew,
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew,
Sigh'd his last thanks, and wept his last adieu:
But still for living wit the wreaths may bloom,
That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.
Such Drury claim'd and claims — nor you refuse
One tribute to revive his slumbering muse;
With garlands deck your own Menander's head,
Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead.
Dear are the days which made our annals bright,
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write.
Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
Vain of our ancestry as they of theirs;
While thus Remembrance borrows Banquo's glass
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass,
And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine
Immortal names, emblazon'd on our line,
Pause — ere their feebler offspring you condemn,
Reflect how hard the task to rival them!

Friends of the stage! to whom both Players and Plays
Must sue alike for pardon or for praise.
Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
The boundless power to cherish or reject;
If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
And made us blush that you forbore to blame;
If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
To soothe the sickly taste it dare not mend,
All past reproach may present scenes refute,
And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute!
Oh! since your fiat stamps the Drama's laws,
Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause;
So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
And reason's voice be echo'd back by ours!

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obey'd
The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
Receive our welcome too, whose every tone
Springs from our hearts, and fair would win your own.
The curtain rises — may our stage unfold

Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old!
Britons our judges, Nature for our guide,
Still may we please — long, long may you preside.

PARENTHETICAL ADDRESS

“When energising objects men pursue,
What are the prodigies they cannot do?
A magic edifice you here survey,
Shot from the ruins of the other day!
As Harlequin had smote the slumberous heap,
And bade the rubbish to a fabric leap.
Yet at that speed you’d never be amazed,
Knew you the *zeal* with which the pile was raised;
Nor even here your smiles would be repress,
Knew you the rival flame that fires our breast, 10
Flame! fire and flame! sad heart-appalling sounds,
Dread metaphors that ope our healing wounds —
A sleeping pang awakes — and — — But away
With all reflections that would cloud the day
That this triumphant, brilliant prospect brings,
Where Hope reviving re-expands her wings;
Where generous joy exults, where duteous ardour springs.

If mighty things with small we may compare,
This spirit drives Britannia’s conquering car,
Burns in her ranks and kindles every tar.
Nelson displayed its power upon the main,
And Wellington exhibits it in Spain;
Another Marlborough points to Blenheim’s story,
And with its lustre, blends his kindred glory. 40

In Arms and Science long our Isle hath shone,
And Shakespeare — wondrous Shakespeare — reared a throne
For British Poesy — whose powers inspire
The British pencil, and the British lyre —
Her we invoke — her Sister Arts implore:
Their smiles beseech whose charms yourselves adore,
These if we win, the Graces too we gain —
Their dear, beloved, inseparable train;

Three who their witching arts from Cupid stole
And three acknowledged sovereigns of the soul: 50
Harmonious throng! with nature blending art!
Divine Sestetto! warbling to the heart
For Poesy shall here sustain the upper part.
Thus lifted gloriously we'll sweep along,
Shine in our music, scenery and song;
Shine in our farce, masque, opera and play,
And prove old Drury has not had her day,
Nay more — so stretch the wing the world shall cry,
Old Drury never, never soared so high.
'But hold,' you'll say, 'this self-complacent boast; 60
Easy to reckon thus without your host.'
True, true — that lowers at once our mounting pride;
'Tis yours alone our merit to decide;
'Tis ours to look to you, you hold the prize
That bids our great, our best ambitions rise.
A *double* blessing *your* rewards impart,
Each good provide and elevate the heart.
Our twofold feeling owns its twofold cause,
Your bounty's *comfort* — *rapture* your applause;
When in your fostering beam you bid us live, 70
You give the means of life, and gild the means you give."

Morning Chronicle, October 17, 1812.]

VERSES FOUND IN A SUMMERHOUSE AT HALES-OWEN

When Dryden's fool, 'unknowing what he sought,'
His hours in whistling spent, 'for want of thought,'
This guiltless oaf his vacancy of sense
Supplied, and amply too, by innocence
Did modern swains, possess'd of Cymon's powers,
In Cymon's manner waste their leisure hours,
Th' offended guests would not, with blushing, see
These fair green walks disgraced by infamy.
Severe the fate of modern fools, alas!

When vice and folly mark them as they pass.
Like noxious reptiles o'er the whiten'd wall,
The filth they leave still points out where they crawl.

REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!

Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Aye, doubt it not.
Thy husband too shall think of thee:
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou false to him, thou fiend to me!

TO TIME

Time! on whose arbitrary wing
The varying hours must flag or fly,
Whose tardy winter, fleeting spring,
But drag or drive us on to die —
Hail thou! who on my birth bestowed
Those boons to all that know thee known;
Yet better I sustain thy load,
For now I bear the weight alone.
I would not one fond heart should share
The bitter moments thou hast given;
And pardon thee — since thou couldst spare
All that I loved, to peace or Heaven.
To them be joy or rest — on me
Thy future ills shall press in vain;
I nothing owe but years to thee,
A debt already paid in pain.
Yet even that pain was some relief;
It felt, but still forgot thy power:
The active agony of grief
Retards, but never counts the hour.
In joy I've sighed to think thy flight
Would soon subside from swift to slow;
Thy cloud could overcast the light,
But could not add a night to Woe;
For then, however drear and dark,
My soul was suited to thy sky;
One star alone shot forth a spark
To prove thee — not Eternity.
That beam hath sunk — and now thou art
A blank — a thing to count and curse
Through each dull tedious trifling part,
Which all regret, yet all rehearse.
One scene even thou canst not deform —
The limit of thy sloth or speed
When future wanderers bear the storm
Which we shall sleep too sound to heed.

And I can smile to think how weak
Thine efforts shortly shall be shown,
When all the vengeance thou canst wreak
Must fall upon — a nameless stone.

TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG

Ah! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my woe,
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows well I knew;
Alas! I find them poison'd too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set;
Or, circled by his fatal fire,
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare,
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

In flattering dreams I deem'd thee mine;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline'
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion, and thy power.

My light of life! ah, tell me why
That pouting lip, and alter'd eye?
My bird of love! my beauteous mate!
And art thou changed, and canst thou hate?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow:
What wretch with me would barter woe?

My bird! relent: one note could give
A charm to bid thy lover live.

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults - while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison; fear not thou!
Thou canst not murder more than now:
I've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest?
Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe.

THOU ART NOT FALSE, BUT THOU ART FICKLE

Thou art not false, but thou art fickle,
To those thyself so fondly sought;
The tears that thou hast forced to trickle
Are doubly bitter from that thought:
'Tis this which breaks the heart thou grieve'st
Too well thou lov'st - too soon thou leavest.

The wholly false the heart despises,
And spurns deceiver and deceit;
But she who not a thought disguises,
Whose love is as sincere as sweet,
When she can change who loved so truly,
It feels what mine has felt so newly.

To dream of joy and wake to sorrow
Is doom'd to all who love or live;
And if, when conscious on the morrow,
We scarce our fancy can forgive,
That cheated us in slumber only,
To leave the waking soul more lonely, What must they feel whom no false
vision,
But truest, tenderest passion warm'd?
Sincere, but swift in sad transition;
As if a dream alone had charm'd?
Ah! sure such grief is fancy's scheming,
And all thy change can be but dreaming!

ON BEING ASKED WHAT WAS THE 'ORIGIN OF LOVE'

The 'Origin of Love!' — Ah why
That cruel question ask of me,
When thou may'st read in many an eye
He starts to life on seeing thee?

And should'st thou seek his end to know:
My heart forebodes, my fears foresee
He'll linger long in silent woe;
But live — until I cease to be.

REMEMBER HIM, WHOM PASSION'S POWER

Remember him, whom Passion's power
Severely — deeply — vainly proved:
Remember thou that dangerous hour,
When neither fell, though both were loved.

That yielding breast, that melting eye,
Too much invited to be blessed:
That gentle prayer, that pleading sigh,
The wilder wish reprov'd, repressed.

Oh! let me feel that all I lost
But saved thee all that Conscience fears;
And blush for every pang it cost
To spare the vain remorse of years.

Yet think of this when many a tongue,
Whose busy accents whisper blame,
Would do the heart that loved thee wrong,
And brand a nearly blighted name.

Think that, whate'er to others, thou
Hast seen each selfish thought subdued:
I bless thy purer soul even now,
Even now, in midnight solitude.

Oh, God! that we had met in time,
Our hearts as fond, thy hand more free;
When thou hadst loved without a crime,
And I been less unworthy thee!

Far may thy days, as heretofore,
From this our gaudy world be past!
And that too bitter moment o'er,
Oh! may such trial be thy last.

This heart, alas! perverted long,
Itself destroyed might there destroy;

To meet thee in the glittering throng,
Would wake Presumption's hope of joy.

Then to the things whose bliss or woe,
Like mine, is wild and worthless all,
That world resign — such scenes forego,
Where those who feel must surely fall.

Thy youth, thy charms, thy tenderness —
Thy soul from long seclusion pure;
From what even here hath passed, may guess
What there thy bosom must endure.

Oh! pardon that imploring tear,
Since not by Virtue shed in vain,
My frenzy drew from eyes so dear;
For me they shall not weep again.

Though long and mournful must it be,
The thought that we no more may meet;
Yet I deserve the stern decree,
And almost deem the sentence sweet.

Still — had I loved thee less — my heart
Had then less sacrificed to thine;
It felt not half so much to part
As if its guilt had made thee mine.

ON LORD THURLOW'S POEMS

When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent
(I hope I am not violent),
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.

And since not even our Rogers' praise
To common sense his thoughts could raise —
Why would they let him print his lays'

To me, divine Apollo, grant — O!
Hermilda's first and second canto,
I'm fitting up a new portmanteau; And thus to furnish decent lining,
My own and others' bays I'm twining, —
So, gentle Thurlow, throw me thine in.

TO LORD THURLOW

'I lay my branch of laurel down.
Then thus to form Apollo's crown.
Let every other bring his own.'~Lord Thurlow's lines to Mr. Rogers

'I lay my branch of laurel down.'
Thou 'lay thy branch of laurel down!'
Why, what thou'st stole is not enow;
And, were it lawfully thine own,
Does Rogers want it most, or thou?
Keep to thyself thy wither'd bough,
Or send it back to Doctor Donne:
Were justice done to both, I trow,
He'd have but little, and thou — none.

'Then thus to form Apollo's crown.'
A crown! why, twist it how you will,
Thy chaplet must be foolscap still.
When next you visit Delphi's town,
Inquire amongst your fellow-lodgers,
They'll tell you Phoebus gave his crown,
Some years before your birth, to Rogers.

'Let every other bring his own.'
When coals to Newcastle are carried,
And owls sent to Athens, as wonders,
From his spouse when the Regent's unmarried,
Or Liverpool weeps o'er his blunders;
When Tories and Whigs cease to quarrel,
When Castlereagh's wife has an heir,
Then Rogers shall ask us for laurel,
And thou shalt have plenty to spare.

TO THOMAS MOORE

WRITTEN THE EVENING BEFORE HIS VISIT TO MR. LEIGH HUNT IN
HORSEMONGER LANE GAOL, MAY 19, 1813

Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town,
Anacreon, Tom Little, Tom Moore, or Tom Brown,
For hang me if I know of which you may most brag,
Your Quarto two-pounds, or your Twopenny Post Bag; But now to my letter-to
yours 'tis an answer —
To-morrow be with me, as soon as you can, sir,
All ready and dress'd for proceeding to sponge on
(According to compact) the wit in the dungeon —
Pray Phobus at length our political malice
May not get us lodgings within the same palace!
I suppose that to-night you're engaged with some codgers,
And for Sotheby's Blues have deserted Sam Rogers;
And I, though with cold I have nearly my death got,
Must put on my breeches, and wait on the Heathcote;
But to-morrow, at four, we will both play the Scurra,
And you'll be Catullus, the Regent Mamurra.

IMPROMPTU, IN REPLY TO A FRIEND

When, from the heart where Sorrow sits,
Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
And clouds the brow, or fills the eye;
Heed not that gloom, which soon shall sink:
My thoughts their dungeon know too well;
Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
And droop within their silent cell.

SONNET, TO GENEVRA

Thine eyes' blue tenderness, thy long fair hair,
And the wan lustre of thy features caught
From contemplation-where serenely wrought,
Seems Sorrow's softness charm'd from its despair —
Have thrown such speaking sadness in thine air
That — but I know thy blessed bosom fraught
With mines of unalloy'd and stainless thought —
I should have deem'd thee doom'd to earthly care.
With such an aspect, by his colours blent,
When from his beauty-breathing pencil born
(Except that thou hast nothing to repent),
The Magdalen of Guido saw the morn —
Such seem'st thou — but how much more excellent!
With nought Remorse can claim — nor Virtue scorn.

December 17, 1813.

SONNET TO GENEVRA

Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes — but, oh!
While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round Heaven's airy bow.
For, though thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a Seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less.

SONNET, TO THE SAME (GENEVRA)

Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes — but, oh!
While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round heaven's airy bow.
For, through thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE, 'TU MI CHAMAS'

In moments to delight devoted,
'My life!' with tenderest tone you cry;
Dear words! on which my heart had doted,
If youth could neither fade nor die.

To death even hours like these must roll,
Ah! then repeat those accents never;
Or change 'my life!' into 'my soul!'
Which, like my love, exists for ever.

ANOTHER VERSION

You call me still your life. — Oh! change the word —
Life is as transient as the inconstant sigh:
Say rather I'm your soul; more just that name,
For, like the soul, my love can never die.

THE DEVIL'S DRIVE: AN UNFINISHED RHAPSODY

The Devil return'd to hell by two,
And he stay'd at home till five;
When he dined on some homicides done in ragoût,
And a rebel or so in an Irish stew,
And sausages made of a self-slain Jew —
And bethought himself what next to do,
'And' quoth he, 'I'll take a drive.
I walk'd in the morning, I'll ride to-night;
In darkness my children take most delight,
And I'll see how my favourites thrive,

'And what shall I ride in?' quoth Lucifer then —
'If I follow'd my taste, indeed,
I should mount in a waggon of wounded men,
And smile to see them bleed.
But these will be furnish'd again and again,
And at present my purpose is speed;
To see my manor as much as I may,
And watch that no souls shall be poach'd away.

'I have a state-coach at Carlton House,
A chariot in Seymour Place;
But they're lent to two friends, who make me amends,
By driving my favourite pace:
And they handle their reins with such a grace,
I have something for both at the end of their race.

'So now for the earth to take my chance:'
Then up to the earth sprang he;
And making a jump from Moscow to France,
He stepp'd across the sea,
And rested his hoof on a turnpike road,
No very great way from a bishop's abode.

But first as he flew, I forgot to say
That he hover'd a moment upon his way,
To look upon Leipsic plain:

And so sweet to his eye was its sulphury glare,
And so soft to his ear was the cry of despair,
That he perch'd on a mountain of slain;
And he gazed with delight from its growing height,
Nor often on earth had he seen such a sight,
Nor his work done half as well:
For the field ran so red with the blood of the dead,
That it blush'd like the waves of hell!
Then loudly, and wildly, and long laugh'd he:
'Methinks they have here little need of me!'

But the softest note that soothed his ear
Was the sound of a widow sighing;
And the sweetest sight was the icy tear,
Which horror froze in the blue eye clear
Of a maid by her lover lying —
As round her fell her long fair hair
And she look'd to heaven with that frenzied air,
Which seem'd to ask if a God were there!
And, stretch'd by the wall of a ruin'd hut,
With its hollow cheek, and eyes half shut,
A child of famine dying:
And the carnage begun, when resistance is done,
And the fall of the vainly flying!

But the Devil has reach'd our, cliffs so white,
And what did he there, I pray?
If his eyes were good, he but saw by night
What we see every day:
But he made a tour, and kept a journal
Of all the wondrous sights nocturnal,
And he sold it in shares to the Men of the Row,
Who bid pretty well — but they cheated him, though!

The Devil first saw, as he thought, the Mail,
Its coachman and his coat
So instead of a pistol he cock'd his tail,
And seized him by the throat:
'Aha!' quoth he, 'what have we here?

‘Tis a new barouche, and an ancient peer!’

So he sat him on his box again,
And bade him have no fear,
But be true to his club, and stanch to his rein,
His brothel, and his beer;
‘Next to seeing a lord at the council board,
I would rather see him here.’

The Devil gat next to Westminster,
And he turn’d to ‘the room’ of the Commons;
But he heard, as he purposed to enter in there,
That ‘the Lords’ had received a summons;
And he thought, as a ‘quondam aristocrat,’
He might peep at the peers, though to hear them were flat;
And he walk’d up the house so like one of our own,
That they say that he stood pretty near the throne.

He saw the Lord Liverpool seemingly wise,
The Lord Westmoreland certainly silly,
And Johnny of Norfolk - a man of some size —
And Chatham, so like his friend Billy;
And he saw the tears in Lord Eldon’s eyes,
Because the Catholics would not rise,
In spite of his prayers and his prophecies;
And he heard - which set Satan himself a staring —
A certain Chief Justice say something like swearing.
And the Devil was shock’d - and quoth he, ‘I must go,
For I find we have much better manners below:
If thus he harangues when he passes my border,
I shall hint to friend Moloch to call him to order.’

WINDSOR POETICS

LINES COMPOSED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT BEING SEEN STANDING BETWEEN THE COFFINS OF HENRY VIII AND CHARLES I, IN THE ROYAL VAULT AT WINDSOR

Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred ties,
By headless Charles see heartless Henry lies;
Between them stands another sceptred thing —
It moves, it reigns — in all but name, a king: Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
- In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and death have mix'd their dust in vain,
Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
Ah, what can tombs avail! — since these disgorge
The blood and dust of both — to mould a George.

ODE TO NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

‘Expendis Annibalem: — quot libras in duce summo
Invenies?~JUVENAL., Sat. X.

I.

Tis done — but yesterday a King!
And arm’d with Kings to strive —
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject — yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew’d our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall’d the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend bath fallen so far.

II.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow’d so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught’st the rest to see.
With might unquestion’d, — power to save, —
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipp’d thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition’s less than littleness!

III.

Thanks for that lesson — It will teach
To after — warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preach ‘d before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway

With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

IV.

The triumph and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife —
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife —
All quell'd! — Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

V.

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince — or live a slave —
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

VI.

He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound:
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke —
Alone — how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed halt done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

VII.

— — — — —

The Roman, when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger — dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home —
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

VIII.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

IX.

But thou — from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung —
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

X.

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
And thank'd him for a throne!

Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

XI.

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain —
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again —
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

XII.

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

XIII.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem, —

‘Tisworth thy vanish’d diadem!

XIV.

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile —
It ne’er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth’s pedagogue hath now
Transferr’d his by-word to thy brow.

XV.

Thou Timour! in his captive’s cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison’d rage?
But one — ‘The world was mine!’
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour’d so widely forth—
So long obey’d — so little worth!

XVI.

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoom’d by God — by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend’s arch mock
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

XVII.

—

'There was a day — there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's — Gaul thine —
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

XVIII.

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest,
As !f that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou Overt fond to wear,
The star, the string the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

XIX.

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes — one — the first — the last — the best —
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

I SPEAK NOT, I TRACE NOT, I BREATHE NOT THY NAME

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name;
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame;
But the tear that now burns on my cheek may impart
The deep thoughts that dwell in that silence of heart.
Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace,
Were those hours - can their joy or their bitterness cease?
We repent, we abjure, we will break from our chain, -
We will part, we will fly to - unite it again!
Oh! thine be the gladness, and mine be the guilt!
Forgive me, adored one! - forsake if thou wilt;
But the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
And man shall not break it - whatever thou may'st.
And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee,
This soul in its bitterest blackness shall be;
And our days seem as swift, and our moments more sweet,
With thee at my side, than with worlds at our feet.
One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy love,
Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or reprove.
And the heartless may wonder at all I resign -
Thy lips shall reply, not to them, but to mine.

May, 1814.

ADDRESS INTENDED TO BE RECITED AT THE CALEDONIAN MEETING.

“Who hath not glow’d above the page where Fame
Hath fix’d high Caledon’s unconquer’d name;
The mountain-land which spurn’d the Roman chain,
And baffled back the fiery-crested Dane,
Whose bright claymore and hardihood of hand
No foe could tame — no tyrant could command.

“That race is gone — but still their children breathe,
And glory crowns them with redoubled wreath:
O’er Gael and Saxon mingling banners shine,
And, England! add their stubborn strength to thine.
The blood which flow’d with Wallace flows as free,
But now ‘tis only shed for fame and thee!
Oh! pass not by the Northern veteran’s claim,
But give support — the world hath given him fame!

“The humbler ranks, the lowly brave, who bled
While cheerly following where the mighty led —
Who sleep beneath the undistinguish’d sod
Where happier comrades in their triumph trod,
To us bequeath — ’tis all their fate allows —
The sireless offspring and the lonely spouse:
She on high Albyn’s dusky hills may raise
The tearful eye in melancholy gaze,
Or view, while shadowy auguries disclose
The Highland seer’s anticipated woes,
The bleeding phantom of each martial form
Dim in the cloud, or darkling in the storm;
While sad, she chants the solitary song,
The soft lament for him who tarries long —
For him, whose distant relics vainly crave
The coronach’s wild requiem to the brave!

“‘Tis Heaven — not man — must charm away the woe
Which bursts when Nature’s feelings newly flow;

Yet tenderness and time may rob the tear
Of half its bitterness for one so dear:
A nation's gratitude perchance may spread
A thornless pillow for the widow'd head;
May lighten well her heart's maternal care,
And wean from penury the soldier's heir."

May 1814

FRAGMENT OF AN EPISTLE TO THOMAS MOORE

‘What say I?’ — not a syllable further in prose;
I’m your man ‘of all measures,’ dear Tom, — so here goes!
Here goes, for a swim on the stream of old Time,
On those buoyant supporters, the bladders of rhyme.
If our weight breaks them down, and we sink in the flood,
We are smother’d, at least, in respectable mud,
Where the Divers of Bathos lie drown’d in a heap,
And Southey’s last Pæan has pillow’d his sleep;
That Felo de se,’ who, half drunk with his malmsey,
Walk’d out of his depth and was lost in a calm sea,
Singing ‘Glory to God’ in a spick and span stanza,
The like (since Tom Sternhold was choked) never man saw.

The papers have told you, no doubt, of the fusses,
The fetes, and the gapings to get at these Russes, —
Of his Majesty’s suite, up from coachman to Hetman,
And what dignity decks the flat face of the great man.
I saw him, last week, at two balls and a party, —
For a prince, his demeanour was rather too hearty.
You know we are used to quite different graces,

The Czar’s look, I own, was much brighter and brisker,
But then he is sadly deficient in whisker;
And wore but a starless blue coat, and in kersey —
Mere breeches whisk’d round, in a waltz with the Jersey,
Who lovely as ever, seem’d just as delighted
With Majesty’s presence as those she invited.

June 1814.

CONDOLATORY ADDRESS TO SARAH

COUNTESS OF JERSEY, ON THE PRINCE REGENT'S RETURNING HER
PICTURE TO MRS. MEE

When the vain triumph of the imperial lord,
Whom servile Rome obey'd, and yet abhorr'd,
Gave to the vulgar gaze each glorious bust,
That left a likeness of the brave or just;
What most admired each scrutinising eye
Of all that deck'd that passing pageantry?
What spread from face to face that wondering air?
The thought of Brutus - for his was not there!
That absence proved his worth, - that absence fix'd
His memory on the longing mind, unmix'd;
And more decreed his glory to endure,
Than all a gold Colossus could secure.
If thus, fair Jersey, our desiring gaze
Search for thy form, in vain and mute amaze,
Amidst those pictured charms, whose loveliness,
Bright though they be, thine own had render'd less:
If he, that vain old man, whom truth admits
Heir of his father's crown, and of his wits,
If his corrupted eye, and wither'd heart,
Could with thy gentle image bear to part;
That tasteless shame be his, and ours the grief,
To gaze on Beauty's band without its chief:
Yet comfort still one selfish thought imparts,
We lose the 'portrait, but preserve our hearts.
What can his vaulted gallery now disclose?
A garden with all flowers — except the rose; —
A fount that only wants its living stream;
A night, with every star, save Dian's beam.
Lost to our eyes the present forms shall be,
That turn from tracing them to dream of thee;
And more on that recall'd resemblance pause,
Than all he shall not force on our applause.
Long may thy yet meridian lustre shine,

with all that virtue asks or Homage mine:
The symmetry of youth, the grace of mien,
The eye that gladdens, and the brow serene;
The glossy darkness of that clustering hair,
Which shades, yet shows that forehead more than fair!
Each glance that wins us, and the life that throws
A spell which will not let our looks repose,
But turn to gaze again, and find anew
Some charm that well rewards another view.
These are not lessen'd, these are still as bright,
Albeit too dazzling for a dotard's sight;
And those must wait till ev'ry charm is gone,
To please the paltry heart that pleases none;-
That dull cold sensualist, whose sickly eye
In envious dimness pass'd thy portrait by;
Who rack'd his little spirit to combine
Its hate of Freedom's loveliness, and thine.

August 1814.

ELEGIAC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF SIR PETER PARKER, BART.

There is a tear for all that die,
A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
And Triumph weeps above the brave.

For them is Sorrow's purest sigh
O'er Ocean's heaving bosom sent:
In vain their bones unburied lie,
All earth becomes their monument!

A tomb is theirs on every page,
An epitaph on every tongue:
The present hours, the future age,
For them bewail, to them belong.

For them the voice of festal mirth
Grows hush'd, their name the only sound;
While deep Remembrance pours to Worth
The goblet's tributary round.

A theme to crowds that knew them not,
Lamented by admiring foes,
Who would not share their glorious lot?
Who would not die the death they chose?

And, gallant Parker! thus enshrined
Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be;
And early valour, glowing, find
A model in thy memory.

But there are breasts that bleed with thee
In woe, that glory cannot quell;
And shuddering hear of victory
Where one so dear, so dauntless, fell.

Where shall they turn to mourn thee less?

When cease to hear thy cherish'd name?
Time cannot teach forgetfulness
While Grief's full heart is fed by Fame.

Alas! for them, though not for thee,
They cannot choose but weep the more;
Deep for the dead the grief must be,
Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before.

October 1814.

TO BELSHAZZAR

Belshazzar! from the banquet turn,
Nor in thy sensual fulness fall;
Behold! while yet before thee burn
The graven words, the glowing wall.
Many a despot men miscall
Crown'd and anointed from on high;
But thou, the weakest, worst of all
Is it not written, thou must die?

Go! dash the roses from thy brow —
Grey hairs but poorly wreath with them;
Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
More than thy very diadem,
Where thou hast tarnish'd every gem:
Then throw the worthless bauble by,
Which, worn by thee, ev'n slaves contemn;
And learn like better men to die!

Oh! early in the balance weigh'd,
And ever light of word and worth,
Whose soul expired ere youth decay'd,
And left thee but a mass of earth.
To see thee moves the scorner's mirth:
But tears in Hope's averted eye
Lament that even thou hadst birth —
Unfit to govern, live, or die.

DOMESTIC PIECES, 1816



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Byron's Cave, Portovenere, Italy — a source of great inspiration to the poet

Fare Thee Well Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well:
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain.
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again; Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee--
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe: Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own life retaineth,
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is - that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father!'

Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd!

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with thee they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee--by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now: But 'tis done--all words are idle
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well! thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

A Sketch

Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next for some gracious service unexpress'd,
And from its wages only to be guess'd
Raised from the toilette to the table, where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair.
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabash'd,
She dines from off the plate she lately wash'd.
Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie,
The genial confidante, and general spy,
Who could, ye gods! her next employment guess--
An only infants earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learn'd to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows;
As many a nameless slander deftly shows.
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know--but that high Soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foil'd was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which Flattery fool'd not, Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, near Contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil,
Nor master'd Science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
Nor Envy ruffle o retaliate pain,
Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor Passion bow,
Nor virtue teach austerity-till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness--to forgive,
Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her below:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would amend.

But to the theme, now laid aside too long,
The baleful burthen of this honest song,
Though all her former functions are no more,
She rules the circle which she served before.

If mothers--none know why--before her quake;
If daughters dread her for the mothers' sake;
If early habits--those false links, which bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will;
If like a snake she steal within your walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find;
What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
Skill'd by a touch to deepen scandal's tints
With all the kind mendacity of hints,
While mingling truth with falsehood, sneers with smiles,
A thread of candour with a web of wiles:
A plain blunt show of briefly--spoken seaming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul-harden'd scheming;
A lip of lies; a face form'd to conceal,
And, without feeling, mock at all who feel:
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown ,
A cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone.
Mark, how the channels of her yellow blood
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud,
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale--
(For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face)
Look on her features! and behold her mind
As in a mirror of itself defined:
Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged
There is no trait which might not be enlarged:

Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade--
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

Oh! wretch without a tear-without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought--
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflicttest now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crush 'd affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!
And make thee in thy leprosy of mind
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind!
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black--as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,
The widow'd couch of fire, that thou hast spread!
Then, when thou fain wouldst weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims--and despair!
Down to the dust!--and, as thou rott'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear--
Thy name--thy human name--to every eye
The climax of all scorn should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorr'd compeers--
And festering in the infamy of years.

Endorsement To The Deed Of Separation In The April Of 1816

A year ago, you swore, fond she!
'To love, to honour,' and so forth:
Such was the vow you pledged to me,
And here's exactly what 'tis worth.

Stanzas To Augusta When all around grew drear and dark,
And reason half withheld her ray —
And hope but shed a dying spark
Which more misled my lonely way;

In that deep midnight of the mind,
And that internal strife of heart,
When dreading to be deemed too kind,
The weak despair — the cold depart; When fortune changed — and love fled far,
And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
Which rose, and set not to the last.

Oh, blest be thine unbroken light!
That watched me as a seraph's eye,
And stood between me and the night,
For ever shining sweetly nigh.

And when the cloud upon us came,
Which strove to blacken o'er thy ray —
Then purer spread its gentle flame,
And dashed the darkness all away.

Still may thy spirit dwell on mine,
And teach it what to brave or brook —
There's more in one soft word of thine
Than in the world's defied rebuke.

Thou stood'st as stands a lovely tree
That, still unbroke though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.

The winds might rend, the skies might pour,
But there thou wert — and still wouldst be
Devoted in the stormiest hour
To shed thy weeping leaves o'er me.

But thou and thine shall know no blight,

Whatever fate on me may fall;
For heaven in sunshine will requite
The kind — and thee the most of all.

Then let the ties of baffled love
Be broken — thine will never break;
Thy heart can feel — but will not move;
Thy soul, though soft, will never shake.

And these, when all was lost beside,
Were found, and still are fixed in thee; —
And bearing still a breast so tried,
Earth is no desert — e'en to me.

Stanzas To Augusta II.

I.

Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in thee.

II.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean.
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from thee.

III.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain - it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not contemn;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me
'Tis of thee that I think - not of them.

IV.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,

Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

V.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one;
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of thee.

VI.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd
Thus much I at least may recall
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of thee.

Epistle To Augusta

I.

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine;
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the same
A loved regret which I would not resign,
There yet are two things in my destiny, -
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

II.

The first were nothing-had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore,
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

III.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

IV.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day

That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift,- a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay:
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

V.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away
Something-I know not what-does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience; not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

VI.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me - or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear,)
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

VII.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love-but none like thee.

VIII.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation;- to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate'
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

IX.

Oh that thou wert but with me! - but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

X.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make,
Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved they are
Resign 'd For ever, or divided far.

XI.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,

And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister - till I look again on thee.

XII.

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not; for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun.
The earliest - even the only paths for me -
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and thou hadst not wept.

XIII.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make - a name.
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over - I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

XIV.

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that were;
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

XV.

And for the remnant which may be to come
I am content; and for the past I feel

I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless,-for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would steal,
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings further. - Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

XVI.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are - I am, even as thou art
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwined-let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

The Dream

/

Our life is twofold; Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality,
And dreams in their development have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off waking toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity;
They pass like spirits of the past -they speak
Like sibyls of the future; they have power -
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;
They make us what we were not -what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by,
The dread of vanished shadows -Are they so?
Is not the past all shadow? -What are they?
Creations of the mind? -The mind can make
Substances, and people planets of its own
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.
I would recall a vision which I dreamed
Perchance in sleep -for in itself a thought,
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into one hour.

//

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
Green and of mild declivity, the last
As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,

But a most living landscape, and the wave
Of woods and corn-fields, and the abodes of men
Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke
Arising from such rustic roofs: the hill
Was crowned with a peculiar diadem
Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,
Not by the sport of nature, but of man:
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there
Gazing -the one on all that was beneath
Fair as herself -but the boy gazed on her;
And both were young, and one was beautiful:
And both were young -yet not alike in youth.
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him; he had looked
Upon it till it could not pass away;
He had no breath, no being, but in hers:
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,
Which coloured all his objects; -he had ceased
To live within himself: she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all; upon a tone,
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,
And his cheek change tempestuously -his heart
Unknowing of its cause of agony.
But she in these fond feelings had no share:
Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
Even as a brother -but no more; 'twas much,
For brotherless she was, save in the name
Her infant friendship had bestowed on him;
Herself the solitary scion left
Of a time-honoured race. -It was a name
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not -and why?
Time taught him a deep answer -when she loved
Another, even now she loved another

Alonely; even now she loved alonely,
And on the summit of that hill she stood
Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

III

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
There was an ancient mansion, and before
Its walls there was a steed caparisoned:
Within an antique Oratory stood
The Boy of whom I spake; -he was alone,
And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon
He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced
Words which I could not guess of; then he leaned
His bowed head on his hands and shook, as 'twere
With a convulsion -then rose again,
And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear
What he had written, but he shed no tears.
And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,
The Lady of his love re-entered there;
She was serene and smiling then, and yet
She knew she was by him beloved; she knew -
For quickly comes such knowledge -that his heart
Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw
That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
A tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;
He dropped the hand he held, and with slow steps
Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,
For they did part with mutual smiles; he passed
From out the massy gate of that old Hall,
And mounting on his steed he went his way;
And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

IV

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his Soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruined walls that had survived the names
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man,
Glad in a flowing garb, did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumbered around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in heaven.

V

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better: in her home,
A thousand leagues from his, -her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,
Daughters and sons of Beauty, -but behold!
Upon her face there was a tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be? -she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,
Or ill-repressed affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be? -she had loved him not,

Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which preyed
Upon her mind -a spectre of the past.

VI

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was returned. -I saw him stand
Before an altar -with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood; -as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The selfsame aspect and the quivering shock
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then -
As in that hour -a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced -and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been -
But the old mansion, and the accustomed hall,
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny, came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light;
What business had they there at such a time?

VII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love; -Oh! she was changed,
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes,
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become
The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things.

were combinations of disjoined things,
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight familiar were to hers.
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth?
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

VIII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compassed round
With Hatred and Contention; Pain was mixed
In all which was served up to him, until,
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men,
And made him friends of mountains; with the stars
And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues: and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;
To him the book of Night was opened wide,
And voices from the deep abyss revealed
A marvel and a secret. -Be it so.

IX

My dream is past; it had no further change.
It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
Almost like a reality -the one
To end in madness -both in misery.

Lines On Hearing That Lady Byron Was Ill

And thou wert sad - yet I was not with thee;
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near;
Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was not - and pain and sorrow here!
And is it thus?-it is as I foretold,
And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shatter'd spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no more,
But in the after - silence on the shore.
When all is lost, except a little life.
I am too well avenged! - but 'twas my right ;
Whate'er my sins might be, thou wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite -
Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful! - thou
Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.
Thy nights are banish'd from the realms of sleep! -
Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could defend, And be avenged, or turn them into
friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread - in thy own weakness shielded,
And in my love, which hath but too much yielded,
And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare;
And thus upon the world - trust in thy truth,
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd youth -
On things that were not, and on things that are -
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt!

'The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope - and all the better life,
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future gold -
And buying others' grief at any price.
And thus once enter 'd into crooked ways,
The earthly truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee - but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits - the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence - the pretext
Of prudence, with advantages annex'd -
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is won
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

September 1816.

Darkness

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went--and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires--and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings--the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire--but hour by hour
They fell and faded--and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash--and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,

Hissing, but stingless--were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again:--a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
All earth was but one thought--and that was death
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails--men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a Gorse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress--he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects--saw, and shriek'd, and died--
Even of their mutual hideousness they
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless,
A lump of death--a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And the great cities full of the dead

And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them--She was the Universe.

Diodati, July 1816.

Monody On The Death Of The Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan

When the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm, so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but weep,
A holy concord, and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow, but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness, but full and clear,
A sweet dejection, a transparent tear,
Unmix'd with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame, and secret without pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instils
When Summer's day declines along the hills.
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed - a Power
Hath pass'd from day to darkness - to whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeath'd - no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit, the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song, the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun, but still have left behind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind;
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced, and lighten'd over all,
To show to mine, to please, to entertain!

to cheer, to pierce, to please, or to appal.
From the charm'd council to the festive board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised, the proud, who made his praise their pride.
When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath - the delegated voice of God!
Which shook the nations through his lips, and blazed
Till vanquish 'd senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all young and warm,
The gay creations of his spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue, the deathless wit,
Which knew not what it was to intermit;
The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring;
These wondrous beings of his fancy, wrought
To fulness by the fiat of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may meet,
Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat;
A halo of the light of other days,
Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause - ah! little do they know
That what to them seem'd Vice might be but Woo.
Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fix'd for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel, accuser, judge, and spy,
The foe, the fool, the jealous, and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others' pain,
Behold the host! delighting to deprave.

Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the troth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the pyramid of Calumny!
These are his portion - but if join'd to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,
If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To soothe Indignity - and face to face
Meet sordid Rage, and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renew'd caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness:-
If such may be the ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric--charged with fire from Heaven,
Black with the rude collision inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turn'd to thunderscorch, and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be - if such have ever been
Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanish'd beam, and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight.
Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous Three!
Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's muse is dear,
He was your Master-emulate him her!
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother - bear his ashes hence!
While Powers of mind almost of boundless range,
Complete in kind, as various in their change,
While Eloquence, Wit, Poesy, and Mirth,

That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,
Survive within our souls - while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud preeminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness, long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that nature form'd but one such man,
And broke the die - in moulding Sheridan!

Churchill's Grave: A Fact Literally Rendered

I stood beside the grave of him who blazed
The comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed
With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,
With name no clearer than the names unknown,
Which lay unread around it; and I ask'd
The Gardener of that ground, why it might be
That for this plant strangers his memory task'd,
Through the thick deaths of half a century?
And thus he answered - ' Well, I do not know
Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;
He died before my day of Sextonship,
And I had not the digging of this grave.'
And is this all? I thought - and do we rip
The veil of Immortality, and crave
I know not what of honour and of light
Through unborn ages, to endure this blight,
So soon, and so successful? As I said,
The Architect of all on which we tread,
For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay,
To extricate remembrance from the clay,
Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought,
Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers;- as he caught,
As 'twere the twilight of a former Sun,
Thus spoke he,- 'I believe the man of whom
You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
Was a most famous writer in his day,
And therefore travellers step from out their way
To pay him honour,- and myself whate'er
Your honour pleases:' - then most pleased I shook
From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver, which as 'twere
Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare
So much but inconveniently:-Ye smile,

I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,
Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.
You are the fools, not I - for I did dwell
With a deep thought, and with a soften'd eye,
On that Old Sexton's natural homily,
In which there was Obscurity and Fame -
The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

Diodati, 1816.

Prometheus

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refus'd thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift Eternity
Was thine--and thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself--and equal to all woes,
And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concentr'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

A Fragment Could I remount the river of my years
To the first fountain of our smiles and tears,
I would not trace again the stream of hours
Between their outworn banks of withered flowers,
But bid it flow as now - until it glides
Into the number of the nameless tides.

*

What is this Death? - a quiet of the heart?
The whole of that of which we are a part?
For Life is but a vision - what I see
Of all which lives alone is Life to me,
And being so - the absent are the dead,
Who haunt us from tranquillity, and spread
A dreary shroud around us, and invest
With sad remembrancers our hours of rest.
The absent are the dead - for they are cold,
And ne'er can be what once we did behold;
And they are changed, and cheerless, - or if yet
The unforgotten do not all forget,
Since thus divided - equal must it be
If the deep barrier be of earth, or sea;
It may be both - but one day end it must
In the dark union of insensate dust.
The under-earth inhabitants - are they
But mingled millions decomposed to clay?
The ashes of a thousand ages spread
Wherever Man has trodden or shall tread?
Or do they in their silent cities dwell
Each in his incommunicative cell?
Or have they their own language? and a sense
Of breathless being? - darkened and intense
As Midnight in her solitude? - Oh Earth!
Where are the past? - and wherefore had they birth?
The dead are thy inheritors - and we
But bubbles on thy surface; and the key
Of thy profundity is in the Grave,

The absent are the dead - for they are cold,

One ebon portal or tiny peopled cave,
Where I would walk in spirit, and behold
Our elements resolved to things untold,
And fathom hidden wonders, and explore
The essence of great bosoms now no more.

*

Diodati, July, 1816.

[First published, Letters and Journals, 1830, ii. 36.]

Sonnet to Lake Lemman

Rousseau -- Voltaire -- our Gibbon -- De Staël --
Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these! wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by thee
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

Bright Be The Place Of Thy Soul!

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be:
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

A Very Mournful Ballad On The Siege And Conquest Of Alhama

Which, in the Arabic language, is to the following purport:

I

THE Moorish King rides up and down,
Through Granada's royal town;
From Elvira's gate to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.
Woe is me, Alhama!

II

Letters to the monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell:
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.
Woe is me, Albamal

III

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin
To the Alhambra spurring in.
Woe is me, Alhama!

IV

When the Alhambra walls he gain'd,
On the moment he ordain'd
That the trumpet straight should sound
With the silver clarion round.
Woe is me, Alhamal

V

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar

Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain.
Woe is me, Alhama!

VI

Then the Moors, by this aware,
That bloody Mars recall'd them there,
One by one, and two by two,
To a mighty squadron grew.
Woe is me, Alhama!

VII

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before,
'Wherefore call on us, oh King?
What may mean this gathering?'
Woe is me, Alhama!

VIII

'Friends! ye have, alas! to know
Of a most disastrous blow;
That the Christians, stern and bold,
Have obtain'd Albania's hold.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

IX

Out then spake old Alfaqui,
With his beard so white to see,
'Good King! thou art justly served,
Good King! this thou hast deserved.
Woe is me, Alhama!

X

'By thee were slain, in evil hour,

The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
And strangers were received by thee
Of Cordova the Chivalry.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XI

'And for this, oh King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement:
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XII

'He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIII

Fire Crashed from out the old Moor's eyes,
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answer'd, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIV

'There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings:
'Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XV

Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui!

MOOR! Alhama! MOOR! Alhama!
Though thy beard so hoary be,
The King hath sent to have thee seized,
For Alhama's loss displeased.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVI

And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That thus for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVII

'Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth!
Let the Moorish Monarch know,
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVIII

'But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;
And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIX

'Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives!
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XX

MOOR! Alhama! MOOR! Alhama!

'I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXI

And as these things the old Moor said,
They sever'd from the trunk his head;
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
'Twas carried, as the King decreed.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXII

And men and infants therein weep
Their loss, so heavy and so deep;
Granada's ladies, all she rears
Within her walls, burst into tears.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXIII

And from the windows o'er the walls
The sable web of mourning falls;
The King weeps as a woman o'er
His loss, for it is much and sore.
Woe is me, Alhama!

Stanzas For Music: They Say That Hope Is Happiness They say that

Hope is happiness;

But genuine Love must prize the past,

And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless:

They rose the first--they set the last; And all that Memory loves the most

Was once our only Hope to be,

And all that Hope adored and lost

Hath melted into Memory.

Alas it is delusion all:

The future cheats us from afar,

Nor can we be what we recall,

Nor dare we think on what we are.

On A Nun

Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy; and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And gazing upon either, both required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired
Becomes extinguish'd, soon - too soon - expires:
But thine, within the closing grate retired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But thou at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never - meeting eyes,
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice once more:
I to the marble, where my daughter lies,
Rush, - the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock but none replies.

On The Bust Of Helen By Canova

In this beloved marble view,
Above the works and thoughts of man,
What Nature could, but would not, do,
And Beauty and Canova can!
Beyond imagination's power,
Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With immortality her dower,
Behold the Helen of the heart!

Song For The Luddites

I.

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will die fighting, or live free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

II.

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

III.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd!

Versicles

I Read the 'Christabel';
Very well:
I read the Missionary';
Pretty - very
I tried at Ilderim ;
Ahem!
I read a sheet of 'Marg'ret of Anjou';
Can you?
I turn'd a page of Scott's 'Waterloo';
Pooh! pooh!
I look'd at Wordsworth's milk-white
'Rylstone Doe';
Hillo!
&c. &c. &c.

March 1817.

So We'll Go No More a-Roving So we'll go no more a-roving

So late into the night,
Though the heart still be as loving,
And the moon still be as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul outwears the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

To Thomas Moore

What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?
Sighing or suing now,
Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
Which, Thomas Moore?

But the Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
The Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!
Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

To Mr. Murray To hook the reader, you, John Murray,
Have publish'd 'Anjou's Margaret,
Which won't be sold off in a hurry
(At least, it has not been as yet);
And then, still further to bewilder em,
Without remorse, you set up 'Ilderim;'
So mind you don't get into debt,
Because as how, if you should fail,
These books would be but baddish bail.

And mind you do not let escape
These rhymes to Morning Post or Parry,
Which would be very treacherous--very,
And get me into such a scrape!
For, firstly, I should have to sally,
All in my little boat, against a Galley;
And, should I chance to slay the Assyrian wight,
Have next to combat with the female knight.

March 25, 1817.

To Thomas Moore (My Boat Is On The Shore) I.

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

II.

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

III.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

IV.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

V.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be - peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

July 1817.

Epistle From Mr. Murray To Dr. Polidori

Dear Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery:
Your dialogue is apt and smart:
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies.
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see:
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,
But - and I grieve to speak it--plays
Are drugs - mere drugs, sir--now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by 'Manual'--
Too lucky if it prove not annual,
And Sotheby, with his 'Orestes,'
(Which, by the by, the author's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand,
That I despair of all demand.
I've advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;--
Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber,
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of - it's no more a drama

A SORT OF--IT'S NO MORE A GRAND
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama:
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice.
In short, sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the street so thunder!
My room's so full--we've Gifford here
Reading MS., with Hookham Frere
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles.

The Quarterly--Ah, sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!
A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what--but to resume:
As I was saying, sir, the room
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits:
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way;
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chantrey
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!
Thus run our time and tongues away;
But, to return, sir, to your play:
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill;
My hands so full, my head so busy,
I'm almost dead, and always dizzy;

And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours
JOHN MURRAY.

Epistle To Mr. Murray

My dear Mr. Murray,
You're in a damn 'd hurry,
To set up this ultimate Canto;
But (if they don't rob us)
You'll see Mr. Hobhouse
Will bring it safe in his portmanteau.

For the Journal you hint of,
As ready to print off,
No doubt you do right to commend it;
But as yet I have writ off
The devil a bit of
Our 'Beppo:'--when copied, I'll send it.

Then you've Sotheby's Tour,--
No great things, to be sure,--
You could hardly begin with a less work;
For the pompous rascallion,
Who don't speak Italian
Nor French, must have scribbled by guess work.

You can make any loss up
With 'Spence' and his gossip,
A work which must surely succeed;
Then Queen Mary's Epistle-craft,
With the new 'Fytte' of 'Whistlecraft,'
Must make people purchase and read.

Then you've General Gordon,
Who girded his sword on,
To serve with a Muscovite master
And help him to polish
A nation so owlsh,
They thought shaving their beards a disaster.

For the man, 'poor and shrewd,'
With whom you'd conclude

A compact without more delay,
Perhaps some such pen is
Still extant in Venice;
But please, sir, to mention your pay.

Venice, January 8, 1818.

To Mr. Murray (Strahan, Tonson Lintot Of The Times) Strahan,
Tonson Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
For thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
My Murray.

To thee, with hope and terror dumb,
The unedged MS. authors come;
Thou printest all - and sellest some--
My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,--
But where is thy new Magazine,
My Murray?

Along thy sprucest bookshelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine-
The 'Art of Cookery,' and mine,
My Murray.

Tours, Travels, Essays, too, I wist,
And Sermons, to thy mill bring grist;
And then thou hast the 'Navy List,'
My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without 'the Board of Longitude,'
Although this narrow paper would,
My Murray.

Venice, March 25, 1818.

On The Birth Of John William Rizzo Hoppner

His father's sense, his mother's grace,
In him I hope, will always fit so;
With--still to keep him in good case--
The health and appetite of Rizzo.

Ode On Venice

I.

Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,

What should thy sons do?--anything but weep
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers--as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh! Agony--that centuries should reap
No mellow harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas--and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors

when vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirit soaring--albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek:
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him, and the dizzy
Chamber swims round and round, and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness,--and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!--Search the page
Of many thousand years--the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting to be which hath been
Hath taught us nought, or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air:

For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter 'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order--they must go
Even where their driver goads them though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,

A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the real;
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme! Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
Save the few spirits who, despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
By the down-thundering of the prison wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains, when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore, in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand,--or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'Twos not for them, their necks were too much how'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain:
Yes! the few spirits, who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations--fair, when free
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III.

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom--godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench her spirit, in her fate
All eyes are turn'd to the feasted monarchs kneel -

All were enwrappt as the reasted monarchs knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled - with the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship; even her crimes
Were of the softer order--born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
And call'd the 'kingdom' of a conquering foe,
But knows what all--and, most of all, we know--
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!
The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd--a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science--
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic! - She has taught
Her Equal brethren that the haughty flag

Her Esau--brethren that the naughty hag,
The floating fence of Albion's feeble crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Stilt, still, for ever,
Better, though each man's life--blood were a river,
That it should flow, and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering: better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylae,
Than stagnate in our marsh,--or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

Stanzas To The Po

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the Lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me: What if thy deep and ample stream should
be

A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

What do I say—a mirror of my heart?
Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
And such as thou art were my passions long.

Time may have somewhat tamed them,—not for ever
Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away: But left long wrecks behind, and
now again,
Borne in our old unchanged career, we move:
Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
And I—to loving one I should not love.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
Her native walls, and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
The twilight air, unharmed by summer's heat.

She will look on thee,—I have looked on thee,
Full of that thought: and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
Without the inseparable sigh for her!

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream,—
Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
That happy wave repass me in its flow!

— — — — —
The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep?—
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
As various as the climates of our birth.

A stranger loves the Lady of the land;
Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Is all meridian, as if never fanned
By the black wind that chills the polar flood.

My blood is all meridian; were it not
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot
A slave again of love,—at least of thee.

'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish young—
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

Sonnet To George The Fourth, On The Repeal Of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Forfeiture

To be the father of the fatherless,
To stretch the hand from the throne's height, and raise
His offspring, who expired in other days
To make thy sire's sway by a kingdom less,--
This is to be a monarch, and repress
Envy into unutterable praise.
Dismiss thy guard, and trust thee to such traits,
For who would lift a hand, except to bless?
Were it not easy, sir, and is't not sweet
To make thyself beloved? and to be
Omnipotent by mercy's means? for thus
Thy sovereignty would grow but more complete:
A despot thou, and yet thy people free,
And by the heart, not hand, enslaving us.

Epigram: From The French Of Rulhières

If, for silver or for gold,
You could melt ten thousand pimples
Into half a dozen dimples,
Then your face we might behold,
Looking, doubtless, much more snugly;
Yet even then 'twould be damned ugly.

August 12, 1819.

Stanzas

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure
We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form 'd for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh!
When link 'd together,
In every weather,
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing
He'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring Like chiefs of Faction,
His life is action--
A formal paction
That curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Cuckoo's nest

such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His power enhancing,
He must move on--
Repose but cloy him,
Retreat destroys him,
Love brooks not a degraded throne.

Wait not, fond lover!
Till years are over,
And then recover
As from a dream.
While each bewailing
The other's failing,
With wrath and railing,
All hideous seem--
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Wait not till teasing
All passion blight:
If once diminish'd,
Love's reign is finish'd--
Then part in friendship-and bid goodnight.

So shall Affection
To recollection
The dear connexion
Bring back with joy:
You had not waited
Till, tired or hated,
Your passions sated
Began to cloy.
Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces--
The same fond faces
As through the past:
And eyes, the mirrors
Of your sweet errors.

Reflect but rapture--not least though last.

True, separations
Ask more than patience;
What desperations
From such have risen!
But yet remaining,
What is't but chaining
Hearts which, once waning,
Beat 'gainst their prison?
Time can but cloy love
And use destroy love:
The winged boy, Love,
Is but for boys--
You'll find it torture,
Though sharper, shorter
To wean, and not wear out your joys.

On My Wedding-Day

Here's a happy new year! but with reason
I beg you'll permit me to say
Wish me many returns of the season,
But as few as you please of the dy.

January 2, 1820.

Epitaph For William Pitt

With death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

Epigram

In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will. Cobbett has done well:
You visit him on earth again,
He'll visit you in hell.

Stanzas: When A Man Hath No Freedom

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knock'd on the head for his labours.
To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
And, is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get knighted.

Epigram: The World Is A Bundle Of Hay

The world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses who pull;
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull.

The Charity Ball

What matter the pangs of a husband and father,
If his sorrows in exile be great or be small,
So the Pharisee's glories around her she gather,
And the saint patronizes her 'charity ball!'

What matters--a heart which, though faulty, was feeling,
Be driven to excesses which once could appal--
That the sinner should suffer is only fair dealing,
As the saint keeps her charity back for 'the ball'!

**Epigram, On The Braziers' Company Having Resolved To Present
An Address To Queen Caroline**

The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass
An address, and present it themselves all in brass,--
A superfluous pageant-for, by the Lord Harry!
They'll find where they're going much more than they carry.

Epigram On My Wedding- Day To Penelope

This day, of all our days, has done
The worst for me and you :-
'Tis just six years since we were one,
And five since we were two.

On My Thirty-Third Birthday, January 22, 1821

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing--except thirty-three.

Martial, Lib. I, Epig. I.

‘Hic est, quem legis, ille, quem requiris, Tota notus in orbe Martialis,’ &c.

He unto whom thou art so partial,
Oh, reader is the well-known Martial,
The Epigrammatist: while living,
Give him the fame thou wouldst be giving;
So shall he hear, and feel, and know it--
Post obits rarely reach a poet.

Bowles And Campbell To the tune of 'Why, how now, saucy jade?'

Why, how now, saucy Tom?
If you thus must ramble,
I will publish some
Remarks on Mister Campbell.

ANSWER

Why, how now, Billy Bowles?
Sure the priest is maudlin!
(To the public) How can you, d--n your souls!
Listen to his twaddling?

Epigrams

Oh, Castlereagh! thou art a patriot now;
Cato died for his country, so didst thou:
He perish'd rather than see Rome enslaved,
Thou cutt' st thy throat that Britain may be saved!
So Castlereagh has cut his throat!--The worst
Of this is, - that his own was not the first.
So He has cut his throat at last!--He! Who?
The man who cut his country's long ago.

Epitaph

Posterity will ne'er survey
A nobler grave than this:
Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop, traveler--

John Keats

Who killed John Keats?
'I,' says the Quarterly,
So savage and Tartarly;
''Twas one of my feats.'

Who shot the arrow?
'The poet-priest Milman
(So ready to kill man),
Or Southey or Barrow.

The Conquest

The Son of Love and Lord of War I sing;
Him who bade England bow to Normandy
And left the name of conqueror more than king
To his unconquerable dynasty.
Not fann'd alone by Victory's fleeting wing,
He rear'd his bold and brilliant throne on high:
The Bastard kept, like lions, his prey fast,
And Britain's bravest victor was the last.

To Mr. Murray (For Oxford And For Waldegrave) For Oxford and for
Waldegrave

You give much more than me you gave;
Which is not fairly to behave,
My Murray.

Because if a live dog, 'tis said,
Be worth a lion fairly sped,
A live lord must be worth two dead,
My Murray.

And if, as the opinion goes,
Verse hath a better sale than prose--
Certes, I should have more than those,
My Murray.

But now this sheet is nearly cramm'd,
So, if you will, I shan't be shamm'd,
And if you won't, you may be damn'd,
My Murray.

The Irish Avatar

‘And Ireland, like a bastinadoed elephant,
kneeling to receive the paltry rider.’~Curran.

Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave,
And her ashes still float to their home o’er the tide,
Lo! George the triumphant speeds over the wave,
To the long-cherish’d isle which he loved like his--bride!

True, the great of her bright and brief era are gone,
The rainbow-like epoch where Freedom could pause
For the few little years, out of centuries won,
Which betray’d not, or crush’d not, or wept not her cause.

True, the chains of the Catholic clank o’er his rags,
The castle still stands, and the senate’s no more,
And the famine which dwelt on her freedomless crags
Is extending its steps to her desolate shore.

To her desolate shore--where the emigrant stands
For a moment to gaze ere he flies from his hearth;
Tears fall on his chain, though it drops from his hands,
For the dungeon he quits is the place of his birth.

But he comes! the Messiah of royalty comes!
Like a goodly Leviathan roll’d from the waves;
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,
With a legion of cooks, and an army of slaves!

He comes in the promise and bloom of threescore,
To perform in the pageant the sovereign’s part
But long live the shamrock, which shadows him o’er!
Could the green in his hat be transferr’d to his heart!

Could that long-wither’d spot but be verdant again,
And a new spring of noble affections arise
Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies.

Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
Were he God--as he is but the commonest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow
Such servile devotion might shame him away.

Ay, roar in his train! let thine orators lash
Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride
Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash
His soul o'er the freedom implored and denied.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good!
So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest!
With all which Demosthenes wanted endued,
And his rival or victor in all he possess'd.

Ere Tully arose in the zenith of Rome,
Though unequall'd, preceded, the task was begun--
But Grattan sprung up like a god from the tomb
Of ages, the first, last, the saviour, the one!

With the skill of an Orpheus to soften the brute;
With the fire of Prometheus to kindle mankind
Even Tyranny listening sate melted or mute,
And Corruption shrunk scorch'd from the glance of his mind.

But back to our theme! Back to despots and slaves!
Feasts furnish'd by Famine! Rejoicings by Pain!
True freedom but welcomes, while slavery still raves,
When a week's saturnalia hath loosen'd her chain.

Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck can afford
(As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin would hide),
Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy lord!
Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his blessings denied!

Or if freedom past hope be extorted at last,
If the idol of brass find his feet are of clay,
Must what terror or policy wring forth be class'd
With what monarchs ne'er give, but as wolves yield their prey?

Each brute hath its nature; a king's is to reign,
To reign! in that word see, ye ages, comprised
The cause of the curses all annals contain,
From Caesar the dreaded to George the despised!

Wear, Fingal, thy trapping! O'Connell, proclaim
His accomplishments! Hist!!! and thy country convince
Half an age's contempt was an error of fame,
And that 'Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest young prince!'

Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal, recall
The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs?
Or, has it not bound thee the fastest of all
The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

Ay! 'Build him a dwelling!' let each give his mite!
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome hath arisen!
Let thy beggars and helots their pittance unite -
And a palace bestow for a poor-house and prison!

Spread--spread, for Vitellius, the royal repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to the gorge!
And the roar of his drunkards proclaim him at last
The fourth of the fools and oppressors call'd 'George!'

Let the tables be loaded with feasts till they groan!
Till they groan like thy people, through ages of woe!
Let the wine flow around the old Bacchanal's throne,
Like their blood which has flow'd, and which yet has to flow.

But let not his name be thine idol alone
On his right hand behold a Sejanus appears!
Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be thine own!
A wretch never named but with curses and jeers!

Till now, when the isle which should blush for his birth,
Deep, deep as the gore which he shed on her soil,
Seems proud of the reptile which crawl 'd from her earth,
And for murder repays him with shouts and a smile.

without one single ray of her genius, without
The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her race
The miscreant who well might plunge Erin in doubt
If she ever gave birth to a being so base.

If she did--let her long-boasted proverb be hush'd,
Which proclaims that from Erin no reptile can spring
See the cold-blooded serpent, with venom full flush'd,
Still warming its folds in the breast of a king!

Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still!

My voice, though but humble, was raised for thy right,
My vote, as a freeman's, still voted thee free,
This hand, though but feeble, would arm in thy fight,
And this heart, though outworn, had a throb still for thee!

Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou art not my land,
I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy sons,
And I wept with the world, o'er the patriot band
Who are gone, but I weep them no longer as once.

For happy are they now reposing afar,
Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan, all
Who, for years, were the chiefs in the eloquent war,
And redeem'd, if they have not retarded, thy fall.

Yes, happy are they in their cold English graves!
Their shades cannot start to thy shouts of today--
Nor the steps of enslavers and chain-kissing slaves
Be, stamp'd in the turf o'er their fetterless clay.

Till now I had envied thy sons and their shore,
Though their virtues were hunted, their liberties fled
There was something so warm and sublime in the core
Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy--thy dead.

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for an hour

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for an hour
My contempt for a nation so servile, though sore,
Which though trod like the worm will not turn upon power,
'Tis the glory of Grattan, and genius of Moore!

Stanzas Written On The Road Between Florence And Pisa

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can only give glory?

O Fame! — if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, there only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

Stanzas To A Hindoo Air

Oh! my lonely--lonely--lonely--Pillow!
Where is my lover? where is my lover?
Is it his bark which my dreary dreams discover?
Far--far away! and alone along the billow?

Oh! my lonely-lonely-lonely-Pillow!
Why must my head ache where his gentle brow lay?
How the long night flags lovelessly and slowly,
And my head droops over thee like the willow!

Oh! thou, my sad and solitary Pillow!
Send me kind dreams to keep my heart from breaking,
In return for the tears I shed upon thee waking;
Let me not die till he comes back o'er the billow.

Then if thou wilt--no more my lonely Pillow,
In one embrace let these arms again enfold him,
And then expire of the joy-but to behold him!
Oh! my lone bosom!-oh! my lonely Pillow!

Impromptu

Beneath Blessington's eyes
The reclaimed Paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an Apple should grieve,
What mortal would not play the Devil.

To The Countess Of Blessington

You have ask'd for a verse:--the request
In a rhymers 'twere strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has painted so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years--
There are moments which act as plough;
And there is not a furrow appears
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;
For sorrow has torn from my lyre
The string which was worthy the strain.

On this Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year 'Tis time the heart should
be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze--
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not thus--and 'tis not here--
Such thoughts should shake my soul nor now,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece--she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!--unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown

Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here:--up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out--less often sought than found--
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

SATIRES



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Portrait of Annabella Byron, the poet's wife

ENGLISH BARDS, AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS;

A SATIRE.

"I had rather be a kitten, and cry, mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics, too."

POPE.

PREFACE

All my friends, learned and unlearned, have urged me not to publish this Satire with my name. If I were to be “turned from the career of my humour by quibbles quick, and paper bullets of the brain” I should have complied with their counsel. But I am not to be terrified by abuse, or bullied by reviewers, with or without arms. I can safely say that I have attacked none ‘personally’, who did not commence on the offensive. An Author’s works are public property: he who purchases may judge, and publish his opinion if he pleases; and the Authors I have endeavoured to commemorate may do by me as I have done by them. I dare say they will succeed better in condemning my scribblings, than in mending their own. But my object is not to prove that I can write well, but, if ‘possible’, to make others write better.

As the Poem has met with far more success than I expected, I have endeavoured in this Edition to make some additions and alterations, to render it more worthy of public perusal.

In the First Edition of this Satire, published anonymously, fourteen lines on the subject of Bowles’s Pope were written by, and inserted at the request of, an ingenious friend of mine, who has now in the press a volume of Poetry. In the present Edition they are erased, and some of my own substituted in their stead; my only reason for this being that which I conceive would operate with any other person in the same manner, — a determination not to publish with my name any production, which was not entirely and exclusively my own composition.

With regard to the real talents of many of the poetical persons whose performances are mentioned or alluded to in the following pages, it is presumed by the Author that there can be little difference of opinion in the Public at large; though, like other sectaries, each has his separate tabernacle of proselytes, by whom his abilities are over-rated, his faults overlooked, and his metrical canons received without scruple and without consideration. But the unquestionable possession of considerable genius by several of the writers here censured renders their mental prostitution more to be regretted. Imbecility may be pitied, or, at worst, laughed at and forgotten; perverted powers demand the most decided reprehension. No one can wish more than the Author that some known and able writer had undertaken their exposure; but Mr. Gifford has devoted himself to Massinger, and, in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner may, in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum to prevent the extension of so deplorable an epidemic, provided there be no

quackery in his treatment of the malady. A caustic is here offered; as it is to be feared nothing short of actual cautery can recover the numerous patients afflicted with the present prevalent and distressing rabies for rhyming. — As to the 'Edinburgh Reviewers', it would indeed require an Hercules to crush the Hydra; but if the Author succeeds in merely "bruising one of the heads of the serpent" though his own hand should suffer in the encounter, he will be amply satisfied.

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH BARDS, AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS.

The article upon 'Hours of Idleness' "which Lord Brougham ... after denying it for thirty years, confessed that he had written" ('Notes from a Diary', by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, 1897, ii. 189), was published in the 'Edinburgh Review' of January, 1808. 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers' did not appear till March, 1809. The article gave the opportunity for the publication of the satire, but only in part provoked its composition. Years later, Byron had not forgotten its effect on his mind. On April 26, 1821, he wrote to Shelley: "I recollect the effect on me of the Edinburgh on my first poem: it was rage and resistance and redress: but not despondency nor despair." And on the same date to Murray: "I know by experience that a savage review is hemlock to a sucking author; and the one on me (which produced the 'English Bards', etc.) knocked me down, but I got up again," etc. It must, however, be remembered that Byron had his weapons ready for an attack before he used them in defence. In a letter to Miss Pigot, dated October 26, 1807, he says that "he has written one poem of 380 lines to be published in a few weeks with notes. The poem ... is a Satire." It was entitled 'British Bards', and finally numbered 520 lines. With a view to publication, or for his own convenience, it was put up in type and printed in quarto sheets. A single copy, which he kept for corrections and additions, was preserved by Dallas, and is now in the British Museum. After the review appeared, he enlarged and recast the 'British Bards', and in March, 1809, the Satire was published anonymously. Byron was at no pains to conceal the authorship of 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', and, before starting on his Pilgrimage, he had prepared a second and enlarged edition, which came out in October, 1809, with his name prefixed. Two more editions were called for in his absence, and on his return he revised and printed a fifth, when he suddenly resolved to suppress the work. On his homeward voyage he expressed, in a letter to Dallas, June 28, 1811, his regret at having written the Satire. A year later he became intimate, among others, with Lord and Lady Holland, whom he had assailed on the supposition that they were the instigators of the article in the 'Edinburgh Review', and on being told by Rogers that they wished the Satire to be withdrawn, he gave orders to his publisher, Cawthorn, to burn the whole impression. A few copies escaped the flames. One of two copies retained by Dallas, which afterwards belonged to Murray, and is now in his grandson's possession, was the foundation of the text of 1831, and of all subsequent issues. Another copy which belonged to Dallas is retained in the British Museum.

Towards the close of the last century there had been an outburst of satirical poems, written in the style of the 'Dunciad' and its offspring the 'Rosciad', Of these, Gifford's 'Baviad' and 'Maviad' (1794-5), and T. J. Mathias' 'Pursuits of Literature' (1794-7), were the direct progenitors of 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', The 'Rolliad' (1794), the 'Children of Apollo' (circ. 1794), Canning's 'New Morality' (1798), and Wolcot's coarse but virile lampoons, must also be reckoned among Byron's earlier models. The ministry of "All the Talents" gave rise to a fresh batch of political 'jeux d'esprits', and in 1807, when Byron was still at Cambridge, the air was full of these ephemera. To name only a few, 'All the Talents', by Polypus (Eaton Stannard Barrett), was answered by 'All the Blocks, an antidote to All the Talents', by Flagellum (W. H. Ireland); 'Elijah's Mantle, a tribute to the memory of the R. H. William Pitt', by James Sayer, the caricaturist, provoked 'Melville's Mantle, being a Parody on ... Elijah's Mantle'. 'The Simpliciad, A Satirico-Didactic Poem', and Lady Anne Hamilton's 'Epics of the Ton', are also of the same period. One and all have perished, but Byron read them, and in a greater or less degree they supplied the impulse to write in the fashion of the day.

'British Bards' would have lived, but, unquestionably, the spur of the article, a year's delay, and, above all, the advice and criticism of his friend Hodgson, who was at work on his 'Gentle Alterative for the Reviewers', 1809 (for further details, see vol. i., 'Letters', Letter 102, 'note' 1), produced the brilliant success of the enlarged satire. 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers' was recognized at once as a work of genius. It has intercepted the popularity of its great predecessors, who are often quoted, but seldom read. It is still a popular poem, and appeals with fresh delight to readers who know the names of many of the "bards" only because Byron mentions them, and count others whom he ridicules among the greatest poets of the century.

ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS.

Still must I hear? — shall hoarse FITZGERALD bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch Reviews
Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my *Muse*?
Prepare for rhyme — I'll publish, right or wrong:
Fools are my theme, let Satire be my song.

Oh! Nature's noblest gift — my grey goose-quill!
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men! 10
The pen! foredoomed to aid the mental throes
Of brains that labour, big with Verse or Prose;
Though Nymphs forsake, and Critics may deride,
The Lover's solace, and the Author's pride.
What Wits! what Poets dost thou daily raise!
How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise!
Condemned at length to be forgotten quite,
With all the pages which 'twas thine to write.
But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
Once laid aside, but now assumed again, 20
Our task complete, like Hamet's shall be free;
Though spurned by others, yet beloved by me:
Then let us soar to-day; no common theme,
No Eastern vision, no distempered dream
Inspires — our path, though full of thorns, is plain;
Smooth be the verse, and easy be the strain.

When Vice triumphant holds her sov'reign sway,
Obey'd by all who nought beside obey;
When Folly, frequent harbinger of crime,
Bedecks her cap with bells of every Clime; 30
When knaves and fools combined o'er all prevail,
And weigh their Justice in a Golden Scale;
E'en then the boldest start from public sneers,
Afraid of Shame, unknown to other fears,

More darkly sin, by Satire kept in awe,
And shrink from Ridicule, though not from Law.

Such is the force of Wit! I but not belong
To me the arrows of satiric song;
The royal vices of our age demand
A keener weapon, and a mightier hand. 40
Still there are follies, e'en for me to chase,
And yield at least amusement in the race:
Laugh when I laugh, I seek no other fame,
The cry is up, and scribblers are my game:
Speed, Pegasus! — ye strains of great and small,
Ode! Epic! Elegy! — have at you all!
I, too, can scrawl, and once upon a time
I poured along the town a flood of rhyme,
A schoolboy freak, unworthy praise or blame;
I printed — older children do the same. 50
'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print;
A Book's a Book, altho' there's nothing in't.
Not that a Title's sounding charm can save
Or scrawl or scribbler from an equal grave:
This LAMB must own, since his patrician name
Failed to preserve the spurious Farce from shame.
No matter, GEORGE continues still to write,
Tho' now the name is veiled from public sight.
Moved by the great example, I pursue
The self-same road, but make my own review: 60
Not seek great JEFFREY'S, yet like him will be
Self-constituted Judge of Poesy.

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save Censure — Critics all are ready made.
Take hackneyed jokes from MILLER, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A man well skilled to find, or forge a fault;
A turn for punning — call it Attic salt;
To JEFFREY go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet: 70
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a *sharper* hit;

Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling — pass your proper jest,
And stand a Critic, hated yet caress'd.

And shall we own such judgment? no — as soon
Seek roses in December — ice in June;
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff,
Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false, before
You trust in Critics, who themselves are sore; 80
Or yield one single thought to be misled
By JEFFREY'S heart, or LAMB'S Boeotian head.
To these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,
Combined usurpers on the Throne of Taste;
To these, when Authors bend in humble awe,
And hail their voice as Truth, their word as Law;
While these are Censors, 'twould be sin to spare;
While such are Critics, why should I forbear?
But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'Tis doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun; 90
Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike,
Our Bards and Censors are so much alike.
Then should you ask me, why I venture o'er
The path which POPE and GIFFORD trod before;
If not yet sickened, you can still proceed;
Go on; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
"But hold!" exclaims a friend, — "here's some neglect:
This — that — and t'other line seem incorrect."
What then? the self-same blunder Pope has got,
And careless Dryden — "Aye, but Pye has not:" — 100
Indeed! — 'tis granted, faith! — but what care I?
Better to err with POPE, than shine with PYE.

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtained mistaken praise,
When Sense and Wit with Poesy allied,
No fabled Graces, flourished side by side,
From the same fount their inspiration drew,
And, reared by Taste, bloomed fairer as they grew.

Then, in this happy Isle, a POPE'S pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain; 110
A polished nation's praise aspired to claim,
And raised the people's, as the poet's fame.
Like him great DRYDEN poured the tide of song,
In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly strong.
Then CONGREVE'S scenes could cheer, or OTWAY'S melt;
For Nature then an English audience felt —
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feebler Bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past. 120
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age;
This truth at least let Satire's self allow,
No dearth of Bards can be complained of now.
The loaded Press beneath her labour groans,
And Printers' devils shake their weary bones;
While SOUTHEY'S Epics cram the creaking shelves,
And LITTLE'S Lyrics shine in hot-pressed twelves.
Thus saith the *Preacher*: "Nought beneath the sun
Is new," yet still from change to change we run. 130
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The Cow-pox, Tractors, Galvanism, and Gas,
In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoln bubble bursts — and all is air!
Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize:
O'er Taste awhile these Pseudo-bards prevail;
Each country Book-club bows the knee to Baal,
And, hurling lawful Genius from the throne,
Erects a shrine and idol of its own; 140
Some leaden calf — but whom it matters not,
From soaring SOUTHEY, down to groveling STOTT.

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And Rhyme and Blank maintain an equal race;

Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And Tales of Terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering Folly loves a varied song, 150
To strange, mysterious Dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels — may they be the last! —
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood
Decoy young Border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why; 160
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding Knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a Felon, yet but half a Knight.
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base. 170
And think'st thou, SCOTT! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though MURRAY with his MILLER may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade,
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain! 180
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted Muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long "good night to Marmion."

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the Bards to whom the Muse must bow;
While MILTON, DRYDEN, POPE, alike forgot,
Resign their hallowed Bays to WALTER SCOTT.

The time has been, when yet the Muse was young,
When HOMER swept the lyre, and MARO sung, 190
An Epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hailed the magic name:
The work of each immortal Bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.
Empires have mouldered from the face of earth,
Tongues have expired with those who gave them birth,
Without the glory such a strain can give,
As even in ruin bids the language live.
Not so with us, though minor Bards, content,
On one great work a life of labour spent: 200
With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,
Behold the Ballad-monger SOUTHEY rise!
To him let CAMOËNS, MILTON, TASSO yield,
Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field.
First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
The scourge of England and the boast of France!
Though burnt by wicked BEDFORD for a witch,
Behold her statue placed in Glory's niche;
Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
A virgin Phoenix from her ashes risen. 210
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wond'rous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal Hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign — the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled Metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doomed the last of all thy race!
Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense! 220
Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
Cacique in Mexico, and Prince in Wales;

Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
More old than Mandeville's, and not so true.
Oh, SOUTHEY! SOUTHEY! cease thy varied song!
A bard may chaunt too often and too long:
As thou art strong in verse, in mercy, spare!
A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way; 230
If still in Berkeley-Ballads most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue:
"God help thee," SOUTHEY, and thy readers too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple WORDSWORTH, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who warns his friend "to shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;" 240
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of "an idiot Boy;"
A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day 250
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the "idiot in his glory"
Conceive the Bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle COLERIDGE pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still Obscurity's a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse

To him who takes a Pixy for a muse, 260
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegize an ass:
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays, the Laureate of the long-eared kind.

Oh! wonder-working LEWIS! Monk, or Bard,
Who fain would make Parnassus a church-yard!
Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
Thy Muse a Sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!
Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
By gibb'ring spectres hailed, thy kindred band; 270
Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
To please the females of our modest age;
All hail, M.P.! from whose infernal brain
Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train;
At whose command "grim women" throng in crowds,
And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
With "small grey men," — "wild yagers," and what not,
To crown with honour thee and WALTER SCOTT:
Again, all hail! if tales like thine may please,
St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease: 280
Even Satan's self with thee might dread to dwell,
And in thy skull discern a deeper Hell.

Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
Of virgins melting, not to Vesta's fire,
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion flushed
Strikes his wild lyre, whilst listening dames are hushed?
'Tis LITTLE! young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral, in his Lay!
Grieved to condemn, the Muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of lust. 290
Pure is the flame which o'er her altar burns;
From grosser incense with disgust she turns
Yet kind to youth, this expiation o'er,
She bids thee "mend thy line, and sin no more."

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,

To whom such glittering ornaments belong,
Hibernian STRANGFORD! with thine eyes of blue,
And boasted locks of red or auburn hue,
Whose plaintive strain each love-sick Miss admires,
And o'er harmonious fustian half expires, 300
Learn, if thou canst, to yield thine author's sense,
Nor vend thy sonnets on a false pretence.
Think'st thou to gain thy verse a higher place,
By dressing Camoëns in a suit of lace?
Mend, STRANGFORD! mend thy morals and thy taste;
Be warm, but pure; be amorous, but be chaste:
Cease to deceive; thy pilfered harp restore,
Nor teach the Lusian Bard to copy MOORE.

Behold — Ye Tarts! — one moment spare the text! —
HAYLEY'S last work, and worst — until his next; 310
Whether he spin poor couplets into plays,
Or damn the dead with purgatorial praise,
His style in youth or age is still the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame.
Triumphant first see "Temper's Triumphs" shine!
At least I'm sure they triumphed over mine.
Of "Music's Triumphs," all who read may swear
That luckless Music never triumph'd there.

Moravians, rise! bestow some meet reward
On dull devotion — Lo! the Sabbath Bard, 320
Sepulchral GRAHAME, pours his notes sublime
In mangled prose, nor e'en aspires to rhyme;
Breaks into blank the Gospel of St. Luke,
And boldly pilfers from the Pentateuch;
And, undisturbed by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the Psalms.

Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings"
A thousand visions of a thousand things,
And shows, still whimpering thro' threescore of years,
The maudlin prince of mournful sonneteers. 330
And art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles!

Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
Whether them sing'st with equal ease, and grief,
The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf;
Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells,
Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
In every chime that jingled from Ostend;
Ah! how much juster were thy Muse's hap,
If to thy bells thou would'st but add a cap! 340
Delightful BOWLES! still blessing and still blest,
All love thy strain, but children like it best.
'Tis thine, with gentle LITTLE'S moral song,
To soothe the mania of the amorous throng!
With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears,
Ere Miss as yet completes her infant years:
But in her teens thy whining powers are vain;
She quits poor BOWLES for LITTLE'S purer strain.
Now to soft themes thou scornest to confine
The lofty numbers of a harp like thine; 350
"Awake a louder and a loftier strain,"
Such as none heard before, or will again!
Where all discoveries jumbled from the flood,
Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
By more or less, are sung in every book,
From Captain Noah down to Captain Cook.
Nor this alone — but, pausing on the road,
The Bard sighs forth a gentle episode,
And gravely tells — attend, each beauteous Miss! —
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss. 360
Bowles! in thy memory let this precept dwell,
Stick to thy Sonnets, Man! — at least they sell.
But if some new-born whim, or larger bribe,
Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for a scribe:
If 'chance some bard, though once by dunces feared,
Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
If Pope, whose fame and genius, from the first,
Have foiled the best of critics, needs the worst,
Do thou essay: each fault, each failing scan;
The first of poets was, alas! but man. 370

Rake from each ancient dunghill ev'ry pearl,
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in CURLL;
Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
Clothe envy in a garb of honest zeal;
Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,
And do from hate what MALLET did for hire.
Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
To rave with DENNIS, and with RALPH to rhyme; 380
Thronged with the rest around his living head,
Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead,
A meet reward had crowned thy glorious gains,
And linked thee to the Dunciad for thy pains.

Another Epic! Who inflicts again
More books of blank upon the sons of men?
Boeotian COTTLE, rich Bristowa's boast,
Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast,
And sends his goods to market — all alive!
Lines forty thousand, Cantos twenty-five! 390
Fresh fish from Hippocrene! who'll buy? who'll buy?
The precious bargain's cheap — in faith, not I.
Your turtle-feeder's verse must needs be flat,
Though Bristol bloat him with the verdant fat;
If Commerce fills the purse, she clogs the brain,
And AMOS COTTLE strikes the Lyre in vain.
In him an author's luckless lot behold!
Condemned to make the books which once he sold.
Oh, AMOS COTTLE! — Phoebus! what a name
To fill the speaking-trump of future fame! — 400
Oh, AMOS COTTLE! for a moment think
What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
Oh! pen perverted! paper misapplied!
Had COTTLE still adorned the counter's side,
Bent o'er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
Been taught to make the paper which he soils,

Ploughed, delved, or plied the oar with lusty limb,
He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him. 410

As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er may sleep,
So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond! heaves
Dull MAURICE all his granite weight of leaves:
Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain!
The petrifications of a plodding brain,
That, ere they reach the top, fall lumbering back again.

With broken lyre and cheek serenely pale,
Lo! sad Alcæus wanders down the vale;
Though fair they rose, and might have bloomed at last, 420
His hopes have perished by the northern blast:
Nipped in the bud by Caledonian gales,
His blossoms wither as the blast prevails!
O'er his lost works let *classic* SHEFFIELD weep;
May no rude hand disturb their early sleep!

Yet say! why should the Bard, at once, resign
His claim to favour from the sacred Nine?
For ever startled by the mingled howl
Of Northern Wolves, that still in darkness prowl;
A coward Brood, which mangle as they prey, 430
By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;
Aged or young, the living or the dead,"
No mercy find-these harpies must be fed.
Why do the injured unresisting yield
The calm possession of their native field?
Why tamely thus before their fangs retreat,
Nor hunt the blood-hounds back to Arthur's Seat?

Health to immortal JEFFREY! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same;
In soul so like, so merciful, yet just, 440
Some think that Satan has resigned his trust,
And given the Spirit to the world again,
To sentence Letters, as he sentenced men.

With hand less mighty, but with heart as black,
With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the Courts betimes, though all that law
As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw, —
Since well instructed in the patriot school
To rail at party, though a party tool —
Who knows? if chance his patrons should restore 450
Back to the sway they forfeited before,
His scribbling toils some recompense may meet,
And raise this Daniel to the Judgment-Seat.
Let JEFFREY'S shade indulge the pious hope,
And greeting thus, present him with a rope:
"Heir to my virtues! man of equal mind!
Skilled to condemn as to traduce mankind,
This cord receive! for thee reserved with care,
To wield in judgment, and at length to wear."

Health to great JEFFREY! Heaven preserve his life, 460
To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
And guard it sacred in its future wars,
Since authors sometimes seek the field of Mars!
Can none remember that eventful day,
That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray,
When LITTLE'S leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street Myrmidons stood laughing by?
Oh, day disastrous! on her firm-set rock,
Dunedin's castle felt a secret shock;
Dark rolled the sympathetic waves of Forth, 470
Low groaned the startled whirlwinds of the north;
TWEED ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued his calm career;
ARTHUR'S steep summit nodded to its base,
The surly Tolbooth scarcely kept her place.
The Tolbooth felt — for marble sometimes can,
On such occasions, feel as much as man —
The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
If JEFFREY died, except within her arms:
Nay last, not least, on that portentous morn, 480
The sixteenth story, where himself was born,

His patrimonial garret, fell to ground,
And pale Edina shuddered at the sound:
Strewed were the streets around with milk-white reams,
Flowed all the Canongate with inky streams;
This of his candour seemed the sable dew,
That of his valour showed the bloodless hue;
And all with justice deemed the two combined
The mingled emblems of his mighty mind.
But Caledonia's goddess hovered o'er 490
The field, and saved him from the wrath of Moore;
From either pistol snatched the vengeful lead,
And straight restored it to her favourite's head;
That head, with greater than magnetic power,
Caught it, as Danæe caught the golden shower,
And, though the thickening dross will scarce refine,
Augments its ore, and is itself a mine.
"My son," she cried, "ne'er thirst for gore again,
Resign the pistol and resume the pen;
O'er politics and poesy preside, 500
Boast of thy country, and Britannia's guide!
For long as Albion's heedless sons submit,
Or Scottish taste decides on English wit,
So long shall last thine unmolested reign,
Nor any dare to take thy name in vain.
Behold, a chosen band shall aid thy plan,
And own thee chieftain of the critic clan.
First in the oat-fed phalanx shall be seen
The travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen.
HERBERT shall wield THOR'S hammer, and sometimes 510
In gratitude, thou'lt praise his rugged rhymes.
Smug SYDNEY too thy bitter page shall seek,
And classic HALLAM, much renowned for Greek;
SCOTT may perchance his name and influence lend,
And paltry PILLANS shall traduce his friend;
While gay Thalia's luckless votary, LAMB,
Damned like the Devil — Devil-like will damn.
Known be thy name! unbounded be thy sway!
Thy HOLLAND'S banquets shall each toil repay!
While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes 520

To HOLLAND'S hirelings and to Learning's foes.
Yet mark one caution ere thy next Review
Spread its light wings of Saffron and of Blue,
Beware lest blundering BROUGHAM destroy the sale,
Turn Beef to Bannocks, Cauliflowers to Kail."
Thus having said, the kilted Goddess kist
Her son, and vanished in a Scottish mist.

Then prosper, JEFFREY! pertest of the train
Whom Scotland pampers with her fiery grain!
Whatever blessing waits a genuine Scot, ⁵³⁰
In double portion swells thy glorious lot;
For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
And showers their odours on thy candid sheets,
Whose Hue and Fragrance to thy work adhere —
This scents its pages, and that gilds its rear.
Lo! blushing Itch, coy nymph, enamoured grown,
Forsakes the rest, and cleaves to thee alone,
And, too unjust to other Pictish men,
Enjoys thy person, and inspires thy pen!

Illustrious HOLLAND! hard would be his lot, ⁵⁴⁰
His hirelings mentioned, and himself forgot!
HOLLAND, with HENRY PETTY at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,
Where Scotchmen feed, and Critics may carouse!
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof.
See honest HALLAM lay aside his fork,
Resume his pen, review his Lordship's work,
And, grateful for the dainties on his plate, ⁵⁵⁰
Declare his landlord can at least translate!
Dunedin! view thy children with delight,
They write for food — and feed because they write:
And lest, when heated with the unusual grape,
Some glowing thoughts should to the press escape,
And tinge with red the female reader's cheek,
My lady skims the cream of each critique;

Breathes o'er the page her purity of soul,
Reforms each error, and refines the whole.

Now to the Drama turn — Oh! motley sight! 560
What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite:
Puns, and a Prince within a barrel pent,
And Dibdin's nonsense yield complete content.
Though now, thank Heaven! the Rosciomania's o'er.
And full-grown actors are endured once more;
Yet what avail their vain attempts to please,
While British critics suffer scenes like these;
While REYNOLDS vents his “dammes!” “poohs!” and
 ”zounds!”
And common-place and common sense confounds?
While KENNEY'S “World” — ah! where is KENNEY'S wit? — 570
Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless Pit;
And BEAUMONT'S pilfered Caratach affords
A tragedy complete in all but words?
Who but must mourn, while these are all the rage
The degradation of our vaunted stage?
Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent gone?
Have we no living Bard of merit? — none?
Awake, GEORGE COLMAN! CUMBERLAND, awake!
Ring the alarum bell! let folly quake!
Oh! SHERIDAN! if aught can move thy pen, 580
Let Comedy assume her throne again;
Abjure the mummary of German schools;
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;
Give, as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.
Gods! o'er those boards shall Folly rear her head,
Where GARRICK trod, and SIDDONS lives to tread?
On those shall Farce display buffoonery's mask,
And HOOK conceal his heroes in a cask?
Shall sapient managers new scenes produce 590
From CHERRY, SKEFFINGTON, and Mother GOOSE?
While SHAKESPEARE, OTWAY, MASSINGER, forgot,
On stalls must moulder, or in closets rot?
Lo! with what pomp the daily prints proclaim

The rival candidates for Attic fame!
In grim array though LEWIS' spectres rise,
Still SKEFFINGTON and GOOSE divide the prize.
And sure 'great' Skeffington must claim our praise,
For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
Renowned alike; whose genius ne'er confines 600
Her flight to garnish Greenwood's gay designs;
Nor sleeps with "Sleeping Beauties," but anon
In five facetious acts comes thundering on.
While poor John Bull, bewildered with the scene,
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean;
But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too.

Such are we now. Ah! wherefore should we turn
To what our fathers were, unless to mourn?
Degenerate Britons! are ye dead to shame, 610
Or, kind to dulness, do you fear to blame?
Well may the nobles of our present race
Watch each distortion of a NALDI'S face;
Well may they smile on Italy's buffoons,
And worship CATALANI's pantaloons,
Since their own Drama yields no fairer trace
Of wit than puns, of humour than grimace.

Then let Ausonia, skill'd in every art
To soften manners, but corrupt the heart,
Pour her exotic follies o'er the town, 620
To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum down:
Let wedded strumpets languish o'er DESHAYES,
And bless the promise which his form displays;
While Gayton bounds before th' enraptured looks
Of hoary Marquises, and stripling Dukes:
Let high-born lechers eye the lively Presle
Twirl her light limbs, that spurn the needless veil;
Let Angiolini bare her breast of snow,
Wave the white arm, and point the pliant toe;
Collini trill her love-inspiring song, 630
Strain her fair neck, and charm the listening throng!

Whet not your scythe, Suppressors of our Vice!
Reforming Saints! too delicately nice!
By whose decrees, our sinful souls to save,
No Sunday tankards foam, no barbers shave;
And beer undrawn, and beards unmown, display
Your holy reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Or hail at once the patron and the pile
Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle!
Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hallow'd fane, 640
Spreads wide her portals for the motley train,
Behold the new Petronius of the day,
Our arbiter of pleasure and of play!
There the hired eunuch, the Hesperian choir,
The melting lute, the soft lascivious lyre,
The song from Italy, the step from France,
The midnight orgy, and the mazy dance,
The smile of beauty, and the flush of wine,
For fops, fools, gamesters, knaves, and Lords combine:
Each to his humour — Comus all allows; 650
Champaign, dice, music, or your neighbour's spouse.
Talk not to us, ye starving sons of trade!
Of piteous ruin, which ourselves have made;
In Plenty's sunshine Fortune's minions bask,
Nor think of Poverty, except "en masque,"
When for the night some lately titled ass
Appears the beggar which his grandsire was,
The curtain dropped, the gay Burletta o'er,
The audience take their turn upon the floor:
Now round the room the circling dow'gers sweep, 660
Now in loose waltz the thin-clad daughters leap;
The first in lengthened line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfettered limb!
Those for Hibernia's lusty sons repair
With art the charms which Nature could not spare;
These after husbands wing their eager flight,
Nor leave much mystery for the nuptial night.

Oh! blest retreats of infamy and ease,

Where, all forgotten but the power to please,
Each maid may give a loose to genial thought, 670
Each swain may teach new systems, or be taught:
There the blithe youngster, just returned from Spain,
Cuts the light pack, or calls the rattling main;
The jovial Caster's set, and seven's the Nick,
Or — done! — a thousand on the coming trick!
If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
And all your hope or wish is to expire,
Here's POWELL'S pistol ready for your life,
And, kinder still, two PAGETS for your wife:
Fit consummation of an earthly race 680
Begun in folly, ended in disgrace,
While none but menials o'er the bed of death,
Wash thy red wounds, or watch thy wavering breath;
Traduced by liars, and forgot by all,
The mangled victim of a drunken brawl,
To live like CLODIUS, and like FALKLAND fall.

Truth! rouse some genuine Bard, and guide his hand
To drive this pestilence from out the land.
E'en I — least thinking of a thoughtless throng,
Just skilled to know the right and choose the wrong, 690
Freed at that age when Reason's shield is lost,
To fight my course through Passion's countless host,
Whom every path of Pleasure's flow'ry way
Has lured in turn, and all have led astray —
E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must feel
Such scenes, such men, destroy the public weal:
Altho' some kind, censorious friend will say,
"What art thou better, meddling fool, than they?"
And every Brother Rake will smile to see
That miracle, a Moralist in me. 700
No matter — when some Bard in virtue strong,
Gifford perchance, shall raise the chastening song,
Then sleep my pen for ever! and my voice
Be only heard to hail him, and rejoice,
Rejoice, and yield my feeble praise, though I
May feel the lash that Virtue must apply.

As for the smaller fry, who swarm in shoals
From silly HAFIZ up to simple BOWLES,
Why should we call them from their dark abode,
In Broad St. Giles's or Tottenham-Road? 710
Or (since some men of fashion nobly dare
To scrawl in verse) from Bond-street or the Square?
If things of Ton their harmless lays indite,
Most wisely doomed to shun the public sight,
What harm? in spite of every critic elf,
Sir T. may read his stanzas to himself;
MILES ANDREWS still his strength in couplets try,
And live in prologues, though his dramas die.
Lords too are Bards: such things at times befall,
And 'tis some praise in Peers to write at all. 720
Yet, did or Taste or Reason sway the times,
Ah! who would take their titles with their rhymes?
ROSCOMMON! SHEFFIELD! with your spirits fled,
No future laurels deck a noble head;
No Muse will cheer, with renovating smile,
The paralytic puling of CARLISLE.
The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the Senior's ceaseless verse,
Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse? 730
What heterogeneous honours deck the Peer!
Lord, rhymester, petit-maître, pamphleteer!
So dull in youth, so drivelling in his age,
His scenes alone had damned our sinking stage;
But Managers for once cried, "Hold, enough!"
Nor drugged their audience with the tragic stuff.
Yet at their judgment let his Lordship laugh,
And case his volumes in congenial calf;
Yes! doff that covering, where Morocco shines,
And hang a calf-skin on those recreant lines. 740

With you, ye Druids! rich in native lead,
Who daily scribble for your daily bread:
With you I war not: GIFFORD'S heavy hand
Has crushed, without remorse, your numerous band.

On "All the Talents" vent your venal spleen;
Want is your plea, let Pity be your screen.
Let Monodies on Fox regale your crew,
And Melville's Mantle prove a Blanket too!
One common Lethe waits each hapless Bard,
And, peace be with you! 'tis your best reward. 750
Such damning fame; as Dunciads only give
Could bid your lines beyond a morning live;
But now at once your fleeting labours close,
With names of greater note in blest repose.
Far be't from me unkindly to upbraid
The lovely ROSA'S prose in masquerade,
Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,
Leave wondering comprehension far behind.
Though Crusca's bards no more our journals fill,
Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still; 760
Last of the howling host which once was Bell's,
Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz yells;
And Merry's metaphors appear anew,
Chained to the signature of O. P. Q.
When some brisk youth, the tenant of a stall,
Employs a pen less pointed than his awl,
Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,
St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the Muse,
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!
How ladies read, and Literati laud! 770
If chance some wicked wag should pass his jest,
'Tis sheer ill-nature — don't the world know best?
Genius must guide when wits admire the rhyme,
And CAPEL LOFFT declares 'tis quite sublime.
Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless trade!
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless spade!
Lo! BURNS and BLOOMFIELD, nay, a greater far,
GIFFORD was born beneath an adverse star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemmed the rude storm, and triumphed over Fate: 780
Then why no more? if Phoebus smiled on you,
BLOOMFIELD! why not on brother Nathan too?
Him too the Mania, not the Muse, has seized;

Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no Boor can seek his last abode,
No common be inclosed without an ode.
Oh! since increased refinement deigns to smile
On Britain's sons, and bless our genial Isle,
Let Poesy go forth, pervade the whole,
Alike the rustic, and mechanic soul! 790
Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
Compose at once a slipper and a song;
So shall the fair your handywork peruse,
Your sonnets sure shall please — perhaps your shoes.
May Moorland weavers boast Pindaric skill,
And tailors' lays be longer than their bill!
While punctual beaux reward the grateful notes,
And pay for poems — when they pay for coats.

To the famed throng now paid the tribute due,
Neglected Genius! let me turn to you. 800
Come forth, oh CAMPBELL! give thy talents scope;
Who dares aspire if thou must cease to hope?
And thou, melodious ROGERS! rise at last,
Recall the pleasing memory of the past;
Arise! let blest remembrance still inspire,
And strike to wonted tones thy hallowed lyre;
Restore Apollo to his vacant throne,
Assert thy country's honour and thine own.
What! must deserted Poesy still weep
Where her last hopes with pious COWPER sleep? 810
Unless, perchance, from his cold bier she turns,
To deck the turf that wraps her minstrel, BURNS!
No! though contempt hath marked the spurious brood,
The race who rhyme from folly, or for food,
Yet still some genuine sons 'tis hers to boast,
Who, least affecting, still affect the most:
Feel as they write, and write but as they feel —
Bear witness GIFFORD, SOTHEBY, MACNEIL.
"Why slumbers GIFFORD?" once was asked in vain;
Why slumbers GIFFORD? let us ask again. 820
Are there no follies for his pen to purge?

Are there no fools whose backs demand the scourge?
Are there no sins for Satire's Bard to greet?
Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
Shall Peers or Princes tread pollution's path,
And 'scape alike the Laws and Muse's wrath?
Nor blaze with guilty glare through future time,
Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
Arouse thee, GIFFORD! be thy promise claimed,
Make bad men better, or at least ashamed. 830

Unhappy WHITE! while life was in its spring,
And thy young Muse just waved her joyous wing,
The Spoiler swept that soaring Lyre away,
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science' self destroyed her favourite son!
Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,
She sowed the seeds, but Death has reaped the fruit.
'Twas thine own Genius gave the final blow,
And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low: 840
So the struck Eagle, stretched upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel;
While the same plumage that had warmed his nest
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

There be who say, in these enlightened days,
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise; 850
That strained Invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern Bard to sing:
Tis true, that all who rhyme — nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to Genius — Trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires:
This fact in Virtue's name let CRABBE attest;
Though Nature's sternest Painter, yet the best.

And here let SHEE and Genius find a place,
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace; 860
To guide whose hand the sister Arts combine,
And trace the Poet's or the Painter's line;
Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow,
Or pour the easy rhyme's harmonious flow;
While honours, doubly merited, attend
The Poet's rival, but the Painter's friend.

Blest is the man who dares approach the bower
Where dwelt the Muses at their natal hour;
Whose steps have pressed, whose eye has marked afar,
The clime that nursed the sons of song and war, 870
The scenes which Glory still must hover o'er,
Her place of birth, her own Achaian shore.
But doubly blest is he whose heart expands
With hallowed feelings for those classic lands;
Who rends the veil of ages long gone by,
And views their remnants with a poet's eye!
WRIGHT! 'twas thy happy lot at once to view
Those shores of glory, and to sing them too;
And sure no common Muse inspired thy pen
To hail the land of Gods and Godlike men. 880

And you, associate Bards! who snatched to light
Those gems too long withheld from modern sight;
Whose mingling taste combined to cull the wreath
While Attic flowers Aonian odours breathe,
And all their renovated fragrance flung,
To grace the beauties of your native tongue;
Now let those minds, that nobly could transfuse
The glorious Spirit of the Grecian Muse,
Though soft the echo, scorn a borrowed tone:
Resign Achaia's lyre, and strike your own. 890

Let these, or such as these, with just applause,
Restore the Muse's violated laws;
But not in flimsy DARWIN'S pompous chime,
That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,

Whose gilded cymbals, more adorned than clear,
The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear,
In show the simple lyre could once surpass,
But now, worn down, appear in native brass;
While all his train of hovering sylphs around
Evaporate in similes and sound: 900
Him let them shun, with him let tinsel die:
False glare attracts, but more offends the eye.

Yet let them not to vulgar WORDSWORTH stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to LAMB and LLOYD:
Let them — but hold, my Muse, nor dare to teach
A strain far, far beyond thy humble reach:
The native genius with their being given
Will point the path, and peal their notes to heaven. 910

And thou, too, SCOTT! resign to minstrels rude
The wilder Slogan of a Border feud:
Let others spin their meagre lines for hire;
Enough for Genius, if itself inspire!
Let SOUTHEY sing, altho' his teeming muse,
Prolific every spring, be too profuse;
Let simple WORDSWORTH chime his childish verse,
And brother COLERIDGE lull the babe at nurse
Let Spectre-mongering LEWIS aim, at most,
To rouse the Galleries, or to raise a ghost; 920
Let MOORE still sigh; let STRANGFORD steal from MOORE,
And swear that CAMOËNS sang such notes of yore;
Let HAYLEY hobble on, MONTGOMERY rave,
And godly GRAHAME chant a stupid stave;
Let sonneteering BOWLES his strains refine,
And whine and whimper to the fourteenth line;
Let STOTT, CARLISLE, MATILDA, and the rest
Of Grub Street, and of Grosvenor Place the best,
Scrawl on, 'till death release us from the strain,
Or Common Sense assert her rights again; 930
But Thou, with powers that mock the aid of praise,

Should'st leave to humbler Bards ignoble lays:
Thy country's voice, the voice of all the Nine,
Demand a hallowed harp — that harp is thine.
Say! will not Caledonia's annals yield
The glorious record of some nobler field,
Than the vile foray of a plundering clan,
Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name of man?
Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter food
For SHERWOOD'S outlaw tales of ROBIN HOOD? 940
Scotland! still proudly claim thy native Bard,
And be thy praise his first, his best reward!
Yet not with thee alone his name should live,
But own the vast renown a world can give;
Be known, perchance, when Albion is no more,
And tell the tale of what she was before;
To future times her faded fame recall,
And save her glory, though his country fall.

Yet what avails the sanguine Poet's hope,
To conquer ages, and with time to cope? 950
New eras spread their wings, new nations rise,
And other Victors fill th' applauding skies;
A few brief generations fleet along,
Whose sons forget the Poet and his song:
E'en now, what once-loved Minstrels scarce may claim
The transient mention of a dubious name!
When Fame's loud trump hath blown its noblest blast,
Though long the sound, the echo sleeps at last;
And glory, like the Phoenix midst her fires,
Exhales her odours, blazes, and expires. 960

Shall hoary Granta call her sable sons,
Expert in science, more expert at puns?
Shall these approach the Muse? ah, no! she flies,
Even from the tempting ore of Seaton's prize;
Though Printers condescend the press to soil
With rhyme by HOARE, and epic blank by HOYLE:
Not him whose page, if still upheld by whist,
Requires no sacred theme to bid us list.

Ye! who in Granta's honours would surpass,
Must mount her Pegasus, a full-grown ass; 970
A foal well worthy of her ancient Dam,
Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.

There CLARKE, still striving piteously "to please,"
Forgetting doggerel leads not to degrees,
A would-be satirist, a hired Buffoon,
A monthly scribbler of some low Lampoon,
Condemned to drudge, the meanest of the mean,
And furbish falsehoods for a magazine,
Devotes to scandal his congenial mind;
Himself a living libel on mankind. 980

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race!
At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
So lost to Phoebus, that nor Hodgson's verse
Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's worse.
But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
The partial Muse delighted loves to lave;
On her green banks a greener wreath she wove,
To crown the Bards that haunt her classic grove;
Where RICHARDS wakes a genuine poet's fires,
And modern Britons glory in their Sires. 990

For me, who, thus unasked, have dared to tell
My country, what her sons should know too well,
Zeal for her honour bade me here engage
The host of idiots that infest her age;
No just applause her honoured name shall lose,
As first in freedom, dearest to the Muse.
Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy fame,
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy name!
What Athens was in science, Rome in power,
What Tyre appeared in her meridian hour, 1000
'Tis thine at once, fair Albion! to have been —
Earth's chief Dictatress, Ocean's lovely Queen:
But Rome decayed, and Athens strewed the plain,
And Tyre's proud piers lie shattered in the main;

Like these, thy strength may sink, in ruin hurled,
And Britain fall, the bulwark of the world.
But let me cease, and dread Cassandra's fate,
With warning ever scoffed at, till too late;
To themes less lofty still my lay confine,
And urge thy Bards to gain a name like thine. 1010

Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers blest,
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!
Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,
While CANNING'S colleagues hate him for his wit,
And old dame PORTLAND fills the place of PITT.

Yet once again, adieu! ere this the sail
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight: 1020
Thence shall I stray through Beauty's native clime,
Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crowned with snows sublime.
But should I back return, no tempting press
Shall drag my Journal from the desk's recess;
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from far,
Snatch his own wreath of Ridicule from Carr;
Let ABERDEEN and ELGIN still pursue
The shade of fame through regions of Virtù;
Waste useless thousands on their Phidian freaks,
Misshapen monuments and maimed antiques; 1030
And make their grand saloons a general mart
For all the mutilated blocks of art:
Of Dardan tours let Dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid GELL;
And, quite content, no more shall interpose
To stun the public ear — at least with Prose.

Thus far I've held my undisturbed career,
Prepared for rancour, steeled 'gainst selfish fear;
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdained to own —
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite unknown: 1040

My voice was heard again, though not so loud,
My page, though nameless, never disavowed;
And now at once I tear the veil away: —
Cheer on the pack! the Quarry stands at bay,
Unscared by all the din of MELBOURNE house,
By LAMB'S resentment, or by HOLLAND'S spouse,
By JEFFREY'S harmless pistol, HALLAM'S rage,
Edina's brawny sons and brimstone page.
Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,
And feel they too are "penetrable stuff:" 1050
And though I hope not hence unscathed to go,
Who conquers me shall find a stubborn foe.
The time hath been, when no harsh sound would fall
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall;
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise
The meanest thing that crawled beneath my eyes:
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,
I've learned to think, and sternly speak the truth;
Learned to deride the critic's starch decree,
And break him on the wheel he meant for me; 1060
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:
Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters frown,
I too can hunt a Poetaster down;
And, armed in proof, the gauntlet cast at once
To Scotch marauder, and to Southern dunce.
Thus much I've dared; if my incondite lay
Hath wronged these righteous times, let others say:
This, let the world, which knows not how to spare,
Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare. 1070

HINTS FROM HORACE

BEING AN ALLUSION IN ENGLISH VERSE TO THE EPISTLE “AD PISONES, DE ARTE
POETICÂ,” AND INTENDED AS A SEQUEL TO “ENGLISH BARDS, AND SCOTCH
REVIEWERS.”

— — ”Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.”

HOR. ‘De Arte Poet’., II. 304 and 305.

“Rhymes are difficult things — they are stubborn things, Sir.”

FIELDING’S ‘Amelia’, Vol. iii. Book; and Chap. v.

[Footnote i:

Hints from Horace (Athens, Capuchin Convent, March 12, 1811); being an
Imitation in English Verse from the Epistle, *etc.*

[MS, M.]

Hints from Horace: being a Partial Imitation, in English Verse, of the
Epistle ‘Ad Pisones, De Arte Poeticâ’; and intended as a sequel to
‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’.

Athens, Franciscan Convent, March 12, 1811.

[‘Proof b’.]

INTRODUCTION

Three MSS. of 'Hints from Horace' are extant, two in the possession of Lord Lovelace (MSS. L. a and b), and a third in the possession of Mr. Murray ('MS. M').

Proofs of lines 173-272 and 1-272 ('Proofs a, b'), are among the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum. They were purchased from the Rev. Alexander Dallas, January 12, 1867, and are, doubtless, fragments of the proofs set up in type for Cawthorn in 1811. They are in "book-form," and show that the volume was intended to be uniform with the Fifth Edition of 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', of 1811. The text corresponds closely but not exactly with that adopted by Murray in 1831, and does not embody the variants of the several MSS. It is probable that complete proofs were in Moore's possession at the time when he included the selections from the 'Hints' in his 'Letters and Journals', pp. 263-269, and that the text of the entire poem as published in 1831 was derived from this source. Selections, numbering in all 156 lines, had already appeared in 'Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron', by R. C. Dallas, 1824, pp. 104-113. Byron, estimating the merit by the difficulty of the performance, rated the 'Hints from Horace' extravagantly high. He only forbore to publish them after the success of 'Childe Harold', because he felt, as he states, that he should be "heaping coals of fire upon his head" if he were in his hour of triumph to put forth a sequel to a lampoon provoked by failure. Nine years afterwards, when he resolved to print the work with some omissions, he gravely maintained that it excelled the productions of his mature genius. "As far," he said, "as versification goes, it is good; and on looking back at what I wrote about that period, I am astonished to see how little I have trained on. I wrote better then than now; but that comes of my having fallen into the atrocious bad taste of the times" [September 23, 1820]. The opinion of J. C. Hobhouse that the 'Hints' would require "a good deal of slashing" to adapt them to the passing hour, and other considerations, again led Byron to suspend the publication. Authors are frequently bad judges of their own works, but of all the literary hallucinations upon record there are none which exceed the mistaken preferences of Lord Byron. Shortly after the appearance of 'The Corsair' he fancied that 'English Bards' was still his masterpiece; when all his greatest works had been produced, he contended that his translation from Pulci was his "grand performance, — the best thing he ever did in his life;" and throughout the whole of his literary career he regarded these 'Hints from Horace' with a special and unchanging fondness.

HINTS FROM HORACE

ATHENS: CAPUCHIN CONVENT, March. 12, 1811.

Who would not laugh, if Lawrence , hired to grace
His costly canvas with each flattered face,
Abused his art, till Nature, with a blush,
Saw cits grow Centaurs underneath his brush?
Or, should some limner join, for show or sale,
A Maid of Honour to a Mermaid's tail?
Or low Dubost — as once the world has seen —
Degrade God's creatures in his graphic spleen?
Not all that forced politeness, which defends
Fools in their faults, could gag his grinning friends. 10
Believe me, Moschus, like that picture seems
The book which, sillier than a sick man's dreams,
Displays a crowd of figures incomplete,
Poetic Nightmares, without head or feet.

Poets and painters, as all artists know,
May shoot a little with a lengthened bow;
We claim this mutual mercy for our task,
And grant in turn the pardon which we ask;
But make not monsters spring from gentle dams —
Birds breed not vipers, tigers nurse not lambs. 20

A laboured, long Exordium, sometimes tends
(Like patriot speeches) but to paltry ends;
And nonsense in a lofty note goes down,
As Pertness passes with a legal gown:
Thus many a Bard describes in pompous strain
The clear brook babbling through the goodly plain:
The groves of Granta, and her Gothic halls,
King's Coll-Cam's stream-stained windows, and old walls:
Or, in adventurous numbers, neatly aims
To paint a rainbow, or the river Thames. 30

You sketch a tree, and so perhaps may shine —

But daub a shipwreck like an alehouse sign;
You plan a *vase* — it dwindles to a *pot*;
Then glide down Grub-street — fasting and forgot:
Laughed into Lethe by some quaint Review,
Whose wit is never troublesome till — true.

In fine, to whatsoever you aspire,
Let it at least be simple and entire.

The greater portion of the rhyming tribe
(Give ear, my friend, for thou hast been a scribe) 40
Are led astray by some peculiar lure.
I labour to be brief — become obscure;
One falls while following Elegance too fast;
Another soars, inflated with Bombast;
Too low a third crawls on, afraid to fly,
He spins his subject to Satiety;
Absurdly varying, he at last engraves
Fish in the woods, and boars beneath the waves!

Unless your care's exact, your judgment nice,
The flight from Folly leads but into Vice; 50
None are complete, all wanting in some part,
Like certain tailors, limited in art.
For galligaskins Slowshears is your man
But coats must claim another artisan.
Now this to me, I own, seems much the same
As Vulcan's feet to bear Apollo's frame;
Or, with a fair complexion, to expose
Black eyes, black ringlets, but — a bottle nose!

Dear Authors! suit your topics to your strength,
And ponder well your subject, and its length; 60
Nor lift your load, before you're quite aware
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.
But lucid Order, and Wit's siren voice,
Await the Poet, skilful in his choice;
With native Eloquence he soars along,
Grace in his thoughts, and Music in his song.

Let Judgment teach him wisely to combine
With future parts the now omitted line:
This shall the Author choose, or that reject,
Precise in style, and cautious to select; 70
Nor slight applause will candid pens afford
To him who furnishes a wanting word.
Then fear not, if 'tis needful, to produce
Some term unknown, or obsolete in use,
(As Pitt has furnished us a word or two,
Which Lexicographers declined to do;)
So you indeed, with care, — (but be content
To take this license rarely) — may invent.
New words find credit in these latter days,
If neatly grafted on a Gallic phrase; 80
What Chaucer, Spenser did, we scarce refuse
To Dryden's or to Pope's maturer Muse.
If you can add a little, say why not,
As well as William Pitt, and Walter Scott?
Since they, by force of rhyme and force of lungs,
Enriched our Island's ill-united tongues;
'Tis then — and shall be — lawful to present
Reform in writing, as in Parliament.

As forests shed their foliage by degrees,
So fade expressions which in season please; 90
And we and ours, alas! are due to Fate,
And works and words but dwindle to a date.
Though as a Monarch nods, and Commerce calls,
Impetuous rivers stagnate in canals;
Though swamps subdued, and marshes drained, sustain
The heavy ploughshare and the yellow grain,
And rising ports along the busy shore
Protect the vessel from old Ocean's roar,
All, all, must perish; but, surviving last,
The love of Letters half preserves the past. 100
True, some decay, yet not a few revive;
Though those shall sink, which now appear to thrive,
As Custom arbitrates, whose shifting sway
Our life and language must alike obey.

The immortal wars which Gods and Angels wage,
Are they not shown in Milton's sacred page?
His strain will teach what numbers best belong
To themes celestial told in Epic song.

The slow, sad stanza will correctly paint
The Lover's anguish, or the Friend's complaint. 110
But which deserves the Laurel — Rhyme or Blank?
Which holds on Helicon the higher rank?
Let squabbling critics by themselves dispute
This point, as puzzling as a Chancery suit.

Satiric rhyme first sprang from selfish spleen.
You doubt — see Dryden, Pope, St. Patrick's Dean.
Blank verse is now, with one consent, allied
To Tragedy, and rarely quits her side.
Though mad Almanzor rhymed in Dryden's days,
No sing-song Hero rants in modern plays; 120
Whilst modest Comedy her verse foregoes
For jest and 'pun' in very middling prose.
Not that our Bens or Beaumonts show the worse,
Or lose one point, because they wrote in verse.
But so Thalia pleases to appear,
Poor Virgin! damned some twenty times a year!

Whate'er the scene, let this advice have weight: —
Adapt your language to your Hero's state.
At times Melpomene forgets to groan,
And brisk Thalia takes a serious tone; 130
Nor unregarded will the act pass by
Where angry Townly "lifts his voice on high."
Again, our Shakespeare limits verse to Kings,
When common prose will serve for common things;
And lively Hal resigns heroic ire, —
To "hollaing Hotspur" and his sceptred sire.

'Tis not enough, ye Bards, with all your art,
To polish poems; they must touch the heart:
Where'er the scene be laid, whate'er the song,

Still let it bear the hearer's soul along; 140
Command your audience or to smile or weep,
Whiche'er may please you — anything but sleep.
The Poet claims our tears; but, by his leave,
Before I shed them, let me see 'him' grieve.

If banished Romeo feigned nor sigh nor tear,
Lulled by his languor, I could sleep or sneer.
Sad words, no doubt, become a serious face,
And men look angry in the proper place.
At double meanings folks seem wondrous sly,
And Sentiment prescribes a pensive eye; 150
For Nature formed at first the inward man,
And actors copy Nature — when they can.
She bids the beating heart with rapture bound,
Raised to the Stars, or levelled with the ground;
And for Expression's aid, 'tis said, or sung,
She gave our mind's interpreter — the tongue,
Who, worn with use, of late would fain dispense
(At least in theatres) with common sense;
O'erwhelm with sound the Boxes, Gallery, Pit,
And raise a laugh with anything — but Wit. 160

To skilful writers it will much import,
Whence spring their scenes, from common life or Court;
Whether they seek applause by smile or tear,
To draw a Lying Valet, or a Lear,
A sage, or rakish youngster wild from school,
A wandering Peregrine, or plain John Bull;
All persons please when Nature's voice prevails,
Scottish or Irish, born in Wilts or Wales.

Or follow common fame, or forge a plot;
Who cares if mimic heroes lived or not! 170
One precept serves to regulate the scene:
Make it appear as if it *might* have *been*.

If some Drawcansir you aspire to draw,
Present him raving, and above all law:

If female furies in your scheme are planned,
Macbeth's fierce dame is ready to your hand;
For tears and treachery, for good and evil,
Constance, King Richard, Hamlet, and the Devil!
But if a new design you dare essay,
And freely wander from the beaten way, 180
True to your characters, till all be past,
Preserve consistency from first to last.

Tis hard to venture where our betters fail,
Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale;
And yet, perchance, 'tis wiser to prefer
A hackneyed plot, than choose a new, and err;
Yet copy not too closely, but record,
More justly, thought for thought than word for word;
Nor trace your Prototype through narrow ways,
But only follow where he merits praise. 190

For you, young Bard! whom luckless fate may lead
To tremble on the nod of all who read,
Ere your first score of cantos Time unrolls,
Beware — for God's sake, don't begin like Bowles!
"Awake a louder and a loftier strain," —
And pray, what follows from his boiling brain? —
He sinks to Southey's level in a trice,
Whose Epic Mountains never fail in mice!
Not so of yore awoke your mighty Sire
The tempered warblings of his master-lyre; 200
Soft as the gentler breathing of the lute,
"Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit"
He speaks, but, as his subject swells along,
Earth, Heaven, and Hades echo with the song."
Still to the "midst of things" he hastens on,
As if we witnessed all already done;
Leaves on his path whatever seems too mean
To raise the subject, or adorn the scene;
Gives, as each page improves upon the sight,
Not smoke from brightness, but from darkness — light; 210
And truth and fiction with such art compounds,

We know not where to fix their several bounds.

If you would please the Public, deign to hear
What soothes the many-headed monster's ear:
If your heart triumph when the hands of all
Applaud in thunder at the curtain's fall,
Deserve those plaudits — study Nature's page,
And sketch the striking traits of every age;
While varying Man and varying years unfold
Life's little tale, so oft, so vainly told; 220
Observe his simple childhood's dawning days,
His pranks, his prate, his playmates, and his plays:
Till time at length the mannish tyro weans,
And prurient vice outstrips his tardy teens!

Behold him Freshman! forced no more to groan
O'er Virgil's devilish verses and his own;
Prayers are too tedious, Lectures too abstruse,
He flies from Tavell's frown to "Fordham's Mews;"
(Unlucky Tavell! doomed to daily cares
By pugilistic pupils, and by bears,) 230
Fines, Tutors, tasks, Conventions threat in vain,
Before hounds, hunters, and Newmarket Plain.
Rough with his elders, with his equals rash,
Civil to sharpers, prodigal of cash;
Constant to nought — save hazard and a whore,
Yet cursing both — for both have made him sore:
Unread (unless since books beguile disease,
The P — — x becomes his passage to Degrees);
Fooled, pillaged, dunned, he wastes his terms away,
And unexpelled, perhaps, retires M.A.; 240
Master of Arts! as *hells* and *clubs* proclaim,
Where scarce a blackleg bears a brighter name!

Launched into life, extinct his early fire,
He apes the selfish prudence of his Sire;
Marries for money, chooses friends for rank,
Buys land, and shrewdly trusts not to the Bank;
Sits in the Senate; gets a son and heir;

Sends him to Harrow — for himself was there.
Mute, though he votes, unless when called to cheer,
His son's so sharp — he'll see the dog a Peer! 250

Manhood declines — Age palsies every limb;
He quits the scene — or else the scene quits him;
Scrapes wealth, o'er each departing penny grieves,
And Avarice seizes all Ambition leaves;
Counts cent per cent, and smiles, or vainly frets,
O'er hoards diminished by young Hopeful's debts;
Weights well and wisely what to sell or buy,
Complete in all life's lessons — but to die;
Peevish and spiteful, doting, hard to please,
Commending every time, save times like these; 260
Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half forgot,
Expires unwept — is buried — Let him rot!

But from the Drama let me not digress,
Nor spare my precepts, though they please you less.
Though Woman weep, and hardest hearts are stirred,
When what is done is rather seen than heard,
Yet many deeds preserved in History's page
Are better told than acted on the stage;
The ear sustains what shocks the timid eye,
And Horror thus subsides to Sympathy, 270
True Briton all beside, I here am French —
Bloodshed 'tis surely better to retrench:
The gladiatorial gore we teach to flow
In tragic scenes disgusts though but in show;
We hate the carnage while we see the trick,
And find small sympathy in being sick.
Not on the stage the regicide Macbeth
Appals an audience with a Monarch's death;
To gaze when sable Hubert threatens to sear
Young Arthur's eyes, can *ours* or *Nature* bear? 280
A haltered heroine Johnson sought to slay —
We saved Irene, but half damned the play,
And (Heaven be praised!) our tolerating times
Stint Metamorphoses to Pantomimes;

And Lewis' self, with all his sprites, would quake
To change Earl Osmond's negro to a snake!
Because, in scenes exciting joy or grief,
We loathe the action which exceeds belief:
And yet, God knows! what may not authors do,
Whose Postscripts prate of dyeing "heroines blue"? 290

Above all things, *Dan* Poet, if you can,
Eke out your acts, I pray, with mortal man,
Nor call a ghost, unless some cursed scrape
Must open ten trap-doors for your escape.
Of all the monstrous things I'd fain forbid,
I loathe an Opera worse than Dennis did;
Where good and evil persons, right or wrong,
Rage, love, and aught but moralise — in song.
Hail, last memorial of our foreign friends,
Which Gaul allows, and still Hesperia lends! 300
Napoleon's edicts no embargo lay
On whores — spies — singers — wisely shipped away.
Our giant Capital, whose squares are spread
Where rustics earned, and now may beg, their bread,
In all iniquity is grown so nice,
It scorns amusements which are not of price.
Hence the pert shopkeeper, whose throbbing ear
Aches with orchestras which he pays to hear,
Whom shame, not sympathy, forbids to snore,
His anguish doubling by his own "encore;" 310
Squeezed in "Fop's Alley," jostled by the beaux,
Teased with his hat, and trembling for his toes;
Scarce wrestles through the night, nor tastes of ease,
Till the dropped curtain gives a glad release:
Why this, and more, he suffers — can ye guess? —
Because it costs him dear, and makes him dress!

So prosper eunuchs from Etruscan schools;
Give us but fiddlers, and they're sure of fools!
Ere scenes were played by many a reverend clerk,
(What harm, if David danced before the ark?) 320
In Christmas revels, simple country folks

Were pleased with morrice-mumm'ry and coarse jokes.
Improving years, with things no longer known,
Produced blithe Punch and merry Madame Joan,
Who still frisk on with feats so lewdly low,
'Tis strange Benvolio suffers such a show;
Suppressing peer! to whom each vice gives place,
Oaths, boxing, begging — all, save rout and race.

Farce followed Comedy, and reached her prime,
In ever-laughing Foote's fantastic time: 330
Mad wag! who pardoned none, nor spared the best,
And turned some very serious things to jest.
Nor Church nor State escaped his public sneers,
Arms nor the Gown — Priests — Lawyers — Volunteers:
"Alas, poor Yorick!" now for ever mute!
Whoever loves a laugh must sigh for Foote.

We smile, perforce, when histrionic scenes
Ape the swoln dialogue of Kings and Queens,
When "Crononhotonthologos must die,"
And Arthur struts in mimic majesty. 340

Moschus! with whom once more I hope to sit,
And smile at folly, if we can't at wit;
Yes, Friend! for thee I'll quit my cynic cell,
And bear Swift's motto, "Vive la bagatelle!"
Which charmed our days in each Ægean clime,
As oft at home, with revelry and rhyme.
Then may Euphrosyne, who sped the past,
Soothe thy Life's scenes, nor leave thee in the last;
But find in thine — like pagan Plato's bed,
Some merry Manuscript of Mimes, when dead. 350

Now to the Drama let us bend our eyes,
Where fettered by whig Walpole low she lies;
Corruption foiled her, for she feared her glance;
Decorum left her for an Opera dance!
Yet Chesterfield, whose polished pen inveighs
'Gainst laughter, fought for freedom to our Plays;

Unchecked by Megrimms of patrician brains,
And damning Dulness of Lord Chamberlains.
Repeal that act! again let Humour roam
Wild o'er the stage — we've time for tears at home; 360
Let Archer plant the horns on Sullen's brows,
And Estifania gull her "Copper" spouse;
The moral's scant — but that may be excused,
Men go not to be lectured, but amused.
He whom our plays dispose to Good or Ill
Must wear a head in want of Willis' skill;
Aye, but Macheath's example — psha! — no more!
It formed no thieves — the thief was formed before;
And spite of puritans and Collier's curse,
Plays make mankind no better, and no worse. 370
Then spare our stage, ye methodistic men!
Nor burn damned Drury if it rise again.
But why to brain-scorched bigots thus appeal?
Can heavenly Mercy dwell with earthly Zeal?
For times of fire and faggot let them hope!
Times dear alike to puritan or Pope.
As pious Calvin saw Servetus blaze,
So would new sects on newer victims gaze.
E'en now the songs of Solyma begin;
Faith cants, perplexed apologist of Sin! 380
While the Lord's servant chastens whom he loves,
And Simeon kicks, where Baxter only "shoves."

Whom Nature guides, so writes, that every dunce ,
Enraptured, thinks to do the same at once;
But after inky thumbs and bitten nails ,
And twenty scattered quires, the coxcomb fails.

Let Pastoral be dumb; for who can hope
To match the youthful eclogues of our Pope?
Yet his and Philips' faults, of different kind,
For Art too rude, for Nature too refined, 390
Instruct how hard the medium 'tis to hit
'Twixt too much polish and too coarse a wit.

A vulgar scribbler, certes, stands disgraced
In this nice age, when all aspire to taste;
The dirty language, and the noisome jest,
Which pleased in Swift of yore, we now detest;
Proscribed not only in the world polite ,
But even too nasty for a City Knight!

Peace to Swift's faults! his wit hath made them pass,
Unmatched by all, save matchless Hudibras! 400
Whose author is perhaps the first we meet,
Who from our couplet lopped two final feet;
Nor less in merit than the longer line,
This measure moves a favourite of the Nine.
Though at first view eight feet may seem in vain
Formed, save in Ode, to bear a serious strain ,
Yet Scott has shown our wondering isle of late
This measure shrinks not from a theme of weight,
And, varied skilfully, surpasses far
Heroic rhyme, but most in Love and War, 410
Whose fluctuations, tender or sublime,
Are curbed too much by long-recurring rhyme.

But many a skilful judge abhors to see,
What few admire — irregularity.
This some vouchsafe to pardon; but 'tis hard
When such a word contents a British Bard.

And must the Bard his glowing thoughts confine,
Lest Censure hover o'er some faulty line?
Remove whate'er a critic may suspect,
To gain the paltry suffrage of "Correct"? 420
Or prune the spirit of each daring phrase,
To fly from Error, not to merit Praise?

Ye, who seek finished models, never cease ,
By day and night, to read the works of Greece.
But our good Fathers never bent their brains
To heathen Greek, content with native strains.
The few who read a page, or used a pen,

Were satisfied with Chaucer and old Ben;
The jokes and numbers suited to their taste
Were quaint and careless, anything but chaste; 430
Yet, whether right or wrong the ancient rules,
It will not do to call our Fathers fools!
Though you and I, who eruditely know
To separate the elegant and low,
Can also, when a hobbling line appears,
Detect with fingers — in default of ears.

In sooth I do not know, or greatly care
To learn, who our first English strollers were;
Or if, till roofs received the vagrant art,
Our Muse, like that of Thespis, kept a cart; 440
But this is certain, since our Shakespeare's days,
There's pomp enough — if little else — in plays;
Nor will Melpomene ascend her Throne
Without high heels, white plume, and Bristol stone.

Old Comedies still meet with much applause,
Though too licentious for dramatic laws;
At least, we moderns, wisely, 'tis confest,
Curtail, or silence, the lascivious jest .

Whate'er their follies, and their faults beside,
Our enterprising Bards pass nought untried; 450
Nor do they merit slight applause who choose
An English subject for an English Muse,
And leave to minds which never dare invent
French flippancy and German sentiment.
Where is that living language which could claim
Poetic more, as philosophic, fame,
If all our Bards, more patient of delay,
Would stop, like Pope, to polish by the way?

Lords of the quill, whose critical assaults
O'erthrow whole quartos with their quires of faults , 460
Who soon detect, and mark where'er we fail,
And prove our marble with too nice a nail!

Democritus himself was not so bad;
He only 'thought' — but 'you' would make us — mad!

But truth to say, most rhymers rarely guard
Against that ridicule they deem so hard;
In person negligent, they wear, from sloth,
Beards of a week, and nails of annual growth;
Reside in garrets, fly from those they meet,
And walk in alleys rather than the street. 470

With little rhyme, less reason, if you please,
The name of Poet may be got with ease,
So that not tuns of helleboric juice
Shall ever turn your head to any use;
Write but like Wordsworth — live beside a lake,
And keep your bushy locks a year from Blake;
Then print your book, once more return to town,
And boys shall hunt your Bardship up and down.
Am I not wise, if such some poets' plight,
To purge in spring — like Bayes — before I write? 480
If this precaution softened not my bile,
I know no scribbler with a madder style;
But since (perhaps my feelings are too nice)
I cannot purchase Fame at such a price,
I'll labour gratis as a grinders' wheel,
And, blunt myself, give edge to other's steel,
Nor write at all, unless to teach the art
To those rehearsing for the Poet's part;
From Horace show the pleasing paths of song, ,
And from my own example — what is wrong. 490

Though modern practice sometimes differs quite,
'Tis just as well to think before you write;
Let every book that suits your theme be read,
So shall you trace it to the fountain-head.

He who has learned the duty which he owes
To friends and country, and to pardon foes;
Who models his deportment as may best

Accord with Brother, Sire, or Stranger-guest;
Who takes our Laws and Worship as they are,
Nor roars reform for Senate, Church, and Bar; 500
In practice, rather than loud precept, wise,
Bids not his tongue, but heart, philosophize:
Such is the man the Poet should rehearse,
As joint exemplar of his life and verse.

Sometimes a sprightly wit, and tale well told,
Without much grace, or weight, or art, will hold
A longer empire o'er the public mind
Than sounding trifles, empty, though refined.

Unhappy Greece! thy sons of ancient days
The Muse may celebrate with perfect praise, 510
Whose generous children narrowed not their hearts
With Commerce, given alone to Arms and Arts.
Our boys (save those whom public schools compel
To "Long and Short" before they're taught to spell)
From frugal fathers soon imbibe by rote,
"A penny saved, my lad, 's a penny got."
Babe of a city birth! from sixpence take
The third, how much will the remainder make? —
"A groat." — "Ah, bravo! Dick hath done the sum!
He'll swell my fifty thousand to a Plum." 520

They whose young souls receive this rust betimes,
'Tis clear, are fit for anything but rhymes;
And Locke will tell you, that the father's right
Who hides all verses from his children's sight;
For Poets (says this Sage, and many more,)
Make sad mechanics with their lyric lore:
And Delphi now, however rich of old,
Discovers little silver, and less gold,
Because Parnassus, though a Mount divine,
Is poor as Irus, or an Irish mine. 530

Two objects always should the Poet move,
Or one or both, — to please or to improve.

Whate'er you teach, be brief, if you design
For our remembrance your didactic line;
Redundance places Memory on the rack,
For brains may be o'erloaded, like the back.

Fiction does best when taught to look like Truth,
And fairy fables bubble none but youth:
Expect no credit for too wondrous tales,
Since Jonas only springs alive from Whales! 540

Young men with aught but Elegance dispense;
Maturer years require a little Sense.
To end at once: — that Bard for all is fit
Who mingles well instruction with his wit;
For him Reviews shall smile; for him o'erflow
The patronage of Paternoster-row;
His book, with Longman's liberal aid, shall pass
(Who ne'er despises books that bring him brass);
Through three long weeks the taste of London lead,
And cross St. George's Channel and the Tweed. 550

But every thing has faults, nor is't unknown
That harps and fiddles often lose their tone,
And wayward voices, at their owner's call,
With all his best endeavours, only squall;
Dogs blink their covey, flints withhold the spark,
And double-barrels (damn them!) miss their mark.

Where frequent beauties strike the reader's view,
We must not quarrel for a blot or two;
But pardon equally to books or men,
The slips of Human Nature, and the Pen. 560
Yet if an author, spite of foe or friend,
Despises all advice too much to mend,
But ever twangs the same discordant string,
Give him no quarter, howsoe'er he sing.
Let Havard's fate o'ertake him, who, for once,
Produced a play too dashing for a dunce:
At first none deemed it his; but when his name

Announced the fact — what then? — it lost its fame.
Though all deplore when Milton deigns to doze,
In a long work 'tis fair to steal repose. 570

As Pictures, so shall Poems be; some stand
The critic eye, and please when near at hand;
But others at a distance strike the sight;
This seeks the shade, but that demands the light,
Nor dreads the connoisseur's fastidious view,
But, ten times scrutinised, is ten times new.

Parnassian pilgrims! ye whom chance, or choice,
Hath led to listen to the Muse's voice,
Receive this counsel, and be timely wise;
Few reach the Summit which before you lies. 580
Our Church and State, our Courts and Camps, concede
Reward to very moderate heads indeed!
In these plain common sense will travel far;
All are not Erskines who mislead the Bar:
But Poesy between the best and worst
No medium knows; you must be last or first;
For middling Poets' miserable volumes
Are damned alike by Gods, and Men, and Columns.
Again, my Jeffrey — as that sound inspires,
How wakes my bosom to its wonted fires! 590
Fires, such as gentle Caledonians feel
When Southrons writhe upon their critic wheel,
Or mild Eclectics, when some, worse than Turks,
Would rob poor Faith to decorate "Good Works."
Such are the genial feelings them canst claim —
My Falcon flies not at ignoble game.
Mightiest of all Dunedin's beasts of chase!
For thee my Pegasus would mend his pace.
Arise, my Jeffrey! or my inkless pen
Shall never blunt its edge on meaner men; 600
Till thee or thine mine evil eye discerns,
"Alas! I cannot strike at wretched kernes."
Inhuman Saxon! wilt thou then resign
A Muse and heart by choice so wholly thine?

Dear d — d contemner of my schoolboy songs,
Hast thou no vengeance for my Manhood's wrongs?
If unprovoked thou once could bid me bleed,
Hast thou no weapon for my daring deed?
What! not a word! — and am I then so low?
Wilt thou forbear, who never spared a foe? 610
Hast thou no wrath, or wish to give it vent?
No wit for Nobles, Dunces by descent?
No jest on "minors," quibbles on a name,
Nor one facetious paragraph of blame?
Is it for this on Ilion I have stood,
And thought of Homer less than Holyrood?
On shore of Euxine or Ægean sea,
My hate, untravelled, fondly turned to thee.
Ah! let me cease! in vain my bosom burns,
From Corydon unkind Alexis turns: 620
Thy rhymes are vain; thy Jeffrey then forego,
Nor woo that anger which he will not show.
What then? — Edina starves some lanker son,
To write an article thou canst not shun;
Some less fastidious Scotchman shall be found,
As bold in Billingsgate, though less renowned.

As if at table some discordant dish,
Should shock our optics, such as frogs for fish;
As oil in lieu of butter men decry,
And poppies please not in a modern pie; 630
If all such mixtures then be half a crime,
We must have Excellence to relish rhyme.
Mere roast and boiled no Epicure invites;
Thus Poetry disgusts, or else delights.

Who shoot not flying rarely touch a gun:
Will he who swims not to the river run?
And men unpractised in exchanging knocks
Must go to Jackson ere they dare to box.
Whate'er the weapon, cudgel, fist, or foil,
None reach expertness without years of toil; 640
But fifty dunces can, with perfect ease,

Tag twenty thousand couplets, when they please.
Why not? — shall I, thus qualified to sit
For rotten boroughs, never show my wit?
Shall I, whose fathers with the “Quorum” sate,
And lived in freedom on a fair estate;
Who left me heir, with stables, kennels, packs,
To ‘all’ their income, and to — ’twice’ its tax;
Whose form and pedigree have scarce a fault,
Shall I, I say, suppress my Attic Salt? 650

Thus think “the Mob of Gentlemen;” but you,
Besides all this, must have some Genius too.
Be this your sober judgment, and a rule,
And print not piping hot from Southey’s school,
Who (ere another Thalaba appears),
I trust, will spare us for at least nine years.
And hark’ye, Southey! pray — but don’t be vexed —
Burn all your last three works — and half the next.
But why this vain advice? once published, books
Can never be recalled — from pastry-cooks! 660
Though “Madoc,” with “Pucelle,” instead of Punk,
May travel back to Quito — on a trunk!

Orpheus, we learn from Ovid and Lempriere,
Led all wild beasts but Women by the ear;
And had he fiddled at the present hour,
We’d seen the Lions waltzing in the Tower;
And old Amphion, such were minstrels then,
Had built St. Paul’s without the aid of Wren.
Verse too was Justice, and the Bards of Greece
Did more than constables to keep the peace; 670
Abolished cuckoldom with much applause,
Called county meetings, and enforced the laws,
Cut down crown influence with reforming scythes,
And served the Church — without demanding tithes;
And hence, throughout all Hellas and the East,
Each Poet was a Prophet and a Priest,
Whose old-established Board of Joint Controls
Included kingdoms in the cure of souls.

Next rose the martial Homer, Epic's prince,
And Fighting's been in fashion ever since; 680
And old Tyrtæus, when the Spartans warred,
(A limping leader, but a lofty bard)
Though walled Ithome had resisted long,
Reduced the fortress by the force of song.

When Oracles prevailed, in times of old,
In song alone Apollo's will was told.
Then if your verse is what all verse should be,
And Gods were not ashamed on't, why should we?

The Muse, like mortal females, may be wooed;
In turns she'll seem a Paphian, or a prude; 690
Fierce as a bride when first she feels affright,
Mild as the same upon the second night;
Wild as the wife of Alderman or Peer,
Now for His Grace, and now a grenadier!
Her eyes beseech, her heart belies, her zone —
Ice in a crowd — and Lava when alone.

If Verse be studied with some show of Art.
Kind Nature always will perform her part;
Though without Genius, and a native vein
Of wit, we loathe an artificial strain, 700
Yet Art and Nature joined will win the prize,
Unless they act like us and our allies.

The youth who trains to ride, or run a race,
Must bear privations with unruffled face,
Be called to labour when he thinks to dine,
And, harder still, leave wenching and his wine.
Ladies who sing, at least who sing at sight,
Have followed Music through her farthest flight;
But rhymers tell you neither more nor less,
"I've got a pretty poem for the Press;" 710
And that's enough; then write and print so fast; —
If Satan take the hindmost, who'd be last?
They storm the Types, they publish, one and all,

They leap the counter, and they leave the stall.
Provincial Maidens, men of high command,
Yea! Baronets have inked the bloody hand!
Cash cannot quell them; Pollio played this prank,
(Then Phoebus first found credit in a Bank!)
Not all the living only, but the dead,
Fool on, as fluent as an Orpheus' Head; 720
Damned all their days, they posthumously thrive,
Dug up from dust, though buried when alive!
Reviews record this epidemic crime,
Those Books of Martyrs to the rage for rhyme.
Alas! woe worth the scribbler! often seen
In Morning Post, or Monthly Magazine.
There lurk his earlier lays; but soon, hot pressed,
Behold a Quarto! — Tarts must tell the rest.
Then leave, ye wise, the Lyre's precarious chords
To muse-mad baronets, or madder lords, 730
Or country Crispins, now grown somewhat stale,
Twin Doric minstrels, drunk with Doric ale!
Hark to those notes, narcotically soft!
The Cobbler-Laureats sing to Capel Lofft!
Till, lo! that modern Midas, as he hears,
Adds an ell growth to his egregious ears!
There lives one Druid, who prepares in time
'Gainst future feuds his poor revenge of rhyme;
Racks his dull Memory, and his duller Muse,
To publish faults which Friendship should excuse. 740
If Friendship's nothing, Self-regard might teach
More polished usage of his parts of speech.
But what is shame, or what is aught to him?
He vents his spleen, or gratifies his whim.
Some fancied slight has roused his lurking hate,
Some folly crossed, some jest, or some debate;
Up to his den Sir Scribbler hies, and soon
The gathered gall is voided in Lampoon.
Perhaps at some pert speech you've dared to frown,
Perhaps your Poem may have pleased the Town: 750
If so, alas! 'tis nature in the man —
May Heaven forgive you, for he never can!

Then be it so; and may his withering Bays
Bloom fresh in satire, though they fade in praise
While his lost songs no more shall steep and stink
The dullest, fattest weeds on Lethe's brink,
But springing upwards from the sluggish mould,
Be (what they never were before) be — sold!
Should some rich Bard (but such a monster now,
In modern Physics, we can scarce allow), 760
Should some pretending scribbler of the Court,
Some rhyming Peer — there's plenty of the sort —
All but one poor dependent priest withdrawn,
(Ah! too regardless of his Chaplain's yawn!)
Condemn the unlucky Curate to recite
Their last dramatic work by candle-light,
How would the preacher turn each rueful leaf,
Dull as his sermons, but not half so brief!
Yet, since 'tis promised at the Rector's death,
He'll risk no living for a little breath. 770
Then spouts and foams, and cries at every line,
(The Lord forgive him!) "Bravo! Grand! Divine!"
Hoarse with those praises (which, by Flatt'ry fed,
Dependence barter for her bitter bread),
He strides and stamps along with creaking boot;
Till the floor echoes his emphatic foot,
Then sits again, then rolls his pious eye,
As when the dying vicar will not die!
Nor feels, forsooth, emotion at his heart; —
But all Dissemblers overact their part. 780

Ye, who aspire to "build the lofty rhyme,"
Believe not all who laud your false "sublime;"
But if some friend shall hear your work, and say,
"Expunge that stanza, lop that line away,"
And, after fruitless efforts, you return
Without amendment, and he answers, "Burn!"
That instant throw your paper in the fire,
Ask not his thoughts, or follow his desire;
But (if true Bard!) you scorn to condescend,
And will not alter what you can't defend, 790

If you will breed this Bastard of your Brains,
We'll have no words — I've only lost my pains.

Yet, if you only prize your favourite thought,
As critics kindly do, and authors ought;
If your cool friend annoy you now and then,
And cross whole pages with his plaguy pen;
No matter, throw your ornaments aside, —
Better let him than all the world deride.
Give light to passages too much in shade,
Nor let a doubt obscure one verse you've made; 800
Your friend's a "Johnson," not to leave one word,
However trifling, which may seem absurd;
Such erring trifles lead to serious ills,
And furnish food for critics, or their quills.

As the Scotch fiddle, with its touching tune,
Or the sad influence of the angry Moon,
All men avoid bad writers' ready tongues,
As yawning waiters fly Fitzscribble's lungs;
Yet on he mouths — ten minutes — tedious each
As Prelate's homily, or placeman's speech; 810
Long as the last years of a lingering lease,
When Riot pauses until Rents increase.
While such a minstrel, muttering fustian, strays
O'er hedge and ditch, through unfrequented ways,
If by some chance he walks into a well,
And shouts for succour with stentorian yell,
"A rope! help, Christians, as ye hope for grace!"
Nor woman, man, nor child will stir a pace;
For there his carcass he might freely fling,
From frenzy, or the humour of the thing. 820
Though this has happened to more Bards than one;
I'll tell you Budgell's story, — and have done.

Budgell, a rogue and rhymester, for no good,
(Unless his case be much misunderstood)
When teased with creditors' continual claims,
"To die like Cato," leapt into the Thames!

And therefore be it lawful through the town
For any Bard to poison, hang, or drown.
Who saves the intended Suicide receives
Small thanks from him who loathes the life he leaves; 830
And, sooth to say, mad poets must not lose
The Glory of that death they freely choose.

Nor is it certain that some sorts of verse
Prick not the Poet's conscience as a curse;
Dosed with vile drams on Sunday he was found,
Or got a child on consecrated ground!
And hence is haunted with a rhyming rage —
Feared like a bear just bursting from his cage.
If free, all fly his versifying fit,
Fatal at once to Simpleton or Wit: 840
But 'him', unhappy! whom he seizes, — 'him'
He flays with Recitation limb by limb;
Probes to the quick where'er he makes his breach,
And gorges like a Lawyer — or a Leech.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA.

— "Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
Immolat, et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit."

Aeneid, lib. xii, 947, 948.

INTRODUCTION

'The Curse of Minerva', which was written at Athens, and is dated March 17, 1811, remained unpublished, as a whole, in this country, during Byron's lifetime. The arrangement which had been made with Cawthorn, to bring out a fifth edition of 'English Bards', included the issue of a separate volume, containing 'Hints from Horace' and 'The Curse of Minerva;' and, as Moore intimates, it was the withdrawal of the latter, in deference to the wishes of Lord Elgin or his connections, which led to the suppression of the other satires.

The quarto edition of The 'Curse of Minerva', printed by T. Davison in 1812, was probably set up at the same time as Murray's quarto edition of 'Childe Harold', and reserved for private circulation. With or without Byron's consent, the poem as a whole was published in Philadelphia by De Silver and Co., 1815, 8vo (for variants, see p. 453, 'note'). In a letter to Murray, March 6, 1816, he says that he "disowns" 'The Curse, etc.', "as stolen and published in a miserable and villainous copy in the magazine." The reference is to 'The Malediction of Minerva, or The Athenian Marble-Market', which appeared in the 'New Monthly Magazine' for April, 1818, vol. iii. 240. It numbers 111 lines, and is signed "Steropes" (The Lightner, a Cyclops). The text of the magazine, with the same additional footnotes, but under the title of 'The Curse', etc., was republished in the eighth edition of 'Poems on His Domestic Circumstances', W. Hone, London, 1816, 8vo, and, thenceforth, in other piratical issues. Whatever may have been his feelings or intentions in 1812, four years later Byron was well aware that 'The Curse of Minerva' would not increase his reputation as a poet, while the object of his satire — the exposure and denunciation of Lord Elgin — had been accomplished by the scathing stanzas (canto ii. 10-15), with their accompanying note, in 'Childe Harold'. "Disown" it as he might, his words were past recall, and both indictments stand in his name.

Byron was prejudiced against Elgin before he started on his tour. He had, perhaps, glanced at the splendid folio, 'Specimens of Ancient Sculpture', which was issued by the Dilettanti Society in 1809. Payne Knight wrote the preface, in which he maintains that the friezes and metopes of the Parthenon were not the actual work of Phidias, "but ... architectural studies ... probably by workmen scarcely ranked among artists." So judged the leader of the 'cognoscenti', and, in accordance with his views, Elgin and Aberdeen are held up to ridicule in 'English Bards' (second edition, October, 1809, 1. 1007, and 'note') as credulous and extravagant collectors of "maimed antiques." It was, however, not till the first visit to Athens (December, 1809-March, 1810), when he saw with

his own eyes the “ravages of barbarous and antiquarian despoilers” (Lord Broughton’s ‘Travels in Albania’, 1858, i. 259), that contempt gave way to indignation, and his wrath found vent in the pages of ‘Childe Harold’.

Byron cared as little for ancient buildings as he did for the authorities, or for patriotic enterprise, but he was stirred to the quick by the marks of fresh and, as he was led to believe, wanton injury to “Athena’s poor remains.” The southern side of the half-wrecked Parthenon had been deprived of its remaining metopes, which had suffered far less from the weather than the other sides which are still in the building; all that remained of the frieze had been stripped from the three sides of the cella, and the eastern pediment had been despoiled of its diminished and mutilated, but still splendid, group of figures; and, though five or six years had gone by, the blank spaces between the triglyphs must have revealed their recent exposure to the light, and the shattered edges of the cornice, which here and there had been raised and demolished to permit the dislodgment of the metopes, must have caught the eye as they sparkled in the sun. Nor had the removal and deportation of friezes and statues come to an end. The firman which Dr. Hunt, the chaplain to the embassy, had obtained in 1801, which empowered Elgin and his agents to take away ‘qualche pezzi di pietra’, still ran, and Don Tita Lusieri, the Italian artist, who remained in Elgin’s service, was still, like the ‘canes venatici’ (Americané, “smell-dogs”) employed by Verres in Sicily (see ‘Childe Harold’, canto ii. st. 12, ‘note’), finding fresh relics, and still bewailing to sympathetic travellers the hard fate which compelled him to despoil the temples ‘malgré lui’. The feelings of the inhabitants themselves were not much in question, but their opinions were quoted for and against the removal of the marbles. Elgin’s secretary and prime agent, W.R. Hamilton, testifies, from personal knowledge, that, “so far from exciting any unpleasant sensations, the people seemed to feel it as the means of bringing foreigners into the country, and of having money spent there” (‘Memoir on the Earl of Elgin’s Pursuits in Greece’, 1811). On the other hand, the traveller, Edward Daniel Clarke, with whom Byron corresponded (see ‘Childe Harold’, canto ii. st. 12, ‘note’), speaks of the attachment of the Turks to the Parthenon, and their religious veneration for the building as a mosque, and tells a pathetic story of the grief of the Disdar when “a metope was lowered, and the adjacent masonry scattered its white fragments with thundering noise among the ruins” (‘Travels in Various Countries’, part ii, sect. ii, p. 483).

Other travellers of less authority than Clarke — Dodwell, for instance, who visited the Parthenon before it had been dismantled, and, afterwards, was present at the removal of metopes; and Hughes, who came after Byron (autumn, 1813) — make use of such phrases as “shattered desolation,” “wanton devastation and

avidity of plunder.” Even Michaelis, the great archaeologist, who denounces ‘The Curse of Minerva’ as a “‘libellous’ poem,” and affirms “that only blind passion could doubt that Lord Elgin’s act was an act of preservation,” admits that “the removal of several metopes and of the statue from the Erechtheion had severely injured the surrounding architecture” (‘Ancient Marbles in Great Britain’, by A. Michaelis, translated by C.A.M. Fennell, 1882, p. 135). Highly coloured and emotional as some of these phrases may be, they explain, if they do not justify, the ‘*sæva indignatio*’ of Byron’s satire.

It is almost, if not quite, unnecessary to state the facts on the other side. History regards Lord Elgin as a disinterested official, who at personal loss (at least thirty-five thousand pounds on his own showing), and in spite of opposition and disparagement, secured for his own country and the furtherance of art the perishable fragments of Phidian workmanship, which, but for his intervention, might have perished altogether. If they had eluded the clutches of Turkish mason and Greek dealer in antiquities — if, by some happy chance, they had escaped the ravages of war, the gradual but gradually increasing assaults of rain and frost would have already left their effacing scars on the “Elgin marbles.” As it is, the progress of decay has been arrested, and all the world is the gainer. Byron was neither a prophet nor an archaeologist, and time and knowledge have put him in the wrong. But in 1810 the gaps in the entablature of the Parthenon were new, the Phidian marbles were huddled in a “damp dirty penthouse” in Park Lane (see ‘Life of Haydon’, i. 84), and the logic of events had not justified a sad necessity.

THE CURSE OF MINERVA.

Pallas te hoc Vulnere Pallas
Immolat et poenam scelerato ex Sanguine Sumit.

ATHENS: CAPUCHIN CONVENT, *March* 17, 1811.

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting Sun;
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light;
O'er the hushed deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it glows;
On old Ægina's rock and Hydra's isle
The God of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine. 10
Descending fast, the mountain-shadows kiss
Thy glorious Gulf, unconquered Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long expanse,
More deeply purpled, meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of Heaven;
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian rock he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve his palest beam he cast
When, Athens! here thy Wisest looked his last. 20
How watched thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murdered Sage's latest day!
Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonizing eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes;
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seemed to pour,
The land where Phoebus never frowned before;
But ere he sunk below Cithaeron's head,
The cup of Woe was quaffed — the Spirit fled; 30

The soul of Him that scorned to fear or fly,
Who lived and died as none can live or die.

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain
The Queen of Night asserts her silent reign;
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, or girds her glowing form;
With cornice glimmering as the moonbeams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And bright around, with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the Minaret; 40
The groves of olive scattered dark and wide,
Where meek Cephissus sheds his scanty tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And sad and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane, yon solitary palm;
All, tinged with varied hues, arrest the eye;
And dull were his that passed them heedless by.
Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war: 50
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long expanse of sapphire and of gold,
Mixed with the shades of many a distant isle
That frown, where gentler Ocean deigns to smile.

As thus, within the walls of Pallas' fane,
I marked the beauties of the land and main,
Alone, and friendless, on the magic shore,
Whose arts and arms but live in poets' lore;
Oft as the matchless dome I turned to scan,
Sacred to Gods, but not secure from Man, 60
The Past returned, the Present seemed to cease,
And Glory knew no clime beyond her Greece!

Hour rolled along, and Dian's orb on high
Had gained the centre of her softest sky;
And yet unwearied still my footsteps trod
O'er the vain shrine of many a vanished God:

But chiefly, Pallas! thine, when Hecate's glare
Checked by thy columns, fell more sadly fair
O'er the chill marble, where the startling tread
Thrills the lone heart like echoes from the dead. 70
Long had I mused, and treasured every trace
The wreck of Greece recorded of her race,
When, lo! a giant-form before me strode,
And Pallas hailed me in her own Abode!

Yes, 'twas Minerva's self; but, ah! how changed,
Since o'er the Dardan field in arms she ranged!
Not such as erst, by her divine command,
Her form appeared from Phidias' plastic hand:
Gone were the terrors of her awful brow,
Her idle Ægis bore no Gorgon now; 80
Her helm was dented, and the broken lance
Seemed weak and shaftless e'en to mortal glance;
The Olive Branch, which still she deigned to clasp,
Shrunk from her touch, and withered in her grasp;
And, ah! though still the brightest of the sky,
Celestial tears bedimmed her large blue eye;
Round the rent casque her owlet circled slow,
And mourned his mistress with a shriek of woe!

"Mortal!" — 'twas thus she spake — "that blush of shame
Proclaims thee Briton, once a noble name; 90
First of the mighty, foremost of the free,
Now honoured 'less' by all, and 'least' by me:
Chief of thy foes shall Pallas still be found.
Seek'st thou the cause of loathing! — look around.
Lo! here, despite of war and wasting fire,
I saw successive Tyrannies expire;
'Scaped from the ravage of the Turk and Goth,
Thy country sends a spoiler worse than both.
Survey this vacant, violated fane;
Recount the relics torn that yet remain: 100
'These' Cecrops placed, 'this' Pericles adorned,
'That' Adrian reared when drooping Science mourned.
What more I owe let Gratitude attest —

Know, Alaric and Elgin did the rest.
That all may learn from whence the plunderer came,
The insulted wall sustains his hated name:
For Elgin's fame thus grateful Pallas pleads,
Below, his name — above, behold his deeds!
Be ever hailed with equal honour here
The Gothic monarch and the Pictish peer: 110
Arms gave the first his right, the last had none,
But basely stole what less barbarians won.
So when the Lion quits his fell repast,
Next prowls the Wolf, the filthy Jackal last:
Flesh, limbs, and blood the former make their own,
The last poor brute securely gnaws the bone.
Yet still the Gods are just, and crimes are crossed:
See here what Elgin won, and what he lost!
Another name with *his* pollutes my shrine:
Behold where Dian's beams disdain to shine! 120
Some retribution still might Pallas claim,
When Venus half avenged Minerva's shame."

She ceased awhile, and thus I dared reply,
To soothe the vengeance kindling in her eye:
"Daughter of Jove! in Britain's injured name,
A true-born Briton may the deed disclaim.
Frown not on England; England owns him not:
Athena, no! thy plunderer was a Scot.
Ask'st thou the difference? From fair Phyles' towers
Survey Boeotia; — Caledonia's ours. 130
And well I know within that bastard land
Hath Wisdom's goddess never held command;
A barren soil, where Nature's germs, confined
To stern sterility, can stint the mind;
Whose thistle well betrays the niggard earth,
Emblem of all to whom the Land gives birth;
Each genial influence nurtured to resist;
A land of meanness, sophistry, and mist.
Each breeze from foggy mount and marshy plain
Dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain, 140
Till, burst at length, each wat'ry head o'erflows,

Foul as their soil, and frigid as their snows:
Then thousand schemes of petulance and pride
Despatch her scheming children far and wide;
Some East, some West, some — everywhere but North!
In quest of lawless gain, they issue forth.
And thus — accursed be the day and year!
She sent a Pict to play the felon here.
Yet Caledonia claims some native worth,
As dull Boeotia gave a Pindar birth; 150
So may her few, the lettered and the brave,
Bound to no clime, and victors of the grave,
Shake off the sordid dust of such a land,
And shine like children of a happier strand;
As once, of yore, in some obnoxious place,
Ten names (if found) had saved a wretched race.”

”Mortal!” the blue-eyed maid resumed, “once more
Bear back my mandate to thy native shore.
Though fallen, alas! this vengeance yet is mine,
To turn my counsels far from lands like thine. 160
Hear then in silence Pallas’ stern behest;
Hear and believe, for Time will tell the rest.

”First on the head of him who did this deed
My curse shall light, — on him and all his seed:
Without one spark of intellectual fire,
Be all the sons as senseless as the sire:
If one with wit the parent brood disgrace,
Believe him bastard of a brighter race:
Still with his hireling artists let him prate,
And Folly’s praise repay for Wisdom’s hate; 170
Long of their Patron’s gusto let them tell,
Whose noblest, *native* gusto is — to sell:
To sell, and make — may shame record the day! —
The State — Receiver of his pilfered prey.
Meantime, the flattering, feeble dotard, West,
Europe’s worst dauber, and poor Britain’s best,
With palsied hand shall turn each model o’er,
And own himself an infant of fourscore.

Be all the Bruisers culled from all St. Giles',
That Art and Nature may compare their styles; 180
While brawny brutes in stupid wonder stare,
And marvel at his Lordship's 'stone shop' there.
Round the thronged gate shall sauntering coxcombs creep
To lounge and lucubrate, to prate and peep;
While many a languid maid, with longing sigh,
On giant statues casts the curious eye;
The room with transient glance appears to skim,
Yet marks the mighty back and length of limb;
Mourns o'er the difference of *now* and *then*;
Exclaims, 'These Greeks indeed were proper men!' 190
Draws slight comparisons of 'these' with 'those',
And envies Laïs all her Attic beaux.
When shall a modern maid have swains like these?
Alas! Sir Harry is no Hercules!
And last of all, amidst the gaping crew,
Some calm spectator, as he takes his view,
In silent indignation mixed with grief,
Admires the plunder, but abhors the thief.
Oh, loathed in life, nor pardoned in the dust,
May Hate pursue his sacrilegious lust! 200
Linked with the fool that fired the Ephesian dome,
Shall vengeance follow far beyond the tomb,
And Eratostratus and Elgin shine
In many a branding page and burning line;
Alike reserved for aye to stand accursed,
Perchance the second blacker than the first.

"So let him stand, through ages yet unborn,
Fixed statue on the pedestal of Scorn;
Though not for him alone revenge shall wait,
But fits thy country for her coming fate: 210
Hers were the deeds that taught her lawless son
To do what oft Britannia's self had done.
Look to the Baltic — blazing from afar,
Your old Ally yet mourns perfidious war.
Not to such deeds did Pallas lend her aid,
Or break the compact which herself had made;

Far from such counsels, from the faithless field
She fled — but left behind her Gorgon shield;
A fatal gift that turned your friends to stone,
And left lost Albion hated and alone. 220

”Look to the East, where Ganges’ swarthy race
Shall shake your tyrant empire to its base;
Lo! there Rebellion rears her ghastly head,
And glares the Nemesis of native dead;
Till Indus rolls a deep purpureal flood,
And claims his long arrear of northern blood.
So may ye perish! — Pallas, when she gave
Your free-born rights, forbade ye to enslave.

”Look on your Spain! — she clasps the hand she hates,
But boldly clasps, and thrusts you from her gates. 230
Bear witness, bright Barossa! thou canst tell
Whose were the sons that bravely fought and fell.
But Lusitania, kind and dear ally,
Can spare a few to fight, and sometimes fly.
Oh glorious field! by Famine fiercely won,
The Gaul retires for once, and all is done!
But when did Pallas teach, that one retreat
Retrieved three long Olympiads of defeat?

”Look last at home — ye love not to look there
On the grim smile of comfortless despair: 240
Your city saddens: loud though Revel howls,
Here Famine faints, and yonder Rapine prowls.
See all alike of more or less bereft;
No misers tremble when there’s nothing left.
’Blest paper credit;’ who shall dare to sing?
It clogs like lead Corruption’s weary wing.
Yet Pallas pluck’d each Premier by the ear,
Who Gods and men alike disdained to hear;
But one, repentant o’er a bankrupt state,
On Pallas calls, — but calls, alas! too late: 250
Then raves for’ — — ’; to that Mentor bends,
Though he and Pallas never yet were friends.

Him senates hear, whom never yet they heard,
Contemptuous once, and now no less absurd.
So, once of yore, each reasonable frog,
Swore faith and fealty to his sovereign 'log.'
Thus hailed your rulers their patrician clod,
As Egypt chose an onion for a God.

"Now fare ye well! enjoy your little hour;
Go, grasp the shadow of your vanished power; 260
Gloss o'er the failure of each fondest scheme;
Your strength a name, your bloated wealth a dream.
Gone is that Gold, the marvel of mankind.
And Pirates barter all that's left behind.
No more the hirelings, purchased near and far,
Crowd to the ranks of mercenary war.
The idle merchant on the useless quay
Droops o'er the bales no bark may bear away;
Or, back returning, sees rejected stores
Rot piecemeal on his own encumbered shores: 270
The starved mechanic breaks his rusting loom,
And desperate mans him 'gainst the coming doom.
Then in the Senates of your sinking state
Show me the man whose counsels may have weight.
Vain is each voice where tones could once command;
E'en factions cease to charm a factious land:
Yet jarring sects convulse a sister Isle,
And light with maddening hands the mutual pile.

"'Tis done, 'tis past — since Pallas warns in vain;
The Furies seize her abdicated reign: 280
Wide o'er the realm they wave their kindling brands,
And wring her vitals with their fiery hands.
But one convulsive struggle still remains,
And Gaul shall weep ere Albion wear her chains,
The bannered pomp of war, the glittering files,
O'er whose gay trappings stern Bellona smiles;
The brazen trump, the spirit-stirring drum,
That bid the foe defiance ere they come;
The hero bounding at his country's call,

The glorious death that consecrates his fall, 290
Swell the young heart with visionary charms.
And bid it antedate the joys of arms.
But know, a lesson you may yet be taught,
With death alone are laurels cheaply bought;
Not in the conflict Havoc seeks delight,
His day of mercy is the day of fight.
But when the field is fought, the battle won,
Though drenched with gore, his woes are but begun:
His deeper deeds as yet ye know by name;
The slaughtered peasant and the ravished dame, 300
The rifled mansion and the foe-reaped field,
Ill suit with souls at home, untaught to yield.
Say with what eye along the distant down
Would flying burghers mark the blazing town?
How view the column of ascending flames
Shake his red shadow o'er the startled Thames?
Nay, frown not, Albion! for the torch was thine
That lit such pyres from Tagus to the Rhine:
Now should they burst on thy devoted coast,
Go, ask thy bosom who deserves them most? 310
The law of Heaven and Earth is life for life,
And she who raised, in vain regrets, the strife."

THE WALTZ

INTRODUCTION

Byron spent the autumn of 1812 “by the waters of Cheltenham,” and, besides writing to order his ‘Song of Drury Lane’ (the address spoken at the opening of the theatre, Oct. 10, 1812), he put in hand a ‘Satire on Waltzing’. It was published anonymously in the following spring; but, possibly, because it was somewhat coolly received, he told Murray (April 21, 1813) “to contradict the report that he was the author of a certain malicious publication on waltzing.” In his memoranda “chiefly with reference to my Byron,” Moore notes “Byron’s hatred of waltzing,” and records a passage of arms between “the lame boy” and Mary Chaworth, which arose from her “dancing with some person who was unknown to her.” Then, and always, he must have experienced the bitter sense of exclusion from active amusements; but it is a hasty assumption that Byron only denounced waltzing because he was unable to waltz himself. To modern sentiment, on the moral side, waltzing is unassailable; but the first impressions of spectators, to whom it was a novelty, were distinctly unfavourable.

In a letter from Germany (May 17, 1799) Coleridge describes a dance round the maypole at Rübeland.

“The dances were reels and the waltzes, but chiefly the latter; this dance is in the higher circles sufficiently voluptuous, but here the motions of it were ‘far’ more faithful interpreters of the passions.”

A year later, H.C. Robinson, writing from Frankfort in 1800 (‘Diary and Letters’, i. 76), says, “The dancing is unlike anything you ever saw. You must have heard of it under the name of waltzing, that is rolling and turning, though the rolling is not horizontal but perpendicular. Yet Werther, after describing his first waltz with Charlotte, says, and I say so too, ‘I felt that if I were married my wife should waltz (or roll) with no one but myself.’” Ten years later, Gillray publishes a caricature of the waltz, as a French dance, which he styles, “Le bon Genre.” It is not a pretty picture. By degrees, however, and with some reluctance, society yielded to the fascinations of the stranger.

“My cousin Hartington,” writes Lady Caroline Lamb, in 1812 (‘Memoirs of Viscount Melbourne’, by W.T. McCullagh Torrens, i. 105), “wanted to have waltzes and quadrilles; and at Devonshire House it could not be allowed, so we had them in the great drawing-room at Whitehall. All the ‘bon ton’ assembled there continually. There was nothing so fashionable.”

“No event,” says Thomas Raikes (‘Personal Reminiscences’, p. 284), ever

produced so great a sensation in English society as the introduction of the German waltz.... Old and young returned to school, and the mornings were now absorbed at home in practising the figures of a French quadrille or whirling a chair round the room to learn the step and measure of the German waltz. The anti-waltzing party took the alarm, cried it down; mothers forbid it, and every ballroom became a scene of feud and contention. The foreigners were not idle in forming their 'élèves'; Baron Tripp, Neumann, St. Aldegonde, etc., persevered in spite of all prejudices which were marshalled against them. It was not, however, till Byron's "malicious publication" had been issued and forgotten that the new dance received full recognition. "When," Raikes concludes, "the Emperor Alexander was seen waltzing round the room at Almack's with his tight uniform and numerous decorations," or [Gronow, 'Recollections', 1860, pp. 32, 33] "Lord Palmerston might have been seen describing an infinite number of circles with Madame de Lieven," insular prejudices gave way, and waltzing became general.

THE WALTZ
AN APOSTROPHIC HYMN.
BY HORACE HORNEM, ESQ.

”Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi,
Exercet DIANA choros.”

VIRGIL, ‘Æn’. i. 502.

”Such on Eurotas’s banks, or Cynthus’s height,
Diana seems: and so she charms the sight,
When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
The quire of nymphs, and overtops their heads.”

DRYDEN’S *Virgil*.

TO THE PUBLISHER.

SIR, I am a country Gentleman of a midland county. I might have been a Parliament-man for a certain borough; having had the offer of as many votes as General T. at the general election in 1812. But I was all for domestic happiness; as, fifteen years ago, on a visit to London, I married a middle-aged Maid of Honour. We lived happily at Hornem Hall till last Season, when my wife and I were invited by the Countess of Waltzaway (a distant relation of my Spouse) to pass the winter in town. Thinking no harm, and our Girls being come to a marriageable (or, as they call it, 'marketable') age, and having besides a Chancery suit inveterately entailed upon the family estate, we came up in our old chariot, — of which, by the bye, my wife grew so ashamed in less than a week, that I was obliged to buy a second-hand barouche, of which I might mount the box, Mrs. H. says, if I could drive, but never see the inside — that place being reserved for the Honourable Augustus Tiptoe, her partner-general and Opera-knight. Hearing great praises of Mrs. H.'s dancing (she was famous for birthnight minuets in the latter end of the last century), I unbooted, and went to a ball at the Countess's, expecting to see a country dance, or, at most, Cotillons, reels, and all the old paces to the newest tunes, But, judge of my surprise, on arriving, to see poor dear Mrs. Hornem with her arms half round the loins of a huge hussar-looking gentleman I never set eyes on before; and his, to say truth, rather more than half round her waist, turning round, and round, to a d — — d see-saw up-and-down sort of tune, that reminded me of the "Black Joke," only more "affettuoso" till it made me quite giddy with wondering they were not so. By and by they stopped a bit, and I thought they would sit or fall down: — but no; with Mrs. H.'s hand on his shoulder, "'Quam familiariter'" (as Terence said, when I was at school,) they walked about a minute, and then at it again, like two cock-chafers spitted on the same bodkin. I asked what all this meant, when, with a loud laugh, a child no older than our Wilhelmina (a name I never heard but in the 'Vicar of Wakefield', though her mother would call her after the Princess of Swappenbach,) said, "L — d! Mr. Hornem, can't you see they're valtzing?" or waltzing (I forget which); and then up she got, and her mother and sister, and away they went, and round-abouted it till supper-time. Now that I know what it is, I like it of all things, and so does Mrs. H. (though I have broken my shins, and four times overturned Mrs. Hornem's maid, in practising the preliminary steps in a morning). Indeed, so much do I like it, that having a turn for rhyme, tastily displayed in some election ballads, and songs in honour of all the victories (but till lately I have had little practice in that way), I sat down, and with the aid of

William Fitzgerald, Esq., and a few hints from Dr. Busby, (whose recitations I attend, and am monstrous fond of Master Busby's manner of delivering his father's late successful "Drury Lane Address,") I composed the following hymn, wherewithal to make my sentiments known to the Public; whom, nevertheless, I heartily despise, as well as the critics.

I am, Sir, yours, etc., *etc.*

HORACE HORNEM.

THE WALTZ

Muse of the many-twinkling feet! whose charms
Are now extended up from legs to arms;
Terpsichore! — too long misdeemed a maid —
Reproachful term — bestowed but to upbraid —
Henceforth in all the bronze of brightness shine,
The least a Vestal of the Virgin Nine.
Far be from thee and thine the name of Prude:
Mocked yet triumphant; sneered at, unsubdued;
Thy legs must move to conquer as they fly,
If but thy coats are reasonably high! 10
Thy breast — if bare enough — requires no shield;
Dance forth — *sans armour* thou shalt take the field
And own — impregnable to *most* assaults,
Thy not too lawfully begotten “Waltz.”

Hail, nimble Nymph! to whom the young hussar,
The whiskered votary of Waltz and War,
His night devotes, despite of spur and boots;
A sight unmatched since Orpheus and his brutes:
Hail, spirit-stirring Waltz! — beneath whose banners
A modern hero fought for modish manners; 20
On Hounslow’s heath to rival Wellesley’s fame,
Cocked, fired, and missed his man — but gained his aim;
Hail, moving muse! to whom the fair one’s breast
Gives all it can, and bids us take the rest.
Oh! for the flow of Busby, or of Fitz,
The latter’s loyalty, the former’s wits,
To “energise the object I pursue,”
And give both Belial and his Dance their due!

Imperial Waltz! imported from the Rhine
(Famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine), 30
Long be thine import from all duty free,
And Hock itself be less esteemed than thee;
In some few qualities alike — for Hock
Improves our cellar — *thou* our living stock.

The head to Hock belongs — thy subtler art
Intoxicates alone the heedless heart:
Through the full veins thy gentler poison swims,
And wakes to Wantonness the willing limbs.

Oh, Germany! how much to thee we owe,
As heaven-born Pitt can testify below, 40
Ere cursed Confederation made thee France's,
And only left us thy d — d debts and dances!
Of subsidies and Hanover bereft,
We bless thee still — George the Third is left!
Of kings the best — and last, not least in worth,
For graciously begetting George the Fourth.
To Germany, and Highnesses serene,
Who owe us millions — don't we owe the Queen?
To Germany, what owe we not besides?
So oft bestowing Brunswickers and brides; 50
Who paid for vulgar, with her royal blood,
Drawn from the stem of each Teutonic stud:
Who sent us — so be pardoned all her faults —
A dozen dukes, some kings, a Queen — and Waltz.

But peace to her — her Emperor and Diet,
Though now transferred to Buonapartè's "fiat!"
Back to my theme — O muse of Motion! say,
How first to Albion found thy Waltz her way?

Borne on the breath of Hyperborean gales,
From Hamburg's port (while Hamburg yet had *mails*), 60
Ere yet unlucky Fame — compelled to creep
To snowy Gottenburg-was chilled to sleep;
Or, starting from her slumbers, deigned arise,
Heligoland! to stock thy mart with lies;
While unburnt Moscow yet had news to send,
Nor owed her fiery Exit to a friend,
She came — Waltz came — and with her certain sets
Of true despatches, and as true Gazettes;
Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest despatch,
Which *Moniteur* nor *Morning Post* can match 70

And — almost crushed beneath the glorious news —
Ten plays, and forty tales of Kotzebue's;
One envoy's letters, six composer's airs,
And loads from Frankfort and from Leipsic fairs:
Meiners' four volumes upon Womankind,
Like Lapland witches to ensure a wind;
Brunck's heaviest tome for ballast, and, to back it,
Of Heynè, such as should not sink the packet.

Fraught with this cargo — and her fairest freight,
Delightful Waltz, on tiptoe for a Mate, ⁸⁰
The welcome vessel reached the genial strand,
And round her flocked the daughters of the land.
Not decent David, when, before the ark,
His grand *Pas-seul* excited some remark;
Not love-lorn Quixote, when his Sancho thought
The knight's *Fandango* friskier than it ought;
Not soft Herodias, when, with winning tread,
Her nimble feet danced off another's head;
Not Cleopatra on her Galley's Deck,
Displayed so much of *leg* or more of *neck*, ⁹⁰
Than Thou, ambrosial Waltz, when first the Moon
Beheld thee twirling to a Saxon tune!

To You, ye husbands of ten years! whose brows
Ache with the annual tributes of a spouse;
To you of nine years less, who only bear
The budding sprouts of those that you *shall* wear,
With added ornaments around them rolled
Of native brass, or law-awarded gold;
To You, ye Matrons, ever on the watch
To mar a son's, or make a daughter's match; ¹⁰⁰
To You, ye children of — whom chance accords —
Always the Ladies, and *sometimes* their Lords;
To You, ye single gentlemen, who seek
Torments for life, or pleasures for a week;
As Love or Hymen your endeavours guide,
To gain your own, or snatch another's bride; —
To one and all the lovely Stranger came,

And every Ball-room echoes with her name.

Endearing Waltz! — to thy more melting tune
Bow Irish Jig, and ancient Rigadoon. 110
Scotch reels, avaunt! and Country-dance forego
Your future claims to each fantastic toe!
Waltz — Waltz alone — both legs and arms demands,
Liberal of feet, and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public sight
Where ne'er before — but — pray “put out the light.”
Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far — or I am much too near;
And true, though strange — Waltz whispers this remark,
”My slippery steps are safest in the dark!” 120
But here the Muse with due decorum halts,
And lends her longest petticoat to “Waltz.”

Observant Travellers of every time!
Ye Quartos published upon every clime!
O say, shall dull *Romaika*'s heavy round,
Fandango's wriggle, or *Bolero*'s bound;
Can Egypt's *Almas* — tantalising group —
Columbia's caperers to the warlike Whoop —
Can aught from cold Kamschatka to Cape Horn
With Waltz compare, or after Waltz be born? 130
Ah, no! from Morier's pages down to Galt's,
Each tourist pens a paragraph for “Waltz.”

Shades of those Belles whose reign began of yore,
With George the Third's — and ended long before! —
Though in your daughters' daughters yet you thrive,
Burst from your lead, and be yourselves alive!
Back to the Ball-room speed your spectred host,
Fool's Paradise is dull to that you lost.
No treacherous powder bids Conjecture quake;
No stiff-starched stays make meddling fingers ache; 140
(Transferred to those ambiguous things that ape
Goats in their visage, women in their shape;)
No damsel faints when rather closely pressed,

But more caressing seems when most caressed;
Superfluous Hartshorn, and reviving Salts,
Both banished by the sovereign cordial “Waltz.”

Seductive Waltz! — though on thy native shore
Even Werter’s self proclaimed thee half a whore;
Werter — to decent vice though much inclined,
Yet warm, not wanton; dazzled, but not blind — 150
Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with Staël,
Would even proscribe thee from a Paris ball;
The fashion hails — from Countesses to Queens,
And maids and valets waltz behind the scenes;
Wide and more wide thy witching circle spreads,
And turns — if nothing else — at least our *heads*;
With thee even clumsy cits attempt to bounce,
And cockney’s practise what they can’t pronounce.
Gods! how the glorious theme my strain exalts,
And Rhyme finds partner Rhyme in praise of “Waltz!” 160
Blest was the time Waltz chose for her *début*!
The Court, the Regent, like herself were new;
New face for friends, for foes some new rewards;
New ornaments for black-and royal Guards;
New laws to hang the rogues that roared for bread;
New coins (most new) to follow those that fled;
New victories — nor can we prize them less,
Though Jenky wonders at his own success;
New wars, because the old succeed so well,
That most survivors envy those who fell; 170
New mistresses — no, old — and yet ‘tis true,
Though they be *old*, the *thing* is something new;
Each new, quite new — (except some ancient tricks),
New white-sticks — gold-sticks — broom-sticks — *all new sticks*!
With vests or ribands — decked alike in hue,
New troopers strut, new turncoats blush in blue:
So saith the Muse: my — — , what say you?
Such was the time when Waltz might best maintain
Her new preferments in this novel reign;
Such was the time, nor ever yet was such; 180
Hoops are *more*, and petticoats *not much*;

Morals and Minuets, Virtue and her stays,
And tell-tale powder — all have had their days.
The Ball begins — the honours of the house
First duly done by daughter or by spouse,
Some Potentate — or royal or serene —
With Kent's gay grace, or sapient Gloster's mien,
Leads forth the ready dame, whose rising flush
Might once have been mistaken for a blush.
From where the garb just leaves the bosom free, 190
That spot where hearts were once supposed to be;
Round all the confines of the yielded waist,
The strangest hand may wander undisplaced:
The lady's in return may grasp as much
As princely paunches offer to her touch.
Pleased round the chalky floor how well they trip
One hand reposing on the royal hip!
The other to the shoulder no less royal
Ascending with affection truly loyal!
Thus front to front the partners move or stand, 200
The foot may rest, but none withdraw the hand;
And all in turn may follow in their rank,
The Earl of — Asterisk — and Lady — Blank;
Sir — Such-a-one — with those of fashion's host,
For whose blest surnames — vide "Morning Post."
(Or if for that impartial print too late,
Search Doctors' Commons six months from my date) —
Thus all and each, in movement swift or slow,
The genial contact gently undergo;
Till some might marvel, with the modest Turk, 210
If "nothing follows all this palming work?"
True, honest Mirza! — you may trust my rhyme —
Something does follow at a fitter time;
The breast thus publicly resigned to man,
In private may resist him — if it can.

O ye who loved our Grandmothers of yore,
Fitzpatrick, Sheridan, and many more!
And thou, my Prince! whose sovereign taste and will
It is to love the lovely beldames still!

Thou Ghost of Queensberry! whose judging Sprite 220
Satan may spare to peep a single night,
Pronounce — if ever in your days of bliss
Asmodeus struck so bright a stroke as this;
To teach the young ideas how to rise,
Flush in the cheek, and languish in the eyes;
Rush to the heart, and lighten through the frame,
With half-told wish, and ill-dissembled flame,
For prurient Nature still will storm the breast —
Who, tempted thus, can answer for the rest?

But ye — who never felt a single thought 230
For what our Morals are to be, or ought;
Who wisely wish the charms you view to reap,
Say — would you make those beauties quite so cheap?
Hot from the hands promiscuously applied,
Round the slight waist, or down the glowing side,
Where were the rapture then to clasp the form
From this lewd grasp and lawless contact warm?
At once Love's most endearing thought resign,
To press the hand so pressed by none but thine;
To gaze upon that eye which never met 240
Another's ardent look without regret;
Approach the lip which all, without restraint,
Come near enough — if not to touch — to taint;
If such thou lovest — love her then no more,
Or give — like her — caresses to a score;
Her Mind with these is gone, and with it go
The little left behind it to bestow.

Voluptuous Waltz! and dare I thus blaspheme?
Thy bard forgot thy praises were his theme.
Terpsichore forgive! — at every Ball 250
My wife *now* waltzes — and my daughters *shall*;
My son — (or stop — 'tis needless to inquire —
These little accidents should ne'er transpire;
Some ages hence our genealogic tree
Will wear as green a bough for him as me) —
Waltzing shall rear, to make our name amends

Grandsons for me — in heirs to all his friends.

THE BLUES

A LITERARY ECLOGUE

“Nimium ne crede colori.” — Virgil, [Ecl. ii. 17]

O trust not, ye beautiful creatures, to hue, Though your hair were as red, as your stockings are blue.

INTRODUCTION

Byron's correspondence does not explain the mood in which he wrote *The Blues*, or afford the slightest hint or clue to its motif or occasion. In a letter to Murray, dated Ravenna, August 7, 1821, he writes, "I send you a thing which I scribbled off yesterday, a mere buffoonery, to quiz 'The Blues.' If published it must be anonymously.... You may send me a proof if you think it worth the trouble." Six weeks later, September 20, he had changed his mind. "You need not," he says, "send *The Blues*, which is a mere buffoonery not meant for publication." With these intimations our knowledge ends, and there is nothing to show why in August, 1821, he took it into his head "to quiz *The Blues*," or why, being so minded, he thought it worth while to quiz them in so pointless and belated a fashion. We can but guess that an allusion in a letter from England, an incident at a *conversazione* at Ravenna, or perhaps the dialogues in Peacock's novels, *Melincourt* and *Nightmare Abbey*, brought to his recollection the half-modish, half-literary coteries of the earlier years of the Regency, and that he sketches the scenes and persons of his eclogue not from life, but from memory.

In the *Diary* of 1813, 1814, there is more than one mention of the "Blues." For instance, November 27, 1813, he writes, "Sotheby is a *Littérateur*, the oracle of the Coteries of the 's, Lydia White (Sydney Smith's 'Tory Virgin'), Mrs. Wilmot (she, at least, is a swan, and might frequent a purer stream), Lady Beaumont and all the Blues, with Lady Charlemont at their head." Again on December 1, "To-morrow there is a party purple at the 'blue' Miss Berry's. Shall I go? um! — I don't much affect your blue-bottles; — but one ought to be civil.... Perhaps that blue-winged Kashmirian butterfly of book-learning Lady Charlemont will be there" (see *Letters*, 1898, ii. 333, 358, note 2).

Byron was, perhaps, a more willing guest at literary entertainments than he professed to be. "I met him," says Sir Walter Scott (*Memoirs of the Life*, etc., 1838, ii. 167), "frequently in society.... Some very agreeable parties I can recollect, particularly one at Sir George Beaumont's, where the amiable landlord had assembled some persons distinguished for talent. Of these I need only mention the late Sir Humphry Davy.... Mr. Richard Sharpe and Mr. Rogers were also present."

Again, Miss Berry, in her *Journal* (1866, in. 49) records, May 8, 1815, that "Lord and Lady Byron persuaded me to go with them to Miss [Lydia] White. Never have I seen a more imposing convocation of ladies arranged in a circle than when we entered ... Lord Byron brought me home. He stayed to supper." If he did not affect "your blue-bottles," he was on intimate terms with Madame de

Staël, “the Begum of Literature,” as Moore called her; with the Contessa d’Albrizzi (the De Staël of Italy); with Mrs. Wilmot, the inspirer of “She walks in beauty like the night;” with Mrs. Shelley; with Lady Blessington. Moreover, to say nothing of his “mathematical wife,” who was as “blue as ether,” the Countess Guiccioli could not only read and “inwardly digest” *Corinna* (see letter to Moore, January 2, 1820), but knew the *Divina Commedia* by heart, and was a critic as well as an inspirer of her lover’s poetry.

If it is difficult to assign a reason or occasion for the composition of *The Blues*, it is a harder, perhaps an impossible, task to identify all the *dramatis personæ*. Botherby, Lady Bluemount, and Miss Diddle are, obviously, Sotheby, Lady Beaumont, and Lydia White. Scamp the Lecturer may be Hazlitt, who had incurred Byron’s displeasure by commenting on his various and varying estimates of Napoleon (see *Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818, p. 304, and *Don Juan*, Canto 1. stanza ii. line 7, note to Buonaparte). Inkel seems to be meant for Byron himself, and Tracy, a friend, not a Lake poet, for Moore. Sir Richard and Lady Bluebottle may possibly symbolize Lord and Lady Holland; and Miss Lilac is, certainly, Miss Milbanke, the “Annabella” of Byron’s courtship, not the “moral Clytemnestra” of his marriage and separation.

The Blues was published anonymously in the third number of the *Liberal*, which appeared April 26, 1823. The “Eclogue” was not attributed to Byron, and met with greater contempt than it deserved. In the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* (*Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, May, 1823, vol. xiii. p. 607), the third number of the *Liberal* is dismissed with the remark, “The last Number contains not one line of Byron’s! Thank God! he has seen his error, and kicked them out.” Brief but contemptuous notices appeared in the *Literary Chronicle*, April 26, and the *Literary Gazette*, May 3, 1823; while a short-lived periodical, named the *Literary Register* (May 3, quoted at length in *John Bull*, May 4, 1823), implies that the author (i.e. Leigh Hunt) would be better qualified to “catch the manners” of *Lisson Grove* than of *May Fair*. It is possible that this was the “last straw,” and that the reception of *The Blues* hastened Byron’s determination to part company with the profitless and ill-omened *Liberal*.

THE BLUES

A LITERARY ECLOGUE.

ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

London. — Before the Door of a Lecture Room.

Enter Tracy, meeting Inkel.

Ink. You're too late.

Tra. Is it over?

Ink. Nor will be this hour.

But the benches are crammed, like a garden in flower.
With the pride of our belles, who have made it the fashion;
So, instead of "beaux arts," we may say "la belle passion"
For learning, which lately has taken the lead in
The world, and set all the fine gentlemen reading.

Tra. I know it too well, and have worn out my patience
With studying to study your new publications.
There's Vamp, Scamp, and Mouthy, and Wordswords and Co.
With their damnable — — Ink. Hold, my good friend, do you know ¹⁰
Whom you speak to?

Tra. Right well, boy, and so does "the Row:"
You're an author — a poet — Ink. And think you that I
Can stand tamely in silence, to hear you decry
The Muses?

Tra. Excuse me: I meant no offence
To the Nine; though the number who make some pretence
To their favours is such — — but the subject to drop,
I am just piping hot from a publisher's shop,
(Next door to the pastry-cook's; so that when I
Cannot find the new volume I wanted to buy
On the bibliopole's shelves, it is only two paces, ²⁰

As one finds every author in one of those places:)
Where I just had been skimming a charming critique,
So studded with wit, and so sprinkled with Greek!
Where your friend — you know who — has just got such a threshing,
That it is, as the phrase goes, extremely “refreshing.”
What a beautiful word!

Ink. Very true; ‘tis so soft
And so cooling — they use it a little too oft;
And the papers have got it at last — but no matter.
So they’ve cut up our friend then?

Tra. Not left him a tatter —
Not a rag of his present or past reputation, ³⁰
Which they call a disgrace to the age, and the nation.

Ink. I’m sorry to hear this! for friendship, you know —
Our poor friend! — but I thought it would terminate so.
Our friendship is such, I’ll read nothing to shock it.
You don’t happen to have the Review in your pocket?

Tra. No; I left a round dozen of authors and others
(Very sorry, no doubt, since the cause is a brother’s)
All scrambling and jostling, like so many imps,
And on fire with impatience to get the next glimpse.

Ink. Let us join them.

Tra. What, won’t you return to the lecture? ⁴⁰

Ink. Why the place is so crammed, there’s not room for a spectre.
Besides, our friend Scamp is to-day so absurd — Tra. How can you know that
till you hear him?

Ink. I heard
Quite enough; and, to tell you the truth, my retreat
Was from his vile nonsense, no less than the heat.

Tra. I have had no great loss then?

Ink. Loss! — such a palaver!
I'd inoculate sooner my wife with the slaver
Of a dog when gone rabid, than listen two hours
To the torrent of trash which around him he pours,
Pumped up with such effort, disgorged with such labour, 50
That — — come — do not make me speak ill of one's neighbour.

Tra. I make you!

Ink. Yes, you! I said nothing until
You compelled me, by speaking the truth — — Tra. To speak ill?
Is that your deduction?

Ink. When speaking of Scamp ill,
I certainly follow, not set an example.
The fellow's a fool, an impostor, a zany.

Tra. And the crowd of to-day shows that one fool makes many.
But we two will be wise.

Ink. Pray, then, let us retire.

Tra. I would, but — —

Ink. There must be attraction much higher
Than Scamp, or the Jew's harp he nicknames his lyre, 60
To call you to this hotbed.

Tra. I own it — 'tis true —
A fair lady — —

Ink. A spinster?

Tra. Miss Lilac.

Ink. The Blue!

Tra. The heiress! The angel!

Ink. The devil! why, man,

Pray get out of this hobble as fast as you can.
You wed with Miss Lilac! 'twould be your perdition:
She's a poet, a chymist, a mathematician.

Tra. I say she's an angel.

Ink. Say rather an angle.
If you and she marry, you'll certainly wrangle.
I say she's a Blue, man, as blue as the ether.

Tra. And is that any cause for not coming together? 70

Ink. Humph! I can't say I know any happy alliance
Which has lately sprung up from a wedlock with science.
She's so learned in all things, and fond of concerning
Herself in all matters connected with learning,
That — — Tra. What?

Ink. I perhaps may as well hold my tongue;
But there's five hundred people can tell you you're wrong.

Tra. You forget Lady Lilac's as rich as a Jew.

Ink. Is it miss or the cash of mamma you pursue?

Tra. Why, Jack, I'll be frank with you — something of both.
The girl's a fine girl.

Ink. And you feel nothing loth 80
To her good lady-mother's reversion; and yet
Her life is as good as your own, I will bet.

Tra. Let her live, and as long as she likes; I demand
Nothing more than the heart of her daughter and hand.

Ink. Why, that heart's in the inkstand — that hand on the pen.

Tra. A propos — Will you write me a song now and then?

Ink. To what purpose?

Tra. You know, my dear friend, that in prose
My talent is decent, as far as it goes;
But in rhyme — — Ink. You're a terrible stick, to be sure.

Tra. I own it; and yet, in these times, there's no lure ⁹⁰
For the heart of the fair like a stanza or two;
And so, as I can't, will you furnish a few?

Ink. In your name?

Tra. In my name. I will copy them out,
To slip into her hand at the very next rout.

Ink. Are you so far advanced as to hazard this?

Tra. Why,
Do you think me subdued by a Blue-stockings' eye,
So far as to tremble to tell her in rhyme
What I've told her in prose, at the least, as sublime?

Ink. As sublime! If i be so, no need of my Muse.

Tra. But consider, dear Inkel, she's one of the "Blues." ¹⁰⁰

Ink. As sublime! — Mr. Tracy — I've nothing to say.
Stick to prose — As sublime!! — but I wish you good day.

Tra. Nay, stay, my dear fellow — consider — I'm wrong;
I own it; but, prithee, compose me the song.

Ink. As sublime!!

Tra. I but used the expression in haste.

Ink. That may be, Mr. Tracy, but shows damned bad taste.

Tra. I own it, I know it, acknowledge it — what
Can I say to you more?

Ink. I see what you'd be at:

You disparage my parts with insidious abuse,
Till you think you can turn them best to your own use. 110

Tra. And is that not a sign I respect them?

Ink. Why that
To be sure makes a difference.

Tra. I know what is what:
And you, who're a man of the gay world, no less
Than a poet of t'other, may easily guess
That I never could mean, by a word, to offend
A genius like you, and, moreover, my friend.

Ink. No doubt; you by this time should know what is due
To a man of — — but come — let us shake hands.

Tra. You knew,
And you know, my dear fellow, how heartily I,
Whatever you publish, am ready to buy. 120

Ink. That's my bookseller's business; I care not for sale;
Indeed the best poems at first rather fail.
There were Renegade's epics, and Botherby's plays,
And my own grand romance — — Tra. Had its full share of praise.
I myself saw it puffed in the "Old Girl's Review."

Ink. What Review?

Tra. Tis the English "Journal de Trevoux;"
A clerical work of our Jesuits at home.
Have you never yet seen it?

Ink. That pleasure's to come.

Tra. Make haste then.

Ink. Why so?

Tra. I have heard people say

That it threatened to give up the ghost t'other day. 130

Ink. Well, that is a sign of some spirit.

Tra. No doubt.

Shall you be at the Countess of Fiddlecome's rout?

Ink. I've a card, and shall go: but at present, as soon
As friend Scamp shall be pleased to step down from the moon,
(Where he seems to be soaring in search of his wits),
And an interval grants from his lecturing fits,
I'm engaged to the Lady Bluebottle's collation,
To partake of a luncheon and learn'd conversation:
'Tis a sort of reunion for Scamp, on the days
Of his lecture, to treat him with cold tongue and praise. 140
And I own, for my own part, that 'tis not unpleasant.
Will you go? There's Miss Lilac will also be present.

Tra. That "metal's attractive."

Ink. No doubt — to the pocket.

Tra. You should rather encourage my passion than shock it.
But let us proceed; for I think by the hum — — Ink. Very true; let us go, then,
before they can come,
Or else we'll be kept here an hour at their levee,
On the rack of cross questions, by all the blue bevy.
Hark! Zounds, they'll be on us; I know by the drone
Of old Botherby's spouting ex-cathedrâ tone. 150
Aye! there he is at it. Poor Scamp! better join
Your friends, or he'll pay you back in your own coin.

Tra. All fair; 'tis but lecture for lecture.

Ink. That's clear.

But for God's sake let's go, or the Bore will be here.
Come, come: nay, I'm off.
[Exit Inkel.

Tra. You are right, and I'll follow;

‘Tis high time for a “Sic me servavit Apollo.”
And yet we shall have the whole crew on our kibes,
Blues, dandies, and dowagers, and second-hand scribes,
All flocking to moisten their exquisite throttles
With a glass of Madeira at Lady Bluebottle’s. 160
[Exit Tracy.]

ECLOGUE THE SECOND.

An Apartment in the House of Lady Bluebottle. — A Table prepared.

Sir Richard Bluebottle solus.

Was there ever a man who was married so sorry?
Like a fool, I must needs do the thing in a hurry.
My life is reversed, and my quiet destroyed;
My days, which once passed in so gentle a void,
Must now, every hour of the twelve, be employed;
The twelve, do I say? — of the whole twenty-four,
Is there one which I dare call my own any more?
What with driving and visiting, dancing and dining,
What with learning, and teaching, and scribbling, and shining,
In science and art, I'll be cursed if I know ¹⁰
Myself from my wife; for although we are two,
Yet she somehow contrives that all things shall be done
In a style which proclaims us eternally one.
But the thing of all things which distresses me more
Than the bills of the week (though they trouble me sore)
Is the numerous, humorous, backbiting crew
Of scribblers, wits, lecturers, white, black, and blue,
Who are brought to my house as an inn, to my cost —
For the bill here, it seems, is defrayed by the host —
No pleasure! no leisure! no thought for my pains, ²⁰
But to hear a vile jargon which addles my brains;
A smatter and chatter, gleaned out of reviews,
By the rag, tag, and bobtail, of those they call "Blues;"
A rabble who know not — — But soft, here they come!
Would to God I were deaf! as I'm not, I'll be dumb.

Enter Lady Bluebottle, Miss Lilac, , MR. Botherby, Inkel, Tracy, Miss Mazarine, and others, with Scamp the Lecturer, etc., etc.

Lady Blueb.

Ah! Sir Richard, good morning: I've brought you some friends.

Sir Rich. (bows, and afterwards aside).

If friends, they're the first.

Lady Blueb. But the luncheon attends.

I pray ye be seated, "sans cérémonie."

Mr. Scamp, you're fatigued; take your chair there, next me.

[They all sit.

Sir Rich. (aside). If he does, his fatigue is to come.

Lady Blueb. Mr. Tracy —

Lady Bluemount — Miss Lilac — be pleased, pray, to place ye; ³¹

And you, Mr. Botherby — Both. Oh, my dear Lady,

I obey.

Lady Blueb. Mr. Inkel, I ought to upbraid ye:

You were not at the lecture.

Ink. Excuse me, I was;

But the heat forced me out in the best part — alas!

And when — Lady Blueb. To be sure it was broiling; but then

You have lost such a lecture!

Both. The best of the ten.

Tra. How can you know that? there are two more.

Both. Because

I defy him to beat this day's wondrous applause.

The very walls shook.

Ink. Oh, if that be the test, ⁴⁰

I allow our friend Scamp has this day done his best.

Miss Lilac, permit me to help you; — a wing?

Miss Lil. No more, sir, I thank you. Who lectures next spring?

Both. Dick Dunder.

Ink. That is, if he lives.

Miss Lil. And why not?

Ink. No reason whatever, save that he's a sot.
Lady Bluemount! a glass of Madeira?

Lady Bluem. With pleasure.

Ink. How does your friend Wordswords, that Windermere treasure?
Does he stick to his lakes, like the leeches he sings,
And their gatherers, as Homer sung warriors and kings?

Lady Bluem. He has just got a place.

Ink. As a footman?

Lady Bluem. For shame!
Nor profane with your sneers so poetic a name. 51

Ink. Nay, I meant him no evil, but pitied his master;
For the poet of pedlers 'twere, sure, no disaster
To wear a new livery; the more, as 'tis not
The first time he has turned both his creed and his coat.

Lady Bluem. For shame! I repeat. If Sir George could but hear — Lady Blueb.
Never mind our friend Inkel; we all know, my dear,
'Tis his way.

Sir Rich. But this place — —

Ink. Is perhaps like friend Scamp's,
A lecturer's.

Lady Bluem. Excuse me — 'tis one in the "Stamps:"
He is made a collector.

Tra. Collector!

Sir Rich. How?

Miss Lil. What? 60

Ink. I shall think of him oft when I buy a new hat:
There his works will appear — — Lady Bluem. Sir, they reach to the Ganges.

Ink. I sha'n't go so far — I can have them at Grange's.

Lady Bluem. Oh fie!

Miss Lil. And for shame!

Lady Bluem. You're too bad.

Both. Very good!

Lady Bluem. How good?

Lady Blueb. He means nought — 'tis his phrase.

Lady Bluem. He grows rude.

Lady Blueb. He means nothing; nay, ask him.

Lady Bluem. Pray, Sir! did you mean
What you say?

Ink. Never mind if he did; 'twill be seen
That whatever he means won't alloy what he says.

Both. Sir!

Ink. Pray be content with your portion of praise;
'Twas in your defence.

Both. If you please, with submission 70
I can make out my own.

Ink. It would be your perdition.
While you live, my dear Botherby, never defend
Yourself or your works; but leave both to a friend.
Apropos — Is your play then accepted at last?

Both. At last?

Ink. Why I thought — that's to say — there had passed
A few green-room whispers, which hinted, — you know
That the taste of the actors at best is so so.

Both. Sir, the green-room's in rapture, and so's the Committee.

Ink. Aye — yours are the plays for exciting our “pity
And fear,” as the Greek says: for “purging the mind,”⁸⁰
I doubt if you'll leave us an equal behind.

Both. I have written the prologue, and meant to have prayed
For a spice of your wit in an epilogue's aid.

Ink. Well, time enough yet, when the play's to be played.
Is it cast yet?

Both. The actors are fighting for parts,
As is usual in that most litigious of arts.

Lady Blueb. We'll all make a party, and go the first night.

Tra. And you promised the epilogue, Inkel.

Ink. Not quite.
However, to save my friend Botherby trouble,
I'll do what I can, though my pains must be double.⁹⁰

Tra. Why so?

Ink. To do justice to what goes before.

Both. Sir, I'm happy to say, I've no fears on that score.
Your parts, Mr. Inkel, are — — Ink. Never mind mine;
Stick to those of your play, which is quite your own line.

Lady Bluem. You're a fugitive writer, I think, sir, of rhymes?

Ink. Yes, ma'am; and a fugitive reader sometimes.
On Wordswords, for instance, I seldom alight,
Or on Mouthey, his friend, without taking to flight.

Lady Bluem. Sir, your taste is too common; but time and posterity
Will right these great men, and this age's severity ¹⁰⁰
Become its reproach.

Ink. I've no sort of objection,
So I'm not of the party to take the infection.

Lady Blueb. Perhaps you have doubts that they ever will take?

Ink. Not at all; on the contrary, those of the lake
Have taken already, and still will continue
To take — what they can, from a groat to a guinea,
Of pension or place; — but the subject's a bore.

Lady Bluem. Well, sir, the time's coming.

Ink. Scamp! don't you feel sore?
What say you to this?

Scamp. They have merit, I own;
Though their system's absurdity keeps it unknown, ¹¹⁰

Ink. Then why not unearth it in one of your lectures?

Scamp. It is only time past which comes under my strictures.

Lady Blueb. Come, a truce with all tartness; — the joy of my heart
Is to see Nature's triumph o'er all that is art.
Wild Nature! — Grand Shakespeare!

Both. And down Aristotle!

Lady Bluem. Sir George thinks exactly with Lady Bluebottle:
And my Lord Seventy-four, who protects our dear Bard,
And who gave him his place, has the greatest regard
For the poet, who, singing of pedlers and asses,
Has found out the way to dispense with Parnassus. ¹²⁰

Tra. And you, Scamp! —

Scamp. I needs must confess I'm embarrassed.

Ink. Don't call upon Scamp, who's already so harassed
With old schools, and new schools, and no schools, and all schools.

Tra. Well, one thing is certain, that some must be fools.
I should like to know who.

Ink. And I should not be sorry
To know who are not: — it would save us some worry.

Lady Blueb. A truce with remark, and let nothing control
This "feast of our reason, and flow of the soul."
Oh! my dear Mr. Botherby! sympathise! — I
Now feel such a rapture, I'm ready to fly, ¹³⁰
I feel so elastic — "so buoyant — so buoyant!"

Ink. Tracy! open the window.

Tra. I wish her much joy on't.

Both. For God's sake, my Lady Bluebottle, check not
This gentle emotion, so seldom our lot
Upon earth. Give it way: 'tis an impulse which lifts
Our spirits from earth — the sublimest of gifts;
For which poor Prometheus was chained to his mountain:
'Tis the source of all sentiment — feeling's true fountain;
'Tis the Vision of Heaven upon Earth: 'tis the gas
Of the soul: 'tis the seizing of shades as they pass, ¹⁴⁰
And making them substance: 'tis something divine: — Ink. Shall I help you, my
friend, to a little more wine?

Both. I thank you: not any more, sir, till I dine.

Ink. Apropos — Do you dine with Sir Humphry to day?

Tra. I should think with Duke Humphry was more in your way.

Ink. It might be of yore; but we authors now look
To the Knight, as a landlord, much more than the Duke.

The truth is, each writer now quite at his ease is,
And (except with his publisher) dines where he pleases.
But 'tis now nearly five, and I must to the Park. 150

Tra. And I'll take a turn with you there till 'tis dark.
And you, Scamp — Scamp. Excuse me! I must to my notes,
For my lecture next week.

Ink. He must mind whom he quotes
Out of "Elegant Extracts."

Lady Blueb. Well, now we break up;
But remember Miss Diddle invites us to sup.

Ink. Then at two hours past midnight we all meet again,
For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and champagne!

Tra. And the sweet lobster salad!

Both. I honour that meal;
For 'tis then that our feelings most genuinely — feel.

Ink. True; feeling is truest then, far beyond question:
I wish to the gods 'twas the same with digestion! 161

Lady Blueb. Pshaw! — never mind that; for one moment of feeling
Is worth — God knows what.

Ink. 'Tis at least worth concealing
For itself, or what follows — But here comes your carriage.

Sir Rich. (aside).
I wish all these people were d — — d with my marriage!
[Exeunt.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT.

BY
QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED BY THE AUTHOR
OF "WAT TYLER."

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

Merchant of Venice, act iv. sc. 1, lines 218, 336.

INTRODUCTION

Byron's *Vision of Judgment* is a parody of Southey's *Vision of Judgement*.

The acts or *fyttes* of the quarrel between Byron and Southey occur in the following order. In the summer of 1817 Southey, accompanied by his friends, Humphrey Senhouse and the artist Edward Nash, passed some weeks (July) in Switzerland. They visited Chamouni, and at Montanvert, in the travellers' album, they found, in Shelley's handwriting, a Greek hexameter verse, in which he affirmed that he was an "atheist," together with an indignant comment ("fool!" also in Greek) superadded in an unknown hand (see *Life of Shelley*, by E. Dowden, 1886, ii. 30, note). Southey copied this entry into his note-book, and "spoke of the circumstance on his return" (circ. August 12, 1817). In the course of the next year some one told Byron that a rumour had reached England that he and Shelley "had formed a league of incest with two sisters," and that Southey and Coleridge were the authors of the scandal. There is nothing to show through what channel the report of the rumour reached Byron's ears, but it may be inferred that it was in his mind (see Letter to Murray, November 24, 1818, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 272) when he assailed Southey in the "Dedication" ("in good, simple, savage verse") to the First Canto of *Don Juan*, which was begun September 6, 1818. Shelley, who was already embittered against Southey (see the account of a dinner at Godwin's, November 6, 1817, *Diary of H. C. Robinson*, 1869, ii. 67), heard Byron read this "Dedication," and, in a letter to Peacock (October 8, 1818), describes it as being "more like a mixture of wormwood and verdigrease than satire."

When *Don Juan* appeared (July 15, 1819), the "Dedication" was not forthcoming, but of its existence and character Southey had been informed. "Have you heard," he asks (Letter to the Rev. H. Hill, *Selections from the Letters*, etc., 1856, iii. 142), "that *Don Juan* came over with a Dedication to me, in which Lord Castlereagh and I ... were coupled together for abuse as the 'two Roberts'? A fear of persecution (sic) from the one Robert is supposed to be the reason why it has been suppressed. Lord Byron might have done well to remember that the other can write dedications also; and make his own cause good, if it were needful, in prose or rhyme, against a villain, as well as against a slanderer."

When George III. died (January 29, 1820), it became the duty of the "laurel-honouring laureate" to write a funeral ode, and in composing a Preface, in vindication of the English hexameter, he took occasion "incidentally to repay some of his obligations to Lord Byron by a few comments on *Don Juan*" (Letter

to the Rev. H. Hill, January 8, 1821, Selections, etc., iii. 225). He was, no doubt, impelled by other and higher motives to constitute himself a censor morum, and take up his parable against the spirit of the age as displayed and fostered in Don Juan (see a letter to Wynne, March 23, 1821, Selections, etc., iii. 238), but the suppressed “Dedication” and certain gibes, which had been suffered to appear, may be reckoned as the immediate causes of his anathema.

Southey’s *Vision of Judgement* was published April 11, 1821 — an undivine comedy, in which the apotheosis of George III., the beatification of the virtuous, and the bale and damnation of such egregious spirits as Robespierre, Wilkes, and Junius, are “thrown upon the screen” of the showman or lecturer. Southey said that the “Vision” ought to be read aloud, and, if the subject could be forgotten and ignored, the hexameters might not sound amiss, but the subject and its treatment are impossible and intolerable. The “Vision” would have “made sport” for Byron in any case, but, in the Preface, Southey went out of his way to attack and denounce the anonymous author of *Don Juan*.

“What, then,” he asks (ed. 1838, x. 204), “should be said of those for whom the thoughtlessness and inebriety of wanton youth can no longer be pleaded, but who have written in sober manhood, and with deliberate purpose?... Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society, and hating that revealed religion which, with all their efforts and bravadoes, they are unable entirely to disbelieve, labour to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul! The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic school; for, though their productions breathe the spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the spirit of Moloch in those loathsome images of atrocities and horrors which they delight to represent, they are more especially characterized by a Satanic pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied.”

Byron was not slow to take up the challenge. In the “Appendix” to the *Two Foscari* (first ed., pp. 325-329), which was written at Ravenna, June-July, but not published till December 11, 1821, he retaliates on “Mr. Southey and his ‘pious preface’” in many words; but when it comes to the point, ignores the charge of having “published a lascivious book,” and endeavours by counter-charges to divert the odium and to cover his adversary with shame and confusion. “Mr. S.,” he says, “with a cowardly ferocity, exults over the anticipated ‘death-bed repentance’ of the objects of his dislike; and indulges himself in a pleasant ‘Vision of Judgment,’ in prose as well as verse, full of impious impudence.... I am not ignorant,” he adds, “of Mr. Southey’s calumnies on a different occasion,

knowing them to be such, which he scattered abroad on his return from Switzerland against me and others.... What his 'death-bed' may be it is not my province to predicate; let him settle it with his Maker, as I must do with mine. There is something at once ludicrous and blasphemous in this arrogant scribbler of all works sitting down to deal damnation and destruction upon his fellow-creatures, with Wat Tyler, the Apotheosis of George the Third, and the Elegy on Martin the regicide, all shuffled together in his writing-desk."

Southey must have received his copy of the *Two Foscari* in the last week of December, 1821, and with the "Appendix" (to say nothing of the Third Canto of *Don Juan*) before him, he gave tongue, in the pages of the *Courier*, January 6, 1822. His task was an easy one. He was able to deny, in toto, the charge of uttering calumnies on his return from Switzerland, and he was pleased to word his denial in a very disagreeable way. He had come home with a stock of travellers' tales, but not one of them was about Lord Byron. He had "sought for no staler subject than St. Ursula." His charges of "impiety," "lewdness," "profanation," and "pollution," had not been answered, and were unanswerable; and as to his being a "scribbler of all work," there were exceptions — works which he had not scribbled, the nefanda which disfigured the writings of Lord Byron. "Satanic school" would stick.

So far, the battle went in Southey's favour. "The words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel," and Byron was reduced to silence. A challenge (sent through Kinnaid, but not delivered) was but a confession of impotence. There was, however, in Southey's letter to the *Courier* just one sentence too many. Before he concluded he had given "one word of advice to Lord Byron" — "When he attacks me again, let it be in rhyme. For one who has so little command of himself, it will be a great advantage that his temper should be obliged to keep tune."

Byron had anticipated this advice, and had already attacked the laureate in rhyme, scornfully and satirically, but with a gay and genial mockery which dispensed with "wormwood and verdigrease" or yet bitterer and more venomous ingredients.

There was a truth in Lamb's jest, that it was Southey's *Vision of Judgement* which was worthy of prosecution; that "Lord Byron's poem was of a most good-natured description — no malevolence" (*Diary of H. C. Robinson*, 1869, ii. 240). Good-natured or otherwise, it awoke inextinguishable laughter, and left Byron in possession of the field.

The *Vision of Judgment*, begun May 7 (but probably laid aside till September 11), was forwarded to Murray October 4, 1821. "By this post," he wrote to Moore, October 6, 1821 (*Letters*, 1901, v. 387), "I have sent my nightmare to

balance the incubus of Southey's impudent anticipation of the Apotheosis of George the Third." A chance perusal of Southey's letter in the *Courier* (see Medwin's *Conversations*, 1824, p. 222, and letters to Douglas Kinnaird, February 6, 25, 1822) quickened his desire for publication; but in spite of many appeals and suggestions to Murray, who had sent Byron's "copy" to his printer, the decisive step of passing the proofs for press was never taken. At length Byron lost patience, and desired Murray to hand over "the corrected copy of the proof with the Preface" of the *Vision of Judgment* to John Hunt (see letters to Murray, July 3, 6, 1822, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 92, 93). Finally, a year after the MS. had been sent to England, the *Vision of Judgment*, by Quevedo Redivivus, appeared in the first number (pp. 1-39) of the *Liberal*, which was issued October 15, 1822. The Preface, to Byron's astonishment and annoyance, was not forthcoming (see letter to Murray, October 22, 1822, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 126, and *Examiner*, Sunday, November 3, 1822, p. 697), and is not prefixed to the first issue of the *Vision of Judgment* in the first number of the *Liberal*.

The *Liberal* was severely handled by the press (see, for example, the *Literary Gazette* for October 19, 26, November 2, 1822; see, too, an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A Critique on the "Liberal"* (London, 1822, 8vo, 16 pages), which devotes ten pages to an attack on the *Vision of Judgment*). The daily press was even more violent. The *Courier* for October 26 begins thus: "This scoundrel-like publication has at length made its appearance."

There was even a threat of prosecution. Byron offered to employ counsel for Hunt, to come over to England to stand his trial in his stead, and blamed Murray for not having handed over the corrected proof, in which some of the more offensive passages had been omitted or mitigated (see letter to Murray, December 25, 1822, and letter to John Hunt, January 8, 1823, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 155, 159). It is to be noted that in the list of Errata affixed to the table of Contents at the end of the first volume of the *Liberal*, the words, a "weaker king ne'er," are substituted for "a worse king never" (stanza viii. line 6), and "an unhandsome woman" for "a bad, ugly woman" (stanza xii. line 8). It would seem that these emendations, which do not appear in the MS., were slipped into the Errata as precautions, not as after-thoughts.

Nevertheless, it was held that a publication "calumniating the late king, and wounding the feelings of his present Majesty," was a danger to the public peace, and on January 15, 1824, the case of the King v. John Hunt was tried in the Court of King's Bench. The jury brought in a verdict of "Guilty," but judgment was deferred, and it was not till July 19, 1824, three days after the author of the *Vision of Judgment* had been laid to rest at Hucknall Torkard, that the publisher was sentenced to pay to the king a fine of one hundred pounds, and to enter into

securities, for five years, for a larger amount.

For the complete text of section iii. of Southey's Preface, Byron's "Appendix" to the *Two Foscari*, etc., see *Essays Moral and Political*, by Robert Southey, 1832, ii. 183, 205. See, too, for "Quarrel between Byron and Southey," Appendix I. of vol. vi. of *Letters of Lord Byron*, 1901.

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that “One fool makes many;” and it hath been poetically observed —

“[That] fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

[POPE’S Essay on Criticism, line 625.]

If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be worse. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegade intolerance, and impious cant, of the poem by the author of “Wat Tyler,” are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself — containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem — a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed “Satanic School,” the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature; thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, except in his imagination, such a School, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is that there are certain writers whom Mr. S. imagines, like Scrub, to have “talked of him; for they laughed consumedly.”

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good, in the charities of life, to their fellow-creatures, in any one year, than Mr. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1stly, Is Mr. Southey the author of Wat Tyler?

2ndly, Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3rdly, Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, “a rancorous renegado?”

4thly, Is he not poet laureate, with his own lines on Martin the regicide staring him in the face?

And, 5thly, Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare he call the attention of the laws to the publications of others, be they what they may?

I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding; its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the motive, which is neither more nor less than that Mr. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of

yore in the Anti-jacobin, by his present patrons. Hence all this “skimble scramble stuff” about “Satanic,” and so forth. However, it is worthy of him — “qualis ab incepto.”

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public in the following poem, they may thank Mr. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared — had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonise a monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king, — inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France — like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new Vision, his public career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgments in the next world, is like his own judgment in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

P.S. — It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons discourse in this Vision. But, for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding's Journey from this World to the next, and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not “like a school-divine,” but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of heaven; and Chaucer's Wife of Bath, Pulci's Morgante Maggiore, Swift's Tale of a Tub, and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, etc., may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious.

Q.R.

* Mr. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the meantime have acquired a little more judgment, properly so

called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. Mr. Southey laudeth grievously “one Mr. Landor,” who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the poet laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called “Gebir.” Who could suppose, that in this same Gebir the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend Mr. Southey’s heaven, — yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious sovereign: —

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view; and he exclaims to his ghostly guide) —

“‘Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung;
He too amongst my ancestors! [I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?’
‘Alas,] O king!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east.’
‘He was a warrior then, nor fear’d the gods?’
‘Gebir, he feared the Demons, not the gods,
Though them indeed his daily face adored;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squandered, as stones to exercise a sling,
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice —
Oh madness of mankind! addressed, adored!’“

Gebir [Works, etc., 1876, vii. 17].

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of “great moral lessons” are apt to be found in strange company.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT.

I.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era “eighty-eight”
The Devils had ta’en a longer, stronger pull,
And “a pull altogether,” as they say
At sea — which drew most souls another way.

II.

The Angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o’er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III.

The Guardian Seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business filled nought in the sky
Save the Recording Angel’s black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripped off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV.

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will, no doubt,

(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six Angels and twelve Saints were named his clerks.

V.

This was a handsome board — at least for Heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many Conquerors' cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day, too, slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust —
The page was so besmeared with blood and dust.

VI.

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
What Angels shrink from: even the very Devil
On this occasion his own work abhorred,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpened every sword,
It almost quenched his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion —
'Tis, that he has both Generals in reversion.)

VII.

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
Which peopled earth no better, Hell as wont,
And Heaven none — they form the tyrant's lease,
With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
'Twill one day finish: meantime they increase,
"With seven heads and ten horns," and all in front,
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII.

In the first year of Freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died — but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad — and t'other no less blind.

IX.

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet — gilding — brass — and no great dearth
Of aught but tears — save those shed by collusion:
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion —
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X.

Formed a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flocked to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe,
There throbbed not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seemed the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI.

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it must far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight

Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What Nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmmmied clay —
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII.

He's dead — and upper earth with him has done;
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will:
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII.

“God save the king!” It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of Hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV.

I know this is unpopular; I know
'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damned
For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
I know my catechism; I know we're crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's Church have shammed,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a damned bad purchase.

XV.

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the Devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost every body born to die.

XVI.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys: when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late —
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a Saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, "There's another star gone out, I think!"

XVII.

But ere he could return to his repose,
A Cherub flapped his right wing o'er his eyes —
At which Saint Peter yawned, and rubbed his nose:
"Saint porter," said the angel, "prithee rise!"
Waving a goodly wing, which glowed, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes:
To which the saint replied, "Well, what's the matter?
"Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?"

XVIII.

"No," quoth the Cherub: "George the Third is dead."
"And who is George the Third?" replied the apostle:
"What George? what Third?" "The King of England," said
The angel. "Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
And ne'er would have got into Heaven's good graces,

Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

XIX.

“He was — if I remember — King of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs — like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my keys, and not my brand,
I only knocked his head from out his hand.

XX.

“And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the Saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by Saint Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul — the parvenu! The skin
Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeemed his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

XXI.

“But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the Saint’s beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell;
And so this very foolish head Heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.”

XXII.

The Angel answered, “Peter! do not pout:
The King who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about —

He did as doth the puppet — by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue —
Which is to act as we are bid to do.”

XXIII.

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and, in his shroud,
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

XXIV.

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tossed;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne’er to be entered more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He potted with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his Apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI.

The very Cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And formed a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal Manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the Angels all are Tories).

XXVII.

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-coloured flame, until its tinges
Reached even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in "Melville's Sound."

XXVIII.

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

XXIX.

'Twas the Archangel Michael: all men know
The make of Angels and Archangels, since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the Angels' Prince.
There also are some altar-pieces, though

I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain their merits.

XXX.

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all Glory
And Good arise; the portal past — he stood;
Before him the young Cherubs and Saints hoary —
(I say young, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seemed a little sweeter).

XXXI.

The Cherubs and the Saints bowed down before
That arch-angelic Hierarch, the first
Of Essences angelical who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Maker's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the Viceroy of the sky.

XXXII.

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met —
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their "Champ Clos" the spheres.

XXXIII.

But here they were in neutral space: we know

From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a-year or so;
And that the “Sons of God,” like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil — but ‘twould take up hours.

XXXIV.

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
‘Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

XXXV.

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of Heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death’s grand cause is argued o’er,
And souls despatched to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There passed a mutual glance of great politeness.

XXXVI.

The Archangel bowed, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turned as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend

With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor Noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

XXXVII.

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom History mentions,
Who long have “paved Hell with their good intentions.”

XXXVIII.

Michael began: “What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not — let him have way.”

XXXIX.

“Michael!” replied the Prince of Air, “even here
Before the gate of Him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reigned o’er millions to serve me alone.

XL.

“I look to our earth, or rather mine: it was

LOOK TO OUR EARTH, OF FAULTIER NAME, IT WAS,
Once, more thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings,

XL I.

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as Lord: and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That Hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

XL II.

“Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of Ocean called him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of Time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

XL III.

“He came to his sceptre young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance

Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV.

“‘Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls amassed
Of Sin and Slaughter — from the Cæsars’ school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumbered with the slain.

XLV.

“He ever warred with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they uttered the word ‘Liberty!’
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stained as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI.

“I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius’ board,
Is more than at an anchorite’s supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what Oppression chose.

XLVII.

“The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones

To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him — his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

XLVIII.

“Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A part of that vast all they held of old, —
Freedom to worship — not alone your Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorred
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX.

“True! he allowed them to pray God; but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the Saints in awe.”
But here Saint Peter started from his place
And cried, “You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damned myself!

L.

“Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and his is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam-bigot range
The azure fields of Heaven, of that be sure!”
“Saint!” replied Satan, “you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I’ll try to coax our Cerberus up to Heaven!”

LI.

Here Michael interposed: "Good Saint! and Devil!
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil:
Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Even Saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?" — "No." — "If you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses."

LII.

Then Satan turned and waved his swarthy hand,
Which stirred with its electric qualities
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets — and Hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII.

This was a signal unto such damned souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of Hell assigned; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely — being damned the same.

LIV.

They are proud of this — as very well they may,
It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
Stuck in their loins; or like to an "entré"
Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be

Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

LV.

When the great signal ran from Heaven to Hell —
About ten million times the distance reckoned
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacons,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the summer is not too severe:

LVI.

I say that I can tell — 'twas half a minute;
I know the solar beams take up more time
Ere, packed up for their journey, they begin it;
But then their Telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal — the Devil not half a day.

LVII.

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appeared
(I've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, ere a squall); it neared,
And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an aerial ship it tacked, and steered,
Or was steered (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer;

LVIII.

But take your choice): and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was — a cloud of witnesses.

But such a cloud! No land ere saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadowed with their myriads Space; their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese,
(If nations may be likened to a goose),
And realised the phrase of "Hell broke loose."

LIX.

Here crashed a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damned away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued "By Jasus!" — "What's your wull?"
The temperate Scot exclaimed: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
"Our President is going to war, I guess."

LX.

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summoned by this grand "subpoena," to
Try if kings mayn't be damned like me or you.

LXI.

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As Angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
He turned all colours — as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon by night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

LXII.

Then he addressed himself to Satan: “Why —
My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,
I ne’er mistake you for a personal foe;
Our difference political, and I
Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you: and this
Makes me regret whate’er you do amiss —

LXIII.

“Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of Earth and Hell produce;
‘Tis even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
Our Time, nay, our Eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, ‘twill stretch our immortality.”

LXIV.

Satan replied, “To me the matter is
Indifferent, in a personal point of view:
I can have fifty better souls than this
With far less trouble than we have gone through
Already; and I merely argued his
Late Majesty of Britain’s case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I’ve kings enough below, God knows!”

LXV.

Thus spoke the Demon (late called “multifaced”
By multo-scribbling Southey). “Then we’ll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with all
The rest,” quoth Michael: “Who may be so graced

As to speak first? there's choice enough — who shall
It be?" Then Satan answered, "There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any."

LXVI.

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking Sprite
Upon the instant started from the throng,
Dressed in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII.

The Spirit looked around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaimed, "My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So let's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 'tis for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturned coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?"

LXVIII.

"Sir," replied Michael, "you mistake; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know."
"Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,"
Said Wilkes, "are Cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older — bless me! is he blind?"

LXIX.

"He is what you behold him, and his doom

Depends upon his deeds," the Angel said;
"If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Gives license to the humblest beggar's head
To lift itself against the loftiest." — "Some,"
Said Wilkes, "don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty — and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun."

LXX.

"Above the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him," said the Archangel. "Why,"
Replied the spirit, "since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

LXXI.

"Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punished here for their excess,
Since they were both damned long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his habeas corpus into Heaven."

LXXII.

"Wilkes," said the Devil, "I understand all this;
You turned to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon's ferry; you forget that his
Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

LXXIII.

“However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox’s lard was basting William Pitt,
His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in Hell breeds farther ills;
I’ll have him gagged — ’twas one of his own Bills.

LXXIV.

“Call Junius!” From the crowd a shadow stalked.
And at the name there was a general squeeze,
So that the very ghosts no longer walked
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,
But were all rammed, and jammed (but to be balked,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compressed and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV.

The shadow came — a tall, thin, grey-haired figure,
That looked as it had been a shade on earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its birth;
Now it waxed little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth:
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant — to what, none could say.

LXXVI.

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less

Could they distinguish whose the features were;
The Devil himself seemed puzzled even to guess;
They varied like a dream — now here, now there;
And several people swore from out the press,
They knew him perfectly; and one could swear
He was his father; upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

LXXVII.

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at least
As oft as they their minds: though in full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself — he was so volatile and thin.

LXXVIII.

The moment that you had pronounced him one,
Presto! his face changed, and he was another;
And when that change was hardly well put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary "Iron Mask."

LXXIX.

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem —
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even one; now many rays
Were flashing round him; and now a thick steam
Hid him from sight — like fogs on London days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX.

I've an hypothesis — 'tis quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
It is — my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call,
Was really — truly — nobody at all.

LXXXI.

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view
Them written without heads; and books, we see,
Are filled as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
The world to say if there be mouth or author.

LXXXII.

"And who and what art thou?" the Archangel said.
"For that you may consult my title-page,"
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
"If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now." — "Canst thou upbraid,"
Continued Michael, "George Rex, or allege
Aught further?" Junius answered, "You had better
First ask him for his answer to my letter:

LXXXIII.

"My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb."
"Repent'st thou not," said Michael, "of some past

Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter — is it not so? — in thy gloom
Of passion?” — ”Passion!” cried the phantom dim,
“I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV.

“What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!” So spoke
Old “Nominis Umbra;” and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, “Don’t forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;” — but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirred.

LXXXV.

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of Cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and looked as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
“What’s this?” cried Michael; “why, ‘tis not a ghost?”
“I know it,” quoth the Incubus; “but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

LXXXVI.

“Confound the renegado! I have sprained
My left wing, he’s so heavy; one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chained.
But to the point; while hovering o’er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rained),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel —
No less on History — than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII.

“The former is the Devil’s scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
I snatched him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
I’ve scarcely been ten minutes in the air —
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea.”

LXXXVIII.

Here Satan said, “I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX.

“But since he’s here, let’s see what he has done.”
“Done!” cried Asmodeus, “he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam’s, prates?”
“Let’s hear,” quoth Michael, “what he has to say:
You know we’re bound to that in every way.”

XC.

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach

Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

XCI.

But ere the spavined dactyls could be spurred
Into recitative, in great dismay
Both Cherubim and Seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array;
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his foundered verses under way,
And cried, "For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best —
'Non Di, non homines' — you know the rest."

XCII.

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seemed to hold all verse in detestation;
The Angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion:
The Monarch, mute till then, exclaimed, "What! what!
Pye come again? No more — no more of that!"

XCIII.

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean — the slaves hear now); some cried "Off, off!"
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The Bard Saint Peter prayed to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV.

The varlet was not an ill-favoured knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the face,
With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony "de se."

XCV.

Then Michael blew his trump, and stilled the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
Which now and then will make a slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrowded;
And now the Bard could plead his own bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI.

He said — (I only give the heads) — he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas his way
Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he buttered both sides; 'twould delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works — he would but cite a few —
"Wat Tyler" — "Rhymes on Blenheim" — "Waterloo."

XCVII.

He had written praises of a Regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever;

Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin —
Had turned his coat — and would have turned his skin.

XCVIII.

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had called
Reviewing “the ungentle craft,” and then
Became as base a critic as e’er crawled —
Fed, paid, and pampered by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been mauled:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than any body knows.

XCIX.

He had written Wesley’s life: — here turning round
To Satan, “Sir, I’m ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser; and there’s no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.”

C.

Satan bowed, and was silent. “Well, if you,
With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be rendered more divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

CI.

“But talking about trumpets, here’s my ‘Vision!’
Now you shall judge, all people — yes — you shall

Judge with my judgment! and by my decision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come — Heaven — Hell — and all,
Like King Alfonso. When I thus see double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.”

CII.

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of Devils, Saints,
Or Angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents:
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanished, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his “melodious twang.”

CIII.

Those grand heroics acted as a spell;
The Angels stopped their ears and plied their pinions;
The Devils ran howling, deafened, down to Hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions —
(For ‘tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump — but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV.

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
And at the fifth line knocked the poet down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate’s final wreath, whene’er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV.

He first sank to the bottom — like his works,
But soon rose to the surface — like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoyed like corks,
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision,"
As Welborn says — "the Devil turned precisian."

CVI.

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And showed me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipped into Heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

Ra Oct. 4, 1821.

THE AGE OF BRONZE

OR,
CARMEN SECULARE ET ANNUS HAUD
MIRABILIS.

“Impar Congressus Achilli.”

INTRODUCTION

The Age of Bronze was begun in December, 1822, and finished on January 10, 1823. "I have sent," he writes (letter to Leigh Hunt, Letters, 1901, vi. 160), "to Mrs. S[helley], for the benefit of being copied, a poem of about seven hundred and fifty lines length — The Age of Bronze, — or Carmen Seculare et Annus haud Mirabilis, with this Epigraph — 'Impar Congressus Achilli.' It is calculated for the reading part of the million, being all on politics, etc., etc., etc., and a review of the day in general, — in my early English Bards style, but a little more stilted, and somewhat too full of 'epithets of war' and classical and historical allusions. If notes are necessary, they can be added."

On March 5th he forwarded the "Proof in Slips" ("and certainly the Slips are the most conspicuous part of it") to his new publisher, John Hunt; and, on April 1, 1823, The Age of Bronze was published, but not with the author's name.

Ten years had gone by since he had published, only to disclaim, the latest of his boyish satires, The Waltz, and more than six years since he had written, "at the request of Douglas Kinnaird," the stilted and laboured Monody on the Death of ... Sheridan. In the interval (1816-1822) he had essayed any and every measure but the heroic, and, at length, as a tardy recognition of his allegiance to "the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all feelings, and of all stages of existence" (Observations upon "Observations," Letters, 1901, v. 590), he reverts, as he believes, to his "early English Bards style," the style of Pope.

The brazen age, the "Annus Haud Mirabilis," which the satirist would hold up to scorn, was 1822, the year after Napoleon's death, which witnessed a revolution in Spain, and the Congress of Allied Sovereigns at Verona. Earlier in the year, the publication of Las Cases' Memorial de Ste Hélène, and of O'Meara's Napoleon in Exile, or a Voice from St. Helena, had created a sensation on both sides of the Channel. Public opinion had differed as to the system on which Napoleon should be treated — and, since his death, there had been a conflict of evidence as to the manner in which he had been treated, at St. Helena. Tories believed that an almost excessive lenience and indulgence had been wasted on a graceless and thankless intriguer, while the "Opposition," Liberals or Radicals, were moved to indignation at the hardships and restrictions which were ruthlessly and needlessly imposed on a fallen and powerless foe. It was, and is, a very pretty quarrel; and Byron, whose lifelong admiration for his "Héros de Roman" was tempered by reason, approached the Longwood controversy somewhat in the spirit of a partisan.

In The Age of Bronze (sects, iii.-v.) he touches on certain incidents of the

“Last Phase” of Napoleon’s career, and proceeds to recapitulate, in a sort of Memoria Technica, the chief events of his history, from the dawn at Marengo to the sunset at “bloody and most bootless Waterloo,” and draws the unimpeachable moral that “Honesty is the best policy,” even when the “game is Empire” and “the stakes are thrones”!

From the rise and fall, the tyranny and captivity of Napoleon, he passes on to the Congress of Allied Powers, which met at Verona in November, 1822.

The “Congress” is the object of his satire. It had assembled with a parade of power and magnificence, and had dispersed with little or nothing accomplished. It was “impar Achilli” (vide ante,), an empty menace, ill-matched with the revolutionary spirit, and in pitiful contrast to the *Sic volo, sic jubeo* of the dead Napoleon.

The immediate and efficient cause of the Congress of Verona was the success of the revolution in Spain. The point at issue between Spanish Liberals and Royalists, or serviles, was the adherence to, or the evasion of, the democratic Constitution of 1812. At the moment the Liberals were in the ascendant, and, as Chateaubriand puts it, had driven King Ferdinand into captivity, at Urgel, in Catalonia, to the tune of the Spanish Marseillaise, “Tragala, Tragala” “swallow it, swallow it,” that is, “accept the Constitution.” On July 7, 1822, a government was established under the name of the “Supreme Regency of Spain during the Captivity of the King,” and, hence, the consternation of the partners of the Holy Alliance, especially France, who conceived, or feigned to conceive, that revolution next door was a source of danger to constitutional government at home. To meet the emergency, a Congress was summoned in the first instance at Vienna, and afterwards at Verona. Thither came the sovereigns of Europe, great and small, accompanied by their chancellors and ministers. The Czar Alexander was attended by Count Nesselrode and Count Pozzo di Borgo; the Emperor Francis of Austria, by Metternich and Prince Esterhazy; the King of Prussia (Frederic William III.), by Count Bernstorff and Baron Humboldt. George IV. of Great Britain, and Louis XVIII. of France, being elderly and gouty, sent as their plenipotentiaries the Duke of Wellington and the Vicomte de Montmorenci, accompanied, and, finally, superseded by, the French ambassador, M. de Chateaubriand. Thither, too, came the smaller fry, Kings of the Two Sicilies and of Sardinia; and last, but not least, Marie Louise of Austria, Archduchess of Parma, *ci-devant* widow of Napoleon, and wife *sub rosâ* of her one-eyed chamberlain, Count de Neipperg. They met, they debated, they went to the theatre in state, and finally decided to send monitory despatches to Spain, and to leave to France a free hand to look after her own interests, and to go to war or not, as she was pleased to determine. There was one dissentient, the Duke of

Wellington, who refused to sign the *procès verbaux*. His Britannic Majesty had been advised to let the Spaniards alone, and not to meddle with their internal affairs. The final outcome of the Congress, the French invasion of Spain, could not be foreseen; and, apparently, all that the Congress had accomplished was to refuse to prohibit the exportation of negroes from Africa to America, and to decline to receive the Greek deputies.

As the *Morning Chronicle* (November 7, 1822) was pleased to put it, “the Royal vultures have been deprived of their anticipated meal.”

From the Holy Alliance and its antagonist, “the revolutionary stork,” Byron turns to the landed and agricultural “interest” of Great Britain. With the cessation of war and the resumption of cash payments in 1819, prices had fallen some 50 per cent., and rents were beginning to fall. Wheat, which in 1818 had fetched 80s. a quarter, in December, 1822, was quoted at 39s. 11d.; consols were at 80. Poor rates had risen from £2,000,000 in 1792 to £8,000,000 in 1822. How was the distress which these changes involved to be met? By retrenchment and reform, by the repeal of taxes, the reduction of salaries, by the landlords and farmers, who had profited by war prices, submitting to the inevitable reaction; or by sliding scales, by a return to an inflated currency, perhaps by a repudiation of a portion of the funded debt?

The point of Byron’s diatribe is that Squire Dives had enjoyed good things during the war, and, now that the war was over, he had no intention to let Lazarus have his turn; that, whoever suffered, it should not be Dives; that patriotism had brought grist to his mill; and that he proposed to suck no small advantage out of peace.

“Year after year they voted cent. per cent.,

Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions — why? for rent?

They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant

To die for England — why then live? — for rent!”

It is easier to divine the “Sources” and the inspiration of *The Age of Bronze* than to place the reader au courant with the literary and political causerie of the day. Byron wrote with O’Meara’s book at his elbow, and with batches of *Galighani’s Messenger*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and *Cobbett’s Weekly Register* within his reach. He was under the impression that his lines would appear as an anonymous contribution to *The Liberal*, and, in any case, he felt that he could speak out, unchecked and uncriticized by friend or publisher. He was, so to speak, unmuzzled.

With regard to the style and quality of his new satire, Byron was under an amiable delusion. His couplets, he imagined, were in his “early English Bards style,” but “more stilted.” He did not realize that, whatever the intervening years

had taken away, they had “left behind” experience and passion, and that he had learned to think and to feel. The fault of the poem is that too much matter is packed into too small a compass, and that, in parts, every line implies a minute acquaintance with contemporary events, and requires an explanatory note. But, even so, in *The Age of Bronze* Byron has wedded “a striking passage of history” to striking and imperishable verse.

The Age of Bronze was reviewed in the *Scots Magazine*, April, 1823, N.S., vol. xii. pp. 483-488; the *Monthly Review*, April, 1823, E.S., vol. 100, pp. 430-433; the *Monthly Magazine*, May, 1823, vol. 55, pp. 322-325; the *Examiner*, March 30, 1823; the *Literary Chronicle*, April 5, 1823; and the *Literary Gazette*, April 5, 1823.

THE AGE OF BRONZE.

I.

The “good old times” — all times when old are good —
Are gone; the present might be if they would;
Great things have been, and are, and greater still
Want little of mere mortals but their will:
A wider space, a greener field, is given
To those who play their “tricks before high heaven.”
I know not if the angels weep, but men
Have wept enough — for what? — to weep again!

II.

All is exploded — be it good or bad.
Reader! remember when thou wert a lad, ¹⁰
Then Pitt was all; or, if not all, so much,
His very rival almost deemed him such.
We — we have seen the intellectual race
Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face —
Athos and Ida, with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between, which flowed all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian shore.
But where are they — the rivals! a few feet
Of sullen earth divide each winding sheet. ²⁰
How peaceful and how powerful is the grave,
Which hushes all! a calm, unstormy wave,
Which oversweeps the World. The theme is old
Of “Dust to Dust,” but half its tale untold:
Time tempers not its terrors — still the worm
Winds its cold folds, the tomb preserves its form,
Varied above, but still alike below;
The urn may shine — the ashes will not glow —
Though Cleopatra’s mummy cross the sea
O’er which from empire she lured Anthony; ³⁰
Though Alexander’s urn a show be grown

On shores he wept to conquer, though unknown —
How vain, how worse than vain, at length appear
The madman's wish, the Macedonian's tear!
He wept for worlds to conquer — half the earth
Knows not his name, or but his death, and birth,
And desolation; while his native Greece
Hath all of desolation, save its peace.
He "wept for worlds to conquer!" he who ne'er
Conceived the Globe, he panted not to spare! 40
With even the busy Northern Isle unknown,
Which holds his urn — and never knew his throne.

III.

But where is he, the modern, mightier far,
Who, born no king, made monarchs draw his car;
The new Sesostris, whose unharnessed kings,
Freed from the bit, believe themselves with wings,
And spurn the dust o'er which they crawled of late,
Chained to the chariot of the Chieftain's state?
Yes! where is he, "the champion and the child"
Of all that's great or little — wise or wild; 50
Whose game was Empire, and whose stakes were thrones;
Whose table Earth — whose dice were human bones?
Behold the grand result in yon lone Isle,
And, as thy nature urges — weep or smile.
Sigh to behold the Eagle's lofty rage
Reduced to nibble at his narrow cage;
Smile to survey the queller of the nations
Now daily squabbling o'er disputed rations;
Weep to perceive him mourning, as he dines,
O'er curtailed dishes and o'er stinted wines; 60
O'er petty quarrels upon petty things.
Is this the Man who scourged or feasted kings?
Behold the scales in which his fortune hangs,
A surgeon's statement, and an earl's harangues!
A bust delayed, — a book refused, can shake
The sleep of Him who kept the world awake.
Is this indeed the tamer of the Great,

Now slave of all could tease or irritate —
The paltry gaoler and the prying spy,
The staring stranger with his note-book nigh? 70
Plunged in a dungeon, he had still been great;
How low, how little was this middle state,
Between a prison and a palace, where
How few could feel for what he had to bear!
Vain his complaint, — My Lord presents his bill,
His food and wine were doled out duly still;
Vain was his sickness, never was a clime
So free from homicide — to doubt's crime;
And the stiff surgeon, who maintained his cause,
Hath lost his place, and gained the world's applause. 80
But smile — though all the pangs of brain and heart
Disdain, defy, the tardy aid of art;
Though, save the few fond friends and imaged face
Of that fair boy his Sire shall ne'er embrace,
None stand by his low bed — though even the mind
Be wavering, which long awed and awes mankind:
Smile — for the fettered Eagle breaks his chain,
And higher Worlds than this are his again.

IV.

How, if that soaring Spirit still retain
A conscious twilight of his blazing reign, 90
How must he smile, on looking down, to see
The little that he was and sought to be!
What though his Name a wider empire found
Than his Ambition, though with scarce a bound;
Though first in glory, deepest in reverse,
He tasted Empire's blessings and its curse;
Though kings, rejoicing in their late escape
From chains, would gladly be their Tyrant's ape;
How must he smile, and turn to yon lone grave,
The proudest Sea-mark that o'ertops the wave! 100
What though his gaoler, duteous to the last,
Scarce deemed the coffin's lead could keep him fast,
Refusing one poor line along the lid,

To date the birth and death of all it hid;
That name shall hallow the ignoble shore,
A talisman to all save him who bore:
The fleets that sweep before the eastern blast
Shall hear their sea-boys hail it from the mast;
When Victory's Gallic column shall but rise,
Like Pompey's pillar, in a desert's skies, ¹¹⁰
The rocky Isle that holds or held his dust,
Shall crown the Atlantic like the Hero's bust,
And mighty Nature o'er his obsequies
Do more than niggard Envy still denies.
But what are these to him? Can Glory's lust
Touch the freed spirit or the fettered dust?
Small care hath he of what his tomb consists;
Nought if he sleeps — nor more if he exists:
Alike the better-seeing Shade will smile
On the rude cavern of the rocky isle, ¹²⁰
As if his ashes found their latest home
In Rome's Pantheon or Gaul's mimic dome.
He wants not this; but France shall feel the want
Of this last consolation, though so scant:
Her Honour — Fame — and Faith demand his bones,
To rear above a Pyramid of thrones;
Or carried onward in the battle's van,
To form, like Guesclin's dust, her Talisman.
But be it as it is — the time may come
His name shall beat the alarm, like Ziska's drum. ¹³⁰

V.

Oh Heaven! of which he was in power a feature;
Oh Earth! of which he was a noble creature;
Thou Isle! to be remembered long and well,
That saw'st the unfledged eaglet chip his shell!
Ye Alps which viewed him in his dawning flights
Hover, the Victor of a hundred fights!
Thou Rome, who saw'st thy Cæsar's deeds outdone!
Alas! why passed he too the Rubicon —
The Rubicon of Man's awakened rights,

To herd with vulgar kings and parasites? 140
Egypt! from whose all dateless tombs arose
Forgotten Pharaohs from their long repose,
And shook within their pyramids to hear
A new Cambyzes thundering in their ear;
While the dark shades of Forty Ages stood
Like startled giants by Nile's famous flood;
Or from the Pyramid's tall pinnacle
Beheld the desert peopled, as from hell,
With clashing hosts, who strewed the barren sand,
To re-manure the uncultivated land! 150
Spain! which, a moment mindless of the Cid,
Beheld his banner flouting thy Madrid!
Austria! which saw thy twice-ta'en capital
Twice spared to be the traitress of his fall!
Ye race of Frederic! — Frederics but in name
And falsehood — heirs to all except his fame:
Who, crushed at Jena, crouched at Berlin, fell
First, and but rose to follow! Ye who dwell
Where Kosciusko dwelt, remembering yet
The unpaid amount of Catherine's bloody debt! 160
Poland! o'er which the avenging Angel past,
But left thee as he found thee, still a waste,
Forgetting all thy still enduring claim,
Thy lotted people and extinguished name,
Thy sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear —
Kosciusko! On — on — on — the thirst of War
Gasps for the gore of serfs and of their Czar.
The half barbaric Moscow's minarets
Gleam in the sun, but 'tis a sun that sets! 170
Moscow! thou limit of his long career,
For which rude Charles had wept his frozen tear
To see in vain — he saw thee — how? with spire
And palace fuel to one common fire.
To this the soldier lent his kindling match,
To this the peasant gave his cottage thatch,
To this the merchant flung his hoarded store,
The prince his hall — and Moscow was no more!

Sublimest of volcanoes! Etna's flame
Pales before thine, and quenchless Hecla's tame; 180
Vesuvius shows his blaze, an usual sight
For gaping tourists, from his hackneyed height:
Thou stand'st alone unrivalled, till the Fire
To come, in which all empires shall expire!
Thou other Element! as strong and stern,
To teach a lesson conquerors will not learn! —
Whose icy wing flapped o'er the faltering foe,
Till fell a hero with each flake of snow;
How did thy numbing beak and silent fang,
Pierce, till hosts perished with a single pang! 190
In vain shall Seine look up along his banks
For the gay thousands of his dashing ranks!
In vain shall France recall beneath her vines
Her Youth — their blood flows faster than her wines;
Or stagnant in their human ice remains
In frozen mummies on the Polar plains.
In vain will Italy's broad sun awaken
Her offspring chilled; its beams are now forsaken.
Of all the trophies gathered from the war,
What shall return? the Conqueror's broken car! 200
The Conqueror's yet unbroken heart! Again
The horn of Roland sounds, and not in vain.
Lutzen, where fell the Swede of victory,
Beholds him conquer, but, alas! not die:
Dresden surveys three despots fly once more
Before their sovereign, — sovereign as before;
But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,
And Leipsic's treason bids the unvanquished yield;
The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's, and wolf's, and fox's guide; 210
And backward to the den of his despair
The forest monarch shrinks, but finds no lair!
Oh ye! and each, and all! Oh France! who found
Thy long fair fields ploughed up as hostile ground,
Disputed foot by foot, till Treason, still
His only victor, from Montmartre's hill
Looked down o'er trampled Paris! and thou Isle,

Which seest Etruria from thy ramparts smile,
Thou momentary shelter of his pride,
Till wooed by danger, his yet weeping bride! 220
Oh, France! retaken by a single march,
Whose path was through one long triumphal arch!
Oh bloody and most bootless Waterloo!
Which proves how fools may have their fortune too,
Won half by blunder, half by treachery:
Oh dull Saint Helen! with thy gaoler nigh —
Hear! hear Prometheus from his rock appeal
To Earth, — Air, — Ocean, — all that felt or feel
His power and glory, all who yet shall hear
A name eternal as the rolling year; 230
He teaches them the lesson taught so long,
So oft, so vainly — learn to do no wrong!
A single step into the right had made
This man the Washington of worlds betrayed:
A single step into the wrong has given
His name a doubt to all the winds of heaven;
The reed of Fortune, and of thrones the rod,
Of Fame the Moloch or the demigod;
His country's Cæsar, Europe's Hannibal,
Without their decent dignity of fall. 240
Yet Vanity herself had better taught
A surer path even to the fame he sought,
By pointing out on History's fruitless page
Ten thousand conquerors for a single sage.
While Franklin's quiet memory climbs to Heaven,
Calming the lightning which he thence hath riven,
Or drawing from the no less kindled earth
Freedom and peace to that which boasts his birth;
While Washington's a watchword, such as ne'er
Shall sink while there's an echo left to air: 250
While even the Spaniard's thirst of gold and war
Forgets Pizarro to shout Bolivar!
Alas! why must the same Atlantic wave
Which wafted freedom gird a tyrant's grave —
The king of kings, and yet of slaves the slave,
Who burst the chains of millions to renew

The very fetters which his arm broke through,
And crushed the rights of Europe and his own,
To flit between a dungeon and a throne?

VI.

But 'twill not be — the spark's awakened — lo! 260
The swarthy Spaniard feels his former glow;
The same high spirit which beat back the Moor
Through eight long ages of alternate gore
Revives — and where? in that avenging clime
Where Spain was once synonymous with crime,
Where Cortes' and Pizarro's banner flew,
The infant world redeems her name of "New."
'Tis the old aspiration breathed afresh,
To kindle souls within degraded flesh,
Such as repulsed the Persian from the shore 270
Where Greece was — No! she still is Greece once more.
One common cause makes myriads of one breast,
Slaves of the East, or helots of the West:
On Andes' and on Athos' peaks unfurled,
The self-same standard streams o'er either world:
The Athenian wears again Harmodius' sword;
The Chili chief abjures his foreign lord;
The Spartan knows himself once more a Greek,
Young Freedom plumes the crest of each cacique;
Debating despots, hemmed on either shore, 280
Shrink vainly from the roused Atlantic's roar;
Through Calpe's strait the rolling tides advance,
Sweep slightly by the half-tamed land of France,
Dash o'er the old Spaniard's cradle, and would fain
Unite Ausonia to the mighty main:
But driven from thence awhile, yet not for aye,
Break o'er th' Ægean, mindful of the day
Of Salamis! — there, there the waves arise,
Not to be lulled by tyrant victories.
Lone, lost, abandoned in their utmost need 290
By Christians, unto whom they gave their creed,
The desolated lands, the ravaged isle,

The fostered feud encouraged to beguile,
The aid evaded, and the cold delay,
Prolonged but in the hope to make a prey; —
These, these shall tell the tale, and Greece can show
The false friend worse than the infuriate foe.
But this is well: Greeks only should free Greece,
Not the barbarian, with his masque of peace.
How should the Autocrat of bondage be ³⁰⁰
The king of serfs, and set the nations free?
Better still serve the haughty Mussulman,
Than swell the Cossaque's prowling caravan;
Better still toil for masters, than await,
The slave of slaves, before a Russian gate, —
Numbered by hordes, a human capital,
A live estate, existing but for thrall,
Lotted by thousands, as a meet reward
For the first courtier in the Czar's regard;
While their immediate owner never tastes ³¹⁰
His sleep, sans dreaming of Siberia's wastes:
Better succumb even to their own despair,
And drive the Camel — than purvey the Bear.

VII.

But not alone within the hoariest clime
Where Freedom dates her birth with that of Time,
And not alone where, plunged in night, a crowd
Of Incas darken to a dubious cloud,
The dawn revives: renowned, romantic Spain
Holds back the invader from her soil again.
Not now the Roman tribe nor Punic horde ³²⁰
Demands her fields as lists to prove the sword;
Not now the Vandal or the Visigoth
Pollute the plains, alike abhorring both;
Nor old Pelayo on his mountain rears
The warlike fathers of a thousand years.
That seed is sown and reaped, as oft the Moor
Sighs to remember on his dusky shore.
Long in the peasant's song or poet's page

Has dwelt the memory of Abencerrage;
The Zegri, and the captive victors, flung ³³⁰
Back to the barbarous realm from whence they sprung.
But these are gone — their faith, their swords, their sway,
Yet left more anti-christian foes than they;
The bigot monarch, and the butcher priest,
The Inquisition, with her burning feast,
The Faith's red "Auto," fed with human fuel,
While sate the catholic Moloch, calmly cruel,
Enjoying, with inexorable eye,
That fiery festival of Agony!
The stern or feeble sovereign, one or both ³⁴⁰
By turns; the haughtiness whose pride was sloth;
The long degenerate noble; the debased
Hidalgo, and the peasant less disgraced,
But more degraded; the unpeopled realm;
The once proud navy which forgot the helm;
The once impervious phalanx disarrayed;
The idle forge that formed Toledo's blade;
The foreign wealth that flowed on every shore,
Save hers who earned it with the native's gore;
The very language which might vie with Rome's, ³⁵⁰
And once was known to nations like their homes,
Neglected or forgotten: — such was Spain;
But such she is not, nor shall be again.
These worst, these home invaders, felt and feel
The new Numantine soul of old Castile,
Up! up again! undaunted Tauridor!
The bull of Phalaris renews his roar;
Mount, chivalrous Hidalgo! not in vain
Revive the cry — "Iago! and close Spain!"
Yes, close her with your arméd bosoms round, ³⁶⁰
And form the barrier which Napoleon found, —
The exterminating war, the desert plain,
The streets without a tenant, save the slain;
The wild Sierra, with its wilder troop
Of vulture-plumed Guerrillas, on the stoop
For their incessant prey; the desperate wall
Of Saragossa, mightiest in her fall;

The Man nerved to a spirit, and the Maid
Waving her more than Amazonian blade;
The knife of Arragon, Toledo's steel; ³⁷⁰
The famous lance of chivalrous Castile;
The unerring rifle of the Catalan;
The Andalusian courser in the van;
The torch to make a Moscow of Madrid;
And in each heart the spirit of the Cid: —
Such have been, such shall be, such are. Advance,
And win — not Spain! but thine own freedom, France!

VIII.

But lo! a Congress! What! that hallowed name
Which freed the Atlantic! May we hope the same
For outworn Europe? With the sound arise, ³⁸⁰
Like Samuel's shade to Saul's monarchic eyes,
The prophets of young Freedom, summoned far
From climes of Washington and Bolivar;
Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the seas;
And stoic Franklin's energetic shade,
Robed in the lightnings which his hand allayed;
And Washington, the tyrant-tamer, wake,
To bid us blush for these old chains, or break.
But who compose this Senate of the few ³⁹⁰
That should redeem the many? Who renew
This consecrated name, till now assigned
To councils held to benefit mankind?
Who now assemble at the holy call?
The blest Alliance, which says three are all!
An earthly Trinity! which wears the shape
Of Heaven's, as man is mimicked by the ape.
A pious Unity! in purpose one —
To melt three fools to a Napoleon.
Why, Egypt's Gods were rational to these; ⁴⁰⁰
Their dogs and oxen knew their own degrees,
And, quiet in their kennel or their shed,
Cared little, so that they were duly fed;

But these, more hungry, must have something more —
The power to bark and bite, to toss and gore.
Ah, how much happier were good Æsop's frogs
Than we! for ours are animated logs,
With ponderous malice swaying to and fro,
And crushing nations with a stupid blow;
All dully anxious to leave little work ⁴¹⁰
Unto the revolutionary stork.

IX.

Thrice blest Verona! since the holy three
With their imperial presence shine on thee!
Honoured by them, thy treacherous site forgets
The vaunted tomb of "all the Capulets!"
Thy Scaligers — for what was "Dog the Great,"
"Can Grande," (which I venture to translate,)
To these sublimer pugs? Thy poet too,
Catullus, whose old laurels yield to new;
Thine amphitheatre, where Romans sate; ⁴²⁰
And Dante's exile sheltered by thy gate;
Thy good old man, whose world was all within
Thy wall, nor knew the country held him in;
Would that the royal guests it girds about
Were so far like, as never to get out!
Aye, shout! inscribe! rear monuments of shame,
To tell Oppression that the world is tame!
Crowd to the theatre with loyal rage,
The comedy is not upon the stage;
The show is rich in ribandry and stars, ⁴³⁰
Then gaze upon it through thy dungeon bars;
Clap thy permitted palms, kind Italy,
For thus much still thy fettered hands are free!

X.

Resplendent sight! Behold the coxcomb Czar,
The Autocrat of waltzes and of war!
As eager for a plaudit as a realm,

And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
A Calmuck beauty with a Cossack wit,
And generous spirit, when 'tis not frost-bit;
Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw, ⁴⁴⁰
But hardened back whene'er the morning's raw;
With no objection to true Liberty,
Except that it would make the nations free.
How well the imperial dandy prates of peace!
How fain, if Greeks would be his slaves, free Greece!
How nobly gave he back the Poles their Diet,
Then told pugnacious Poland to be quiet!
How kindly would he send the mild Ukraine,
With all her pleasant Pulks, to lecture Spain!
How royally show off in proud Madrid ⁴⁵⁰
His goodly person, from the South long hid!
A blessing cheaply purchased, the world knows,
By having Muscovites for friends or foes.
Proceed, thou namesake of great Philip's son!
La Harpe, thine Aristotle, beckons on;
And that which Scythia was to him of yore
Find with thy Scythians on Iberia's shore.
Yet think upon, thou somewhat agéd youth,
Thy predecessor on the banks of Pruth;
Thou hast to aid thee, should his lot be thine, ⁴⁶⁰
Many an old woman, but not Catherine.
Spain, too, hath rocks, and rivers, and defiles —
The Bear may rush into the Lion's toils.
Fatal to Goths are Xeres' sunny fields;
Think'st thou to thee Napoleon's victor yields?
Better reclaim thy deserts, turn thy swords
To ploughshares, shave and wash thy Bashkir hordes,
Redeem thy realms from slavery and the knout,
Than follow headlong in the fatal route,
To infest the clime whose skies and laws are pure ⁴⁷⁰
With thy foul legions. Spain wants no manure:
Her soil is fertile, but she feeds no foe:
Her vultures, too, were gorged not long ago;
And wouldst thou furnish them with fresher prey?
Alas! thou wilt not conquer, but purvey.

I am Diogenes, though Russ and Hun
Stand between mine and many a myriad's sun;
But were I not Diogenes, I'd wander
Rather a worm than such an Alexander!
Be slaves who will, the cynic shall be free; 480
His tub hath tougher walls than Sinopè:
Still will he hold his lantern up to scan
The face of monarchs for an "honest man."

XI.

And what doth Gaul, the all-prolific land
Of ne plus ultra ultras and their band
Of mercenaries? and her noisy chambers
And tribune, which each orator first clambers
Before he finds a voice, and when 'tis found,
Hears "the lie" echo for his answer round?
Our British Commons sometimes deign to "hear!" 490
A Gallic senate hath more tongue than ear;
Even Constant, their sole master of debate,
Must fight next day his speech to vindicate.
But this costs little to true Franks, who'd rather
Combat than listen, were it to their father.
What is the simple standing of a shot,
To listening long, and interrupting not?
Though this was not the method of old Rome,
When Tully fulminated o'er each vocal dome,
Demosthenes has sanctioned the transaction, 500
In saying eloquence meant "Action, action!"

XII.

But where's the monarch? hath he dined? or yet
Groans beneath indigestion's heavy debt?
Have revolutionary patés risen,
And turned the royal entrails to a prison?
Have discontented movements stirred the troops?
Or have no movements followed traitorous soups?
Have Carbonaro cooks not carbonadoed

Each course enough? or doctors dire dissuaded
 Repletion? Ah! in thy dejected looks ⁵¹⁰
 I read all France's treason in her cooks!
 Good classic Louis! is it, canst thou say,
 Desirable to be the "Desiré?"
 Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's green abode,
 Apician table, and Horatian ode,
 To rule a people who will not be ruled,
 And love much rather to be scourged than schooled?
 Ah! thine was not the temper or the taste
 For thrones; the table sees thee better placed:
 A mild Epicurean, formed, at best, ⁵²⁰
 To be a kind host and as good a guest,
 To talk of Letters, and to know by heart
 One half the Poet's, all the Gourmand's art;
 A scholar always, now and then a wit,
 And gentle when Digestion may permit; —
 But not to govern lands enslaved or free;
 The gout was martyrdom enough for thee.

XIII.

Shall noble Albion pass without a phrase
 From a bold Briton in her wonted praise?
 "Arts — arms — and George — and glory — and the Isles, ⁵³⁰
 And happy Britain, wealth, and Freedom's smiles,
 White cliffs, that held invasion far aloof,
 Contented subjects, all alike tax-proof,
 Proud Wellington, with eagle beak so curled,
 That nose, the hook where he suspends the world!
 And Waterloo, and trade, and — — (hush! not yet
 A syllable of imposts or of debt) — —
 And ne'er (enough) lamented Castlereagh,
 Whose penknife slit a goose-quill t'other day —
 And, 'pilots who have weathered every storm' — ⁵⁴⁰
 (But, no, not even for rhyme's sake, name Reform)."
 These are the themes thus sung so oft before,
 Methinks we need not sing them any more;
 Found in so many volumes far and near,

There's no occasion you should find them here.
Yet something may remain perchance to chime
With reason, and, what's stranger still, with rhyme.
Even this thy genius, Canning! may permit,
Who, bred a statesman, still wast born a wit,
And never, even in that dull House, couldst tame ⁵⁵⁰
To unleavened prose thine own poetic flame;
Our last, our best, our only orator,
Even I can praise thee — Tories do no more:
Nay, not so much; — they hate thee, man, because
Thy Spirit less upholds them than it awes.
The hounds will gather to their huntsman's hollo,
And where he leads the duteous pack will follow;
But not for love mistake their yelling cry;
Their yelp for game is not an eulogy;
Less faithful far than the four-footed pack, ⁵⁶⁰
A dubious scent would lure the bipeds back.
Thy saddle-girths are not yet quite secure,
Nor royal stallion's feet extremely sure;
The unwieldy old white horse is apt at last
To stumble, kick — and now and then stick fast
With his great Self and Rider in the mud;
But what of that? the animal shows blood.

XIV.

Alas, the Country! how shall tongue or pen
Bewail her now uncountr'y gentlemen?
The last to bid the cry of warfare cease, ⁵⁷⁰
The first to make a malady of peace.
For what were all these country patriots born?
To hunt — and vote — and raise the price of corn?
But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,
Kings — Conquerors — and markets most of all.
And must ye fall with every ear of grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparté's reign?
He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroyed but realms, and still maintained your prices;
He amplified to every lord's content ⁵⁸⁰

The grand agrarian alchymy, high rent.
Why did the tyrant stumble on the Tartars,
And lower wheat to such desponding quarters?
Why did you chain him on yon Isle so lone?
The man was worth much more upon his throne.
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spilt,
But what of that? the Gaul may bear the guilt;
But bread was high, the farmer paid his way,
And acres told upon the appointed day.
But where is now the goodly audit ale? 590
The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail?
The farm which never yet was left on hand?
The marsh reclaimed to most improving land?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental? What an evil's peace!
In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill,
In vain the Commons pass their patriot bill;
The Landed Interest — (you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the land) —
The land self-interest groans from shore to shore, 600
For fear that plenty should attain the poor.
Up, up again, ye rents, exalt your notes,
Or else the Ministry will lose their votes,
And patriotism, so delicately nice,
Her loaves will lower to the market price;
For ah! "the loaves and fishes," once so high,
Are gone — their oven closed, their ocean dry,
And nought remains of all the millions spent,
Excepting to grow moderate and content.
They who are not so, had their turn — and turn 610
About still flows from Fortune's equal urn;
Now let their virtue be its own reward,
And share the blessings which themselves prepared.
See these inglorious Cincinnati swarm,
Farmers of war, dictators of the farm;
Their ploughshare was the sword in hireling hands,
Their fields manured by gore of other lands;
Safe in their barns, these Sabine tillers sent
Their brethren out to battle — why? for rent!

Year after year they voted cent. per cent. 620
Blood, sweat, and tear-wrung millions — why? — for rent!
They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant
To die for England — why then live? — for rent!
The peace has made one general malcontent
Of these high-market patriots; war was rent!
Their love of country, millions all mis-spent,
How reconcile? by reconciling rent!
And will they not repay the treasures lent?
No: down with everything, and up with rent!
Their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent, 630
Being, end, aim, religion — rent — rent — rent!
Thou sold'st thy birthright, Esau! for a mess;
Thou shouldst have gotten more, or eaten less;
Now thou hast swilled thy pottage, thy demands
Are idle; Israel says the bargain stands.
Such, landlords! was your appetite for war,
And gorged with blood, you grumble at a scar!
What! would they spread their earthquake even o'er cash?
And when land crumbles, bid firm paper crash?
So rent may rise, bid Bank and Nation fall, 640
And found on 'Change a Fundling Hospital?
Lo, Mother Church, while all religion writhes,
Like Niobe, weeps o'er her offspring — Tithes;
The Prelates go to — where the Saints have gone,
And proud pluralities subside to one;
Church, state, and faction wrestle in the dark,
Tossed by the deluge in their common ark.
Shorn of her bishops, banks, and dividends,
Another Babel soars — but Britain ends.
And why? to pamper the self-seeking wants, 650
And prop the hill of these agrarian ants.
"Go to these ants, thou sluggard, and be wise;"
Admire their patience through each sacrifice,
Till taught to feel the lesson of their pride,
The price of taxes and of homicide;
Admire their justice, which would fain deny
The debt of nations: — pray who made it high?

XV.

Or turn to sail between those shifting rocks,
 The new Symplegades — the crushing Stocks,
 Where Midas might again his wish behold ⁶⁶⁰
 In real paper or imagined gold.
 That magic palace of Alcina shows
 More wealth than Britain ever had to lose,
 Were all her atoms of unleavened ore,
 And all her pebbles from Pactolus' shore.
 There Fortune plays, while Rumour holds the stake
 And the World trembles to bid brokers break.
 How rich is Britain! not indeed in mines,
 Or peace or plenty, corn or oil, or wines;
 No land of Canaan, full of milk and honey, ⁶⁷⁰
 Nor (save in paper shekels) ready money:
 But let us not to own the truth refuse,
 Was ever Christian land so rich in Jews?
 Those parted with their teeth to good King John,
 And now, ye kings, they kindly draw your own;
 All states, all things, all sovereigns they control,
 And waft a loan "from Indus to the pole."
 The banker — broker — baron — brethren, speed
 To aid these bankrupt tyrants in their need.
 Nor these alone; Columbia feels no less ⁶⁸⁰
 Fresh speculations follow each success;
 And philanthropic Israel deigns to drain
 Her mild per-centage from exhausted Spain.
 Not without Abraham's seed can Russia march;
 Tis gold, not steel, that rears the conqueror's arch.
 Two Jews, a chosen people, can command
 In every realm their Scripture-promised land: —
 Two Jews, keep down the Romans, and uphold
 The accurséd Hun, more brutal than of old:
 Two Jews, — but not Samaritans — direct ⁶⁹⁰
 The world, with all the spirit of their sect.
 What is the happiness of earth to them?
 A congress forms their "New Jerusalem,"
 Where baronies and orders both invite —

Oh, holy Abraham! dost thou see the sight?
Thy followers mingling with these royal swine,
Who spit not “on their Jewish gaberdine,”
But honour them as portion of the show —
(Where now, oh Pope! is thy forsaken toe?
Could it not favour Judah with some kicks? ⁷⁰⁰
Or has it ceased to “kick against the pricks?”)
On Shylock’s shore behold them stand afresh,
To cut from Nation’s hearts their “pound of flesh.”

XVI.

Strange sight this Congress! destined to unite
All that’s incongruous, all that’s opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns — they’re alike,
A common coin as ever mint could strike;
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of motley than their heavy kings.
Jews, authors, generals, charlatans, combine, ⁷¹⁰
While Europe wonders at the vast design:
There Metternich, power’s foremost parasite,
Cajoles; there Wellington forgets to fight;
There Chateaubriand forms new books of martyrs;
And subtle Greeks intrigue for stupid Tartars;
There Montmorenci, the sworn foe to charters,
Turns a diplomatist of great éclat,
To furnish articles for the “Débats;”
Of war so certain — yet not quite so sure
As his dismissal in the “Moniteur.” ⁷²⁰
Alas! how could his cabinet thus err!
Can Peace be worth an ultra-minister?
He falls indeed, perhaps to rise again,
“Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.”

XVII.

Enough of this — a sight more mournful woos
The averted eye of the reluctant Muse.
The Imperial daughter, the Imperial bride,

The imperial Victim — sacrifice to pride;
The mother of the Hero's hope, the boy,
The young Astyanax of Modern Troy; 730
The still pale shadow of the loftiest Queen
That Earth has yet to see, or e'er hath seen;
She flits amidst the phantoms of the hour,
The theme of pity, and the wreck of power.
Oh, cruel mockery! Could not Austria spare
A daughter? What did France's widow there?
Her fitter place was by St. Helen's wave,
Her only throne is in Napoleon's grave.
But, no, — she still must hold a petty reign,
Flanked by her formidable chamberlain; 740
The martial Argus, whose not hundred eyes
Must watch her through these paltry pageantries.
What though she share no more, and shared in vain,
A sway surpassing that of Charlemagne,
Which swept from Moscow to the southern seas!
Yet still she rules the pastoral realm of cheese,
Where Parma views the traveller resort,
To note the trappings of her mimic court.
But she appears! Verona sees her shorn
Of all her beams — while nations gaze and mourn — 750
Ere yet her husband's ashes have had time
To chill in their inhospitable clime;
(If e'er those awful ashes can grow cold; —
But no, — their embers soon will burst the mould;)
She comes! — the Andromache (but not Racine's,
Nor Homer's,) — Lo! on Pyrrhus' arm she leans!
Yes! the right arm, yet red from Waterloo,
Which cut her lord's half-shattered sceptre through,
Is offered and accepted? Could a slave
Do more? or less? — and he in his new grave! 760
Her eye — her cheek — betray no inward strife,
And the Ex-Empress grows as Ex a wife!
So much for human ties in royal breasts!
Why spare men's feelings, when their own are jests?

XVIII. But, tired of foreign follies, I turn home,

And sketch the group — the picture's yet to come.
My Muse 'gan weep, but, ere a tear was spilt,
She caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt!
While thronged the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman! ⁷⁷⁰
Guildhall grows Gael, and echoes with Erse roar,
While all the Common Council cry "Claymore!"
To see proud Albyn's tartans as a belt
Gird the gross sirloin of a city Celt,
She burst into a laughter so extreme,
That I awoke — and lo! it was no dream!
Here, reader, will we pause: — if there's no harm in
This first — you'll have, perhaps, a second "Carmen."
B. Jn 10th 1823.

TALES



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THE GIAOUR

INTRODUCTION

In a letter to Murray, dated Pisa, December 12, 1821 (*Life*, p. 545), Byron avows that the “Giaour Story” had actually “some foundation on facts.” Soon after the poem appeared (June 5, 1813), “a story was circulated by some gentlewomen ... a little too close to the text” (Letters to Moore, September 1, 1813, *Letters*, 1898, ii. 258), and in order to put himself right with his friends or posterity, Byron wrote to his friend Lord Sligo, who in July, 1810, was anchored off Athens in “a twelve-gun brig, with a crew of fifty men” (see *Letters*, 1898, i. 289, note 1), requesting him to put on paper not so much the narrative of an actual event, but “what he had heard at Athens about the affair of that girl who was so near being put an end to while you were there.” According to the letter which Moore published (*Life*, p. 178), and which is reprinted in the present issue (*Letters*, 1898, ii. 257), Byron interposed on behalf of a girl, who “in compliance with the strict letter of the Mohammedan law,” had been sewn in a sack and was about to be thrown into the sea. “I was told,” adds Lord Sligo, “that you then conveyed her in safety to the convent, and despatched her off at night to Thebes.” The letter, which Byron characterizes as “curious,” is by no means conclusive, and to judge from the designedly mysterious references in the *Journal*, dated November 16 and December 5, and in the second postscript to a letter to Professor Clarke, dated December 15, 1813 (*Letters*, 1898, ii. 321, 361, 311), “the circumstances which were the groundwork” are not before us. “An event,” says John Wright (ed. 1832, ix. 145), “in which Lord Byron was personally concerned, undoubtedly supplied the groundwork of this tale; but for the story so circumstantially set forth (see Medwin’s *Conversations*, 1824, pp. 121, 124) of his having been the lover of this female slave, there is no foundation. The girl whose life the poet saved at Athens was not, we are assured by Sir John Hobhouse (*Westminster Review*, January, 1825, iii. 27), an object of his Lordship’s attachment, but of that of his Turkish servant.” Nevertheless, whatever Byron may have told Hobhouse (who had returned to England), and he distinctly says (*Letters*, 1898, ii. 393) that he did not tell him everything, he avowed to Clarke that he had been led “to the water’s edge,” and confided to his diary that to “describe the *feelings* of *that* situation was impossible — it is *icy* even to recollect them.”

For the allusive and fragmentary style of the *Giaour*, *The Voyage of*

Columbus, which Rogers published in 1812, is in part responsible. "It is sudden in its transitions," wrote the author, in the Preface to the first edition, "... leaving much to be imagined by the reader." The story or a part of it is told by a fellow-seaman of Columbus, who had turned "hermite" in his old age, and though the narrative itself is in heroic verse, the prologue and epilogue, as they may be termed, are in "the romance or ballad-measure of the Spanish." The resemblance between the two poems is certainly more than accidental. On the other hand, a vivid and impassioned description of Oriental scenery and customs was, as Gifford observed, new and original, and though, by his own admission, Byron was indebted to *Vathek* (or rather S. Henley's notes to *Vathek*) and to D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* for allusions and details, the "atmosphere" could only have been reproduced by the creative fancy of an observant and enthusiastic traveller who had lived under Eastern skies, and had come within ken of Eastern life and sentiment.

In spite, however, of his love for the subject-matter of his poem, and the facility, surprising even to himself, with which he spun his rhymes, Byron could not persuade himself that a succession of fragments would sort themselves and grow into a complete and connected whole. If his thrice-repeated depreciation of the *Giaour* is not entirely genuine, it is plain that he misdoubted himself. Writing to Murray (August 26, 1813) he says, "I have, but with some difficulty, *not* added any more to this snake of a poem, which has been lengthening its rattles every month;" to Moore (September 1), "The *Giaour* I have added to a good deal, but still in foolish fragments;" and, again, to Moore (September 8), "By the coach I send you a copy of that awful pamphlet the *Giaour*."

But while the author doubted and apologized, or deprecated "his love's excess In words of wrong and bitterness," the public read, and edition followed edition with bewildering speed.

The *Giaour* was reviewed by George Agar Ellis in the *Quarterly* (No. xxxi., January, 1813 [published February 11, 1813]) and in the *Edinburgh Review* by Jeffrey (No. 54, January, 1813 [published February 24, 1813]).

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The bibliography of the *Giaour* is beset with difficulties, and it is doubtful if more than approximate accuracy can be secured. The composition of the entire poem in its present shape was accomplished within six months, May-November, 1813, but during that period it was expanded by successive accretions from a first draft of 407 lines (extant in MS.) to a seventh edition of 1334 lines. A proof is extant of an edition of 28 pages containing 460 lines, itself an enlargement on the MS.; but whether (as a note in the handwriting of the late Mr. Murray affirms) this was or was not published is uncertain. A portion of a second proof of 38 pages has been preserved, but of the publication of the poem in this state there is no record. On June 5 a first edition of 41 pages, containing 685 lines, was issued, and of this numerous copies are extant. At the end of June, or the beginning of July, 1813, a second edition, entitled, a "New Edition with some Additions," appeared. This consisted of 47 pages, and numbered 816 lines. Among the accretions is to be found the famous passage beginning, "He that hath bent him o'er the dead." Two MS. copies of this *pannus vere purpureus* are in Mr. Murray's possession. At the end of July, and during the first half of August, two or more issues of a third edition were set up in type. The first issue amounted to 53 pages, containing 950 lines, was certainly published in this form, and possibly a second issue of 56 pages, containing 1004 lines, may have followed at a brief interval. A revise of this second issue, dated August 13, is extant. In the last fortnight of August a fourth edition of 58 pages, containing 1048 lines, undoubtedly saw the light. Scarcely more than a few days can have elapsed before a fifth edition of 66 pages, containing 1215 lines, was ready to supplant the fourth edition. A sixth edition, a reproduction of the fifth, may have appeared in October. A seventh edition of 75 pages, containing 1334 lines, which presented the poem in its final shape, was issued subsequently to November 27, 1813 (a seventh edition was advertised in the *Morning Chronicle*, December 22, 1813), the date of the last revise, or of an advance copy of the issue. The ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth editions belong to 1814, while a fourteenth edition is known to have been issued in 1815. In that year and henceforward the *Giaour* was included in the various collected editions of Byron's works. The subjoined table assigns to their several editions the successive accretions in their order as now published: — **NOTE.**

The first edition is advertised in the *Morning Chronicle*, June 5; a third edition on August 11, 13, 16, 31; a fifth edition, with considerable additions, on September 11; on November 29 a "new edition;" and on December 27, 1813, a

seventh edition, together with a repeated notice of the *Bride of Abydos*. These dates do not exactly correspond with Murray's contemporary memoranda of the dates of the successive issues.

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

AS A SLIGHT BUT MOST SINCERE TOKEN
OF ADMIRATION OF HIS GENIUS,
RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER,
AND GRATITUDE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP,
THIS PRODUCTION IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS OBLIGED
AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

BYRON.

London, *May*, 1813.



'Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha' by Eugène Delacroix, 1827

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The tale which these disjointed fragments present, is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly; either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the “olden time,” or because the Christians have better fortune, or less enterprise. The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion. The desertion of the Mainotes, on being refused the plunder of Misitra, led to the abandonment of that enterprise, and to the desolation of the Morea, during which the cruelty exercised on all sides was unparalleled even in the annals of the faithful.

THE GIAOUR

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff
High o'er the land he saved in vain;
When shall such Hero live again?

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight, 10
And lend to loneliness delight.
There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the eastern wave:
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That wakes and wafts the odours there! 20
For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,
The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blossoms blushing to her lover's tale:
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchilled by snows,
Far from the winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by Nature given 30
In softest incense back to Heaven;
And grateful yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that Love might share,

And many a grotto, meant for rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar ⁴⁰
Is heard, and seen the Evening Star;
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turn to groans his roundelay.
Strange — that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling place,
And every charm and grace hath mixed
Within the Paradise she fixed,
There man, enamoured of distress, ⁵⁰
Should mar it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one laborious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To bloom along the fairy land,
But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him — but to spare!
Strange — that where all is Peace beside,
There Passion riots in her pride,
And Lust and Rapine wildly reign ⁶⁰
To darken o'er the fair domain.
It is as though the Fiends prevailed
Against the Seraphs they assailed,
And, fixed on heavenly thrones, should dwell
The freed inheritors of Hell;
So soft the scene, so formed for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of Death is fled,
The first dark day of Nothingness, ⁷⁰
The last of Danger and Distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where Beauty lingers,)

And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of Repose that's there,
The fixed yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And — but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow, 80
Where cold Obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,
Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the Tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,
The first, last look by Death revealed!
Such is the aspect of this shore; 90
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for Soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded Halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling past away! 100
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave, — 110
Oh servile offspring of the free —

Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your Sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear, ¹²⁰
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While Kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy Heroes, though the general doom ¹³⁰
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from Splendour to Disgrace;
Enough — no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yet! Self-abasement paved the way ¹⁴⁰
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

What can he tell who treads thy shore?
No legend of thine olden time,
No theme on which the Muse might soar
High as thine own in days of yore,
When man was worthy of thy clime.
The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
Thy sons to deeds sublime,

Now crawl from cradle to the Grave, ¹⁵⁰
Slaves — nay, the bondsmen of a Slave,
And callous, save to crime;
Stained with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, where least above the brutes;
Without even savage virtue blest,
Without one free or valiant breast,
Still to the neighbouring ports they waft
Proverbial wiles, and ancient craft;
In this the subtle Greek is found,
For this, and this alone, renowned. ¹⁶⁰
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,
And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye like boat ¹⁷⁰
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caïque,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumbered with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

Who thundering comes on blackest steed, ¹⁸⁰
With slackened bit and hoof of speed?
Beneath the clattering iron's sound

The caverned Echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound:
The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gathered from the Ocean-tide:
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There's none within his rider's breast;
And though to-morrow's tempest lower,
'Tis calmer than thy heart, young Giaour! 190
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What Time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery Passion's brunt;
Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On — on he hastened, and he drew 200
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a Demon of the night
He passed, and vanished from my sight,
His aspect and his air impressed
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by; 210
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For, well I ween, unwelcome he
Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
And not a star but shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he passed
One glance he snatched, as if his last,
A moment checked his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood — 220

Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The Crescent glimmers on the hill,
The Mosque's high lamps are quivering still
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of the far tophaike,
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal.
To-night, set Rhamazani's sun;
To-night, the Bairam feast's begun;
To-night — but who and what art thou 230
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
And what are these to thine or thee,
That thou shouldst either pause or flee?

He stood — some dread was on his face,
Soon Hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient Anger's hasty blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed; 240
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly;
Impatient of his flight delayed,
Here loud his raven charger neighed —
Down glanced that hand, and grasped his blade;
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As Slumber starts at owlet's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away — away — for life he rides: 250
Swift as the hurled on high jerreed
Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'Twas but an instant he restrained
That fiery barb so sternly reined;

'Twas but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by Death pursued; 260
But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seemed to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt *he* then, at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which pondered o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date! 270
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone:
And did he fly or fall alone?
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent 280
To turn a palace to a tomb;
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of Fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death —
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!

The steed is vanished from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely Spider's thin gray pall 290
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The Bat builds in his Haram bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The Owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,

With baffled thirst, and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.
‘Twas sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day, ³⁰⁰
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o’er the ground.
‘Twas sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan’s Childhood played
Around the verge of that cascade;
And oft upon his mother’s breast ³¹⁰
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan’s Youth along
Its bank been soothed by Beauty’s song;
And softer seemed each melting tone
Of Music mingled with its own.
But ne’er shall Hassan’s Age repose
Along the brink at Twilight’s close:
The stream that filled that font is fled —
The blood that warmed his heart is shed!
And here no more shall human voice ³²⁰
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice.
The last sad note that swelled the gale
Was woman’s wildest funeral wail:
That quenched in silence, all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill:
Though raves the gust, and floods the rain,
No hand shall close its clasp again.
On desert sands ‘twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,
So here the very voice of Grief ³³⁰
Might wake an Echo like relief —
At least ‘twould say, “All are not gone;
There lingers Life, though but in one” —
For many a gilded chamber’s there,

Which Solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet Decay
Hath slowly worked her cankering way —
But gloom is gathered o'er the gate,
Nor there the Fakir's self will wait;
Nor there will wandering Dervise stay, ³⁴⁰
For Bounty cheers not his delay;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred "bread and salt."
Alike must Wealth and Poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by,
For Courtesy and Pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is Desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from labour, ³⁵⁰
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's sabre!

I hear the sound of coming feet,
But not a voice mine ear to greet;
More near — each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathèd ataghan;
The foremost of the band is seen
An Emir by his garb of green:
"Ho! who art thou?" — "This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.
The burthen ye so gently bear, ³⁶⁰
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight —
My humble bark would gladly wait."

"Thou speakest sooth: thy skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore;
Nay, leave the sail still furled, and ply
The nearest oar that's scattered by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channelled waters dark and deep.

Rest from your task — so — bravely done, 370
Our course has been right swiftly run;
Yet 'tis the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of — * “

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank;
I watched it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirred it more, — 'twas but the beam
That checkered o'er the living stream:
I gazed, till vanishing from view, 380
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemmed the tide, then mocked the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

As rising on its purple wing
The insect-queen of Eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer 390
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye:
So Beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild:
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betrayed, 400
Woe waits the insect and the maid;
A life of pain, the loss of peace;

From infant's play, and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that wooed its stay
Hath brushed its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'Tis left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast, 410
Ah! where shall either victim rest?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or Beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower?
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim 420
Except an erring Sister's shame.

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire;
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly searched by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows —
The sting she nourished for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain, 430
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain:
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!

Black Hassan from the Haram flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes; 440
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell?
That tale can only Hassan tell:
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's last sun was set,
And flashing from each Minaret 450
Millions of lamps proclaimed the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.
'Twas then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly searched in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wronged him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deemed;
But still so fond, so fair she seemed, 460
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave:
And on that eve had gone to Mosque,
And thence to feast in his Kiosk.
Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
Who did not watch their charge too well;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed 470
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the Gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well;
As large, as languishingly dark,
But Soul beamed forth in every spark
That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.
Yea, *Soul*, and should our prophet say ⁴⁸⁰
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Alla! I would answer nay;
Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
With Paradise within my view,
And all his Houris beckoning through.
Oh! who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed
Which saith that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust? ⁴⁹⁰
On her might Muftis gaze, and own
That through her eye the Immortal shone;
On her fair cheek's unfading hue
The young pomegranate's blossoms strew
Their bloom in blushes ever new;
Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
When left to roll its folds below,
As midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all,
Hath swept the marble where her feet ⁵⁰⁰
Gleamed whiter than the mountain sleet
Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.
The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!
As rears her crest the ruffled Swan,
And spurns the wave with wings of pride,
When pass the steps of stranger man
Along the banks that bound her tide; ⁵¹⁰
Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck: —

Thus armed with beauty would she check
Intrusion's glance, till Folly's gaze
Shrunk from the charms it meant to praise.
Thus high and graceful was her gait;
Her heart as tender to her mate;
Her mate — stern Hassan, who was he?
Alas! that name was not for thee!

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
With twenty vassals in his train, ⁵²⁰
Each armed, as best becomes a man,
With arquebuss and ataghan;
The chief before, as decked for war,
Bears in his belt the scimitar
Stained with the best of Arnaut blood,
When in the pass the rebels stood,
And few returned to tell the tale
Of what befell in Parne's vale.
The pistols which his girdle bore
Were those that once a Pasha wore, ⁵³⁰
Which still, though gemmed and bossed with gold,
Even robbers tremble to behold.
'Tis said he goes to woo a bride
More true than her who left his side;
The faithless slave that broke her bower,
And — worse than faithless — for a Giaour!

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
And sparkle in the fountain rill,
Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
Draw blessings from the mountaineer: ⁵⁴⁰
Here may the loitering merchant Greek
Find that repose 'twere vain to seek
In cities lodged too near his lord,
And trembling for his secret hoard —

Here may he rest where none can see,
In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
And with forbidden wine may stain
The bowl a Moslem must not drain

The foremost Tartar's in the gap
Conspicuous by his yellow cap; 550
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile:
Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast to-night,
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light;
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there: 560
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite gray,
By time, or mountain lightning, riven
From summits clad in mists of heaven;
For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura unveiled?

They reach the grove of pine at last;
"Bismillah! now the peril's past;
For yonder view the opening plain,
And there we'll prick our steeds amain:" 570
The Chiaus spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;
The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
Scarce had they time to check the rein,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
But three shall never mount again:
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying ask revenge in vain.
With steel unsheathed, and carbine bent,

Some o'er their courser's harness leant, 580
Half sheltered by the steed;
Some fly beneath the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
Stern Hassan only from his horse
Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
Till fiery flashes in the van
Proclaim too sure the robber-clan 590
Have well secured the only way
Could now avail the promised prey;
Then curled his very beard with ire,
And glared his eye with fiercer fire;
"Though far and near the bullets hiss,
I've scaped a bloodier hour than this."
And now the foe their covert quit,
And call his vassals to submit;
But Hassan's frown and furious word
Are dreaded more than hostile sword, 600
Nor of his little band a man
Resigned carbine or ataghan,
Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!
In fuller sight, more near and near,
The lately ambushed foes appear,
And, issuing from the grove, advance
Some who on battle-charger prance.
Who leads them on with foreign brand
Far flashing in his red right hand?
"'Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now; 610
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery;
I know him by his jet-black barb;
Though now arrayed in Arnaut garb,
Apostate from his own vile faith,
It shall not save him from the death:
'Tis he! well met in any hour,

Lost Leila's love — accursed Giaour!"

As rolls the river into Ocean, ⁶²⁰
In sable torrent wildly streaming;
As the sea-tide's opposing motion,
In azure column proudly gleaming,
Beats back the current many a rood,
In curling foam and mingling flood,
While eddying whirl, and breaking wave,
Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o'er the shore, ⁶³⁰
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus — as the stream and Ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet —
Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
And fate, and fury, drive along.
The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
And pealing wide or ringing near
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of war, ⁶⁴⁰
Reverberate along that vale,
More suited to the shepherd's tale:
Though few the numbers — theirs the strife,
That neither spares nor speaks for life!
Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress;
But Love itself could never pant
For all that Beauty sighs to grant
With half the fervour Hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes, ⁶⁵⁰
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
Friends meet to part; Love laughs at faith;
True foes, once met, are joined till death!

With sabre shivered to the hilt,
Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
Yet strained within the severed hand
Which quivers round that faithless brand;
His turban far behind him rolled,
And cleft in twain its firmest fold; 660
His flowing robe by falchion torn,
And crimson as those clouds of morn
That, streaked with dusky red, portend
The day shall have a stormy end;
A stain on every bush that bore
A fragment of his palampore;
His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
His back to earth, his face to Heaven,
Fall'n Hassan lies — his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy, 670
As if the hour that sealed his fate
Surviving left his quenchless hate;
And o'er him bends that foe with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

“Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave,
But his shall be a redder grave;
Her spirit pointed well the steel
Which taught that felon heart to feel.
He called the Prophet, but his power
Was vain against the vengeful Giaour: 680
He called on Alla — but the word
Arose unheeded or unheard.
Thou Paynim fool! could Leila's prayer
Be passed, and thine accorded there?
I watched my time, I leagued with these,
The traitor in his turn to seize;
My wrath is wreaked, the deed is done,
And now I go — but go alone.”

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling:
His mother looked from her lattice high — 690
She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
The pasture green beneath her eye,
She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
“‘Tis twilight — sure his train is nigh.”
She could not rest in the garden-bower,
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower.
“Why comes he not? his steeds are fleet,
Nor shrink they from the summer heat;
Why sends not the Bridegroom his promised gift?
Is his heart more cold, or his barb less swift? 700
Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now
Has gained our nearest mountain's brow,
And warily the steep descends,
And now within the valley bends;
And he bears the gift at his saddle bow —
How could I deem his courser slow?
Right well my largess shall repay
His welcome speed, and weary way.”

The Tartar lighted at the gate,
But scarce upheld his fainting weight! 710
His swarthy visage spake distress,
But this might be from weariness;
His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,
But these might be from his courser's side;
He drew the token from his vest —
Angel of Death! 'tis Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent — his caftan red —
“Lady, a fearful bride thy Son hath wed:
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear. 720
Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt:
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.”

A Turban carved in coarsest stone,
A Pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
Whereon can now be scarcely read
The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
Point out the spot where Hassan fell
A victim in that lonely dell.
There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee; ⁷³⁰
As ever scorned forbidden wine,
Or prayed with face towards the shrine,
In orisons resumed anew
At solemn sound of "Alla Hu!"
Yet died he by a stranger's hand,
And stranger in his native land;
Yet died he as in arms he stood,
And unavenged, at least in blood.
But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite, ⁷⁴⁰
And the dark heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright;
They come — their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave!
Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour
Is worthiest an immortal bower.

But thou, false Infidel! shall writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torments 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne; ⁷⁵⁰
And fire unquenched, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life; 760
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are withered on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a *father's* name —
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame! 770
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony! 780
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go — and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From Spectre more accursed than they!

“How name ye yon lone Caloyer?
His features I have scanned before
In mine own land: 'tis many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore, 790

I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever served a horseman's need.
But once I saw that face, yet then
It was so marked with inward pain,
I could not pass it by again;
It breathes the same dark spirit now,
As death were stamped upon his brow.

“‘Tis twice three years at summer tide
Since first among our freres he came;
And here it soothes him to abide 800
For some dark deed he will not name.
But never at our Vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before Confession chair
Kneels he, nor recks he when arise
Incense or anthem to the skies,
But broods within his cell alone,
His faith and race alike unknown.
The sea from Paynim land he crost,
And here ascended from the coast;
Yet seems he not of Othman race, 810
But only Christian in his face:
I'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
Great largess to these walls he brought,
And thus our Abbot's favour bought;
But were I Prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay,
Or pent within our penance cell 820
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden whelmed beneath the sea;
Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying.
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh severed from its parent limb,

Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave, ⁸³⁰
And lures to leap into the wave.”

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl:
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by;
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft with his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable,
A spirit yet unquelled and high, ⁸⁴⁰
That claims and keeps ascendancy;
And like the bird whose pinions quake,
But cannot fly the gazing snake,
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor ‘scape the glance they scarce can brook.
From him the half-affrighted Friar
When met alone would fain retire,
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferred to others fear and guile:
Not oft to smile descendeth he, ⁸⁵⁰
And when he doth ‘tis sad to see
That he but mocks at Misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever;
As if his sorrow or disdain
Forbade him e’er to smile again.
Well were it so — such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne’er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face: ⁸⁶⁰
Time hath not yet the features fixed,
But brighter traits with evil mixed;

And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded:
The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;
The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestowed in vain, ⁸⁷⁰
Which Grief could change, and Guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted.
The roofless cot, decayed and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer-by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's eye; ⁸⁸⁰
Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone!
"His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he through the columned aisle;
With dread beheld, with gloom beholding
The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks, his steps retire;
By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch; ⁸⁹⁰
There will he pause till all is done —
And hear the prayer, but utter none.
See — by the half-illuminated wall
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead strayed:
For he declines the convent oath,
And leaves those locks unhallowed growth, ⁹⁰⁰
But wears our garb in all beside;

And, not from piety but pride,
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
Lo! — mark ye, as the harmony
Peals louder praises to the sky,
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mixed defiance and despair!
Saint Francis, keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine 910
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore;
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven!”

To Love the softest hearts are prone,
But such can ne’er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel 920
The wound that Time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plunged within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts — though still the same;
Then tempered to thy want, or will,
‘Twill serve thee to defend or kill —
A breast-plate for thine hour of need,
Or blade to bid thy foeman bleed;
But if a dagger’s form it bear, 930
Let those who shape its edge, beware!
Thus Passion’s fire, and Woman’s art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta’en,
And what they make it, must remain,
But break — before it bend again.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness
Might thank the pang that made it less. 940
We loathe what none are left to share:
Even bliss — 'twere woe alone to bear;
The heart once left thus desolate
Must fly at last for ease — to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay! 950
It is as if the desert bird,
Whose beak unlocks her bosom's stream
To still her famished nestlings' scream,
Nor mourns a life to them transferred,
Should rend her rash devoted breast,
And find them flown her empty nest.
The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed. 960
Who would be doomed to gaze upon
A sky without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the tempest's roar,
Than ne'er to brave the billows more —
Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on Fortune's shore,
'Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay; —
Better to sink beneath the shock
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock! 970

“Father! thy, days have passed in peace,
‘Mid counted beads, and countless prayer;
To bid the sins of others cease,
Thyself without a crime or care,
Save transient ills that all must bear,
Has been thy lot from youth to age;
And thou wilt bless thee from the rage
Of passions fierce and uncontrolled,
Such as thy penitents unfold,
Whose secret sins and sorrows rest 980
Within thy pure and pitying breast.
My days, though few, have passed below
In much of Joy, but more of Woe;
Yet still in hours of love or strife,
I’ve ‘scaped the weariness of Life:
Now leagued with friends, now girt by foes,
I loathed the languor of repose.
Now nothing left to love or hate,
No more with hope or pride elate,
I’d rather be the thing that crawls 990
Most noxious o’er a dungeon’s walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemned to meditate and gaze.
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast
For rest — but not to feel ‘tis rest.
Soon shall my Fate that wish fulfil;
And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still
Dark as to thee my deeds may seem:
My memory now is but the tomb 1000
Of joys long dead; my hope, their doom:
‘Though better to have died with those
Than bear a life of lingering woes.
My spirit shrunk not to sustain
The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave
Of ancient fool and modern knave:
Yet death I have not feared to meet;
And in the field it had been sweet,

Had Danger wooed me on to move 1010
The slave of Glory, not of Love.
I've braved it — not for Honour's boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost;
To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay:
But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize —
The maid I love, the man I hate —
And I will hunt the steps of fate,
To save or slay, as these require, 1020
Through rending steel, and rolling fire:
Nor needst thou doubt this speech from one
Who would but do — what he *hath* done.
Death is but what the haughty brave,
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;
Then let life go to Him who gave:
I have not quailed to Danger's brow
When high and happy — need I *now*?

“I loved her, Friar! nay, adored —
But these are words that all can use — 1030
I proved it more in deed than word;
There's blood upon that dinted sword,
A stain its steel can never lose:
'Twas shed for her, who died for me,
It warmed the heart of one abhorred:
Nay, start not — no — nor bend thy knee,
Nor midst my sin such act record;
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,
For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene 1040
Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen.
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands
Well wielded in some hardy hands,
And wounds by Galileans given —
The surest pass to Turkish heaven —

For him his Houris still might wait
Impatient at the Prophet's gate.
I loved her — Love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
And if it dares enough, 'twere hard 1050
If Passion met not some reward —
No matter how, or where, or why,
I did not vainly seek, nor sigh:
Yet sometimes, with remorse, in vain
I wish she had not loved again.
She died — I dare not tell thee how;
But look — 'tis written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by Time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me, pause; 1060
Not mine the act, though I the cause.
Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one.
Faithless to him — he gave the blow;
But true to me — I laid him low:
Howe'er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which Tyranny can ne'er enthrall;
And I, alas! too late to save! 1070
Yet all I then could give, I gave —
'Twas some relief — our foe a grave.
His death sits lightly; but her fate
Has made me — what thou well mayst hate.
His doom was sealed — he knew it well,
Warned by the voice of stern Taheer,
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot pealed of murder near,
As filed the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil, 1080
A time that heeds nor pain nor toil;
One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Alla all he made:
He knew and crossed me in the fray —

I gazed upon him where he lay,
And watched his spirit ebb away:
Though pierced like pard by hunter's steel,
He felt not half that now I feel.
I searched, but vainly searched, to find
The workings of a wounded mind; 1090
Each feature of that sullen corse
Betrayed his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had Vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face!
The late repentance of that hour
When Penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave,
And will not soothe, and cannot save.

“The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name; 1100
But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Ætna's breast of flame.
I cannot prate in puling strain
Of Ladye-love, and Beauty's chain:
If changing cheek, and scorching vein,
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain,
If bursting heart, and maddening brain,
And daring deed, and vengeful steel,
And all that I have felt, and feel,
Betoken love — that love was mine, 1110
And shown by many a bitter sign.
'Tis true, I could not whine nor sigh,
I knew but to obtain or die.
I die — but first I have possessed,
And come what may, I *have been* blessed.
Shall I the doom I sought upbraid?
No — reft of all, yet undismayed
But for the thought of Leila slain,
Give me the pleasure with the pain,
So would I live and love again. 1120

I grieve, but not, my holy Guide!
For him who dies, but her who died:
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave —
Ah! had she but an earthly grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.
She was a form of Life and Light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
The Morning-star of Memory! 1130

“Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alia given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
Devotion wafts the mind above,
But Heaven itself descends in Love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;
A ray of Him who formed the whole;
A Glory circling round the soul! 1140
I grant *my* love imperfect, all
That mortals by the name miscall;
Then deem it evil, what thou wilt;
But say, oh say, *hers* was not Guilt!
She was my Life's unerring Light:
That quenched — what beam shall break my night?
Oh! would it shone to lead me still,
Although to death or deadliest ill!
Why marvel ye, if they who lose
This present joy, this future hope, 1150
No more with Sorrow meekly cope;
In phrensy then their fate accuse;
In madness do those fearful deeds
That seem to add but Guilt to Woe?
Alas! the breast that inly bleeds
Hath nought to dread from outward blow:
Who falls from all he knows of bliss,
Cares little into what abyss.

Fierce as the gloomy vulture's now
To thee, old man, my deeds appear: 1160
I read abhorrence on thy brow,
And this too was I born to bear!
'Tis true, that, like that bird of prey,
With havock have I marked my way:
But this was taught me by the dove,
To die — and know no second love.
This lesson yet hath man to learn,
Taught by the thing he dares to spurn:
The bird that sings within the brake,
The swan that swims upon the lake, 1170
One mate, and one alone, will take.
And let the fool still prone to range,
And sneer on all who cannot change,
Partake his jest with boasting boys;
I envy not his varied joys,
But deem such feeble, heartless man,
Less than yon solitary swan;
Far, far beneath the shallow maid
He left believing and betrayed.
Such shame at least was never mine — 1180
Leila! each thought was only thine!
My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high — my all below.
Each holds no other like to thee,
Or, if it doth, in vain for me:
For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.
The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death — attest my truth!
'Tis all too late — thou wert, thou art 1190
The cherished madness of my heart!

“And she was lost — and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life:
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time, abhorred all place,

Shuddering I shrank from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charmed before
The blackness of my bosom wore.
The rest thou dost already know, ¹²⁰⁰
And all my sins, and half my woe.
But talk no more of penitence;
Thou seest I soon shall part from hence:
And if thy holy tale were true,
The deed that's done canst *thou* undo?
Think me not thankless — but this grief
Looks not to priesthood for relief.
My soul's estate in secret guess:
But wouldst thou pity more, say less.
When thou canst bid my Leila live, ¹²¹⁰
Then will I sue thee to forgive;
Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses proffer grace.
Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest-cave her shrieking young,
And calm the lonely lioness:
But soothe not — mock not *my* distress!

“In earlier days, and calmer hours,
When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's bowers, ¹²²⁰
I had — Ah! have I now? — a friend!
To him this pledge I charge thee send,
Memorial of a youthful vow;
I would remind him of my end:
Though souls absorbed like mine allow
Brief thought to distant Friendship's claim,
Yet dear to him my blighted name.
'Tis strange — he prophesied my doom,
And I have smiled — I then could smile —
When Prudence would his voice assume, ¹²³⁰
And warn — I recked not what — the while:
But now Remembrance whispers o'er
Those accents scarcely marked before.
Say — that his bodings came to pass,

And he will start to hear their truth,
And wish his words had not been sooth:
Tell him — unheeding as I was,
Through many a busy bitter scene
Of all our golden youth had been,
In pain, my faltering tongue had tried ¹²⁴⁰
To bless his memory — ere I died;
But Heaven in wrath would turn away,
If Guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame,
Too gentle he to wound my name;
And what have I to do with Fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
Such cold request might sound like scorn;
And what than Friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier? ¹²⁵⁰
But bear this ring, his own of old,
And tell him — what thou dost behold!
The withered frame, the ruined mind,
The wrack by passion left behind,
A shrivelled scroll, a scattered leaf,
Seared by the autumn blast of Grief!

“Tell me no more of Fancy's gleam,
No, father, no,'twas not a dream;
Alas! the dreamer first must sleep,
I only watched, and wished to weep; ¹²⁶⁰
But could not, for my burning brow
Throbbled to the very brain as now:
I wished but for a single tear,
As something welcome, new, and dear:
I wished it then, I wish it still;
Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not, if I might, be blest;
I want no Paradise, but rest. ¹²⁷⁰

‘Twas then — I tell thee — father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;
And shining in her white symar
As through yon pale gray cloud the star
Which now I gaze on, as on her,
Who looked and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
To-morrow’s night shall be more dark;
And I, before its rays appear,
That lifeless thing the living fear. 1280
I wander — father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal.
I saw her — friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes;
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp — what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine —
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine! 1290
And art thou, dearest, changed so much
As meet my eye, yet mock my touch?
Ah! were thy beauties e’er so cold,
I care not — so my arms enfold
The all they ever wished to hold.
Alas! around a shadow prest
They shrink upon my lonely breast;
Yet still ‘tis there! In silence stands,
And beckons with beseeching hands!
With braided hair, and bright-black eye — 1300
I knew ‘twas false — she could not die!
But *he* is dead! within the dell
I saw him buried where he fell;
He comes not — for he cannot break
From earth; — why then art *thou* awake?
They told me wild waves rolled above
The face I view — the form I love;
They told me — ‘twas a hideous tale! —
I’d tell it, but my tongue would fail:

If true, and from thine ocean-cave 1310
Thou com'st to claim a calmer grave,
Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o'er
This brow that then will burn no more;
Or place them on my hopeless heart:
But, Shape or Shade! whate'er thou art,
In mercy ne'er again depart!
Or farther with thee bear my soul
Than winds can waft or waters roll!

“Such is my name, and such my tale.
Confessor! to thy secret ear 1320
I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
And thank thee for the generous tear
This glazing eye could never shed.
Then lay me with the humblest dead,
And, save the cross above my head,
Be neither name nor emblem spread,
By prying stranger to be read,
Or stay the passing pilgrim's tread.”

He passed — nor of his name and race
He left a token or a trace, 1330
Save what the Father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day:
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he loved, or him he slew.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS. A TURKISH TALE.

“Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted,

We had ne'er been broken-hearted." — Burns [*Farewell to Nancy*].

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

INTRODUCTION

Many poets — Wordsworth, for instance — have been conscious in their old age that an interest attaches to the circumstances of the composition of their poems, and have furnished their friends and admirers with explanatory notes. Byron recorded the *motif* and occasion of the *Bride of Abydos* while the poem was still in the press. It was written, he says, to divert his mind, “to wring his thoughts from reality to imagination — from selfish regrets to vivid recollections” (*Diary*, December 5, 1813, *Letters*, ii. 361), “to distract his dreams from ...” (*Diary*, November 16) “for the sake of *employment*” (Letter to Moore, November 30, 1813). He had been staying during part of October and November at Aston Hall, Rotherham, with his friend James Wedderburn Webster, and had fallen in love with his friend’s wife, Lady Frances. From a brief note to his sister, dated November 5, we learn that he was in a scrape, but in “no immediate peril,” and from the lines, “Remember him, whom Passion’s power” (*vide ante*,), we may infer that he had sought safety in flight. The *Bride of Abydos*, or *Zuleika*, as it was first entitled, was written early in November, “in four nights” (*Diary*, November 16), or in a week (Letter to Gifford, November 12) — the reckoning goes for little — as a counter-irritant to the pain and distress of *amour interrompu*.

The confession or apology is eminently characteristic. Whilst the *Giaour* was still in process of evolution, still “lengthening its rattles,” another Turkish poem is offered to the public, and the natural explanation, that the author is in vein, and can score another trick, is felt to be inadequate and dishonouring — “To withdraw *myself* from *myself*,” he confides to his *Diary* (November 27), “has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive for scribbling at all.”

It is more than probable that in his twenty-sixth year Byron had not attained to perfect self-knowledge, but there is no reason to question his sincerity. That Byron loved to surround himself with mystery, and to dissociate himself from “the general,” is true enough; but it does not follow that at all times and under all circumstances he was insincere. “Once a *poseur* always a *poseur*” is a rough-and-ready formula not invariably applicable even to a poet.

But the *Bride of Abydos* was a tonic as well as a styptic. Like the *Giaour*, it embodied a personal experience, and recalled “a country replete with the *darkest* and *brightest*, but always the most *lively* colours of my memory” (*Diary*,

December 5, 1813).

In a letter to Galt (December 11, 1813, Letters, 1898, ii. 304, reprinted from *Life of Byron*, pp. 181, 182) Byron maintains that the first part of the *Bride* was drawn from “observations” of his own, “from existence.” He had, it would appear, intended to make the story turn on the guilty love of a brother for a sister, a tragic incident of life in a Harem, which had come under his notice during his travels in the East, but “on second thoughts” had reflected that he lived “two centuries at least too late for the subject,” and that not even the authority of the “finest works of the Greeks,” or of Schiller (in the *Bride of Messina*), or of Alfieri (in *Mirra*), “in modern times,” would sanction the intrusion of the *μυστηριον* into English literature. The early drafts and variants of the MS. do not afford any evidence of this alteration of the plot which, as Byron thought, was detrimental to the poem as a work of art, but the undoubted fact that the *Bride of Abydos*, as well as the *Giaour*, embody recollections of actual scenes and incidents which had burnt themselves into the memory of an eye-witness, accounts not only for the fervent heat at which these Turkish tales were written, but for the extraordinary glamour which they threw over contemporary readers, to whom the local colouring was new and attractive, and who were not out of conceit with “good Monsieur Melancholy.”

Byron was less dissatisfied with his second Turkish tale than he had been with the *Giaour*. He apologizes for the rapidity with which it had been composed — *stans pede in uno* — but he announced to Murray (November 20) that “he was doing his best to beat the *Giaour*,” and (November 29) he appraises the *Bride* as “my first entire composition of any length.”

Moreover, he records (November 15), with evident gratification, the approval of his friend Hodgson, “a very sincere and by no means (at times) a flattering critic of mine,” and modestly accepts the praise of such masters of letters as “Mr. Canning,” Hookham Frere, Heber, Lord Holland, and of the traveller Edward Daniel Clarke.

The *Bride of Abydos* was advertised in the *Morning Chronicle*, among “Books published this day,” on November 29, 1813. It was reviewed by George Agar Ellis in the *Quarterly Review* of January, 1814 (vol. x. p. 331), and, together with the *Corsair*, by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1814 (vol. xxiii. p. 198).



'The Bride of Abydos' by Eugène Delacroix, 1857

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD HOLLAND,
THIS TALE
IS INSCRIBED, WITH
EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD
AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED
AND SINCERE FRIEND,

BYRON.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

CANTO THE FIRST

I.

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute; 10
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine —
Tis the clime of the East — 'tis the land of the Sun —
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

II.

Begirt with many a gallant slave, 20
Apparelled as becomes the brave,
Awaiting each his Lord's behest
To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
Old Giaffir sate in his Divan:
Deep thought was in his agéd eye;
And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skilled to hide
All but unconquerable pride,

His pensive cheek and pondering brow 30
Did more than he was wont avow.

III.

“Let the chamber be cleared.” — The train disappeared —
“Now call me the chief of the Haram guard” —
With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire’s award.
“Haroun — when all the crowd that wait
Are passed beyond the outer gate,
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika’s face unveiled!)
Hence, lead my daughter from her tower — 40
Her fate is fixed this very hour;
Yet not to her repeat my thought —
By me alone be duty taught!”

“Pacha! to hear is to obey.” —
No more must slave to despot say —
Then to the tower had ta’en his way:
But here young Selim silence brake,
First lowly rendering reverence meet;
And downcast looked, and gently spake,
Still standing at the Pacha’s feet: 50
For son of Moslem must expire,
Ere dare to sit before his sire!
“Father! for fear that thou shouldst chide
My sister, or her sable guide —
Know — for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine — then fall thy frowns on me!
So lovelily the morning shone,
That — let the old and weary sleep —
I could not; and to view alone
The fairest scenes of land and deep, 60
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat high
Were irksome — for whate’er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude;

I on Zuleika's slumber broke,
And, as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our own! 70
There lingered we, beguiled too long
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song;
Till I, who heard the deep tambour
Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
To thee, and to my duty true,
Warned by the sound, to greet thee flew:
But there Zuleika wanders yet —
Nay, Father, rage not — nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's tower." 80

IV.

"Son of a slave" — the Pacha said —
"From unbelieving mother bred,
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that beseems a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.
Would that yon Orb, whose matin glow 90
Thy listless eyes so much admire,
Would lend thee something of his fire!
Thou, who wouldst't see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth!
Go — let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff — not the brand. 100

But, Haroun! — to my daughter speed:
And hark — of thine own head take heed —
If thus Zuleika oft takes wing —
Thou see'st yon bow — it hath a string!”

V.

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
But every frown and every word
Pierced keener than a Christian's sword.
“Son of a slave! — reproached with fear!
Those gibes had cost another dear. ¹¹⁰
Son of a slave! — and *who* my Sire?”
Thus held his thoughts their dark career;
And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.
Old Giaffir gazed upon his son
And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;
He saw rebellion there begun:
“Come hither, boy — what, no reply?
I mark thee — and I know thee too; ¹²⁰
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,
I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance.”
As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:
That eye returned him glance for glance,
And proudly to his Sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quailed and shrunk askance — ¹³⁰
And why — he felt, but durst not tell.
“Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy:
I never loved him from his birth,
And — but his arm is little worth,
And scarcely in the chase could cope

With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife
Where man contends for fame and life —
I would not trust that look or tone: 140
No — nor the blood so near my own.
That blood — he hath not heard — no more —
I'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight,
Or Christian crouching in the fight —
But hark! — I hear Zuleika's voice;
Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;
Oh! more than ev'n her mother dear,
With all to hope, and nought to fear — 150
My Peri! ever welcome here!
Sweet, as the desert fountain's wave
To lips just cooled in time to save —
Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More thanks for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth and bless thee now.”

VI.

Fair, as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose Image then was stamped upon her mind — 160
But once beguiled — and ever more beguiling;
Dazzling, as that, oh! too transcendent vision
To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
And paints the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
Soft, as the memory of buried love;
Pure, as the prayer which Childhood wafts above;
Was she — the daughter of that rude old Chief,
Who met the maid with tears — but not of grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words essay 170
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?

Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might — the majesty of Loveliness?
Such was Zuleika — such around her shone
The nameless charms unmarked by her alone —
The light of Love, the purity of Grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole, 180
And oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest,
Zuleika came — and Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt:
Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel; 190
Affection chained her to that heart;
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII.

“Zuleika! child of Gentleness!
How dear this very day must tell,
When I forget my own distress,
In losing what I love so well,
To bid thee with another dwell:
Another! and a braver man
Was never seen in battle’s van.
We Moslem reck not much of blood: 200
But yet the line of Carasman
Unchanged, unchangeable hath stood
First of the bold Timariot bands
That won and well can keep their lands.
Enough that he who comes to woo
Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou:

His years need scarce a thought employ;
I would not have thee wed a boy.
And thou shalt have a noble dower:
And his and my united power ²¹⁰
Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
Which others tremble but to scan,
And teach the messenger what fate
The bearer of such boon may wait.
And now thou know'st thy father's will;
All that thy sex hath need to know:
'Twas mine to teach obedience still —
The way to love, thy Lord may show.”

VIII.

In silence bowed the virgin's head;
And if her eye was filled with tears ²²⁰
That stifled feeling dare not shed,
And changed her cheek from pale to red,
And red to pale, as through her ears
Those wingéd words like arrows sped,
What could such be but maiden fears?
So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
Even Pity scarce can wish it less!

Whate'er it was the sire forgot: ²³⁰
Or if remembered, marked it not;
Thrice clapped his hands, and called his steed,
Resigned his gem-adorned chibouque,
And mounting featly for the mead,
With Maugrabeel and Mamaluke,
His way amid his Delis took,
To witness many an active deed
With sabre keen, or blunt jerreed.
The Kislár only and his Moors
Watch well the Haram's massy doors. ²⁴⁰

His head was leant upon his hand,
 His eye looked o'er the dark blue water
 That swiftly glides and gently swells
 Between the winding Dardanelles;
 But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
 Nor even his Pacha's turbaned band
 Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
 Careering cleave the folded felt
 With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
 Nor marked the javelin-darting crowd, ²⁵⁰
 Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud —
 He thought but of old Giaffir's daughter!

X.

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
 One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke:
 Still gazed he through the lattice grate,
 Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
 To him Zuleika's eye was turned,
 But little from his aspect learned:
 Equal her grief, yet not the same;
 Her heart confessed a gentler flame: ²⁶⁰
 But yet that heart, alarmed or weak,
 She knew not why, forbade to speak.
 Yet speak she must — but when essay?
 "How strange he thus should turn away!
 Not thus we e'er before have met;
 Not thus shall be our parting yet."
 Thrice paced she slowly through the room,
 And watched his eye — it still was fixed:
 She snatched the urn wherein was mixed
 The Persian Atar-gul's perfume, ²⁷⁰
 And sprinkled all its odours o'er
 The pictured roof and marble floor:
 The drops, that through his glittering vest
 The playful girl's appeal addressed,
 Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,

As if that breast were marble too.
“What, sullen yet? it must not be —
Oh! gentle Selim, this from thee!”
She saw in curious order set
The fairest flowers of Eastern land — 280
“He loved them once; may touch them yet,
If offered by Zuleika’s hand.”
The childish thought was hardly breathed
Before the rose was plucked and wreathed;
The next fond moment saw her seat
Her fairy form at Selim’s feet:
“This rose to calm my brother’s cares
A message from the Bulbul bears;
It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim’s ear his sweetest song; 290
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He’ll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his altered lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI.

“What! not receive my foolish flower?
Nay then I am indeed unblest:
On me can thus thy forehead lower?
And know’st thou not who loves thee best?
Oh, Selim dear! oh, more than dearest!
Say, is it me thou hat’st or fearest? 300
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
And I will kiss thee into rest,
Since words of mine, and songs must fail,
Ev’n from my fabled nightingale.
I knew our sire at times was stern,
But this from thee had yet to learn:
Too well I know he loves thee not;
But is Zuleika’s love forgot?
Ah! deem I right? the Pacha’s plan —
This kinsman Bey of Carasman 310
Perhaps may prove some foe of thine.

If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine, —
If shrines that ne'er approach allow
To woman's step admit her vow, —
Without thy free consent — command —
The Sultan should not have my hand!
Think'st thou that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart?
Ah! were I severed from thy side,
Where were thy friend — and who my guide? 320
Years have not seen, Time shall not see,
The hour that tears my soul from thee:
Ev'n Azrael, from his deadly quiver
When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
That parts all else, shall doom for ever
Our hearts to undivided dust!"

XII.

He lived — he breathed — he moved — he felt;
He raised the maid from where she knelt;
His trance was gone, his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt; 330
With thoughts that burn — in rays that melt.
As the stream late concealed
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes reveal'd
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flashed the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
A war-horse at the trumpet's sound, 340
A lion roused by heedless hound,
A tyrant waked to sudden strife
By graze of ill-directed knife,
Starts not to more convulsive life
Than he, who heard that vow, displayed,
And all, before repressed, betrayed:
"Now thou art mine, for ever mine,

With life to keep, and scarce with life resign;
 Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
 Though sworn by one, hath bound us both. 350
 Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done;
 That vow hath saved more heads than one:
 But blench not thou — thy simplest tress
 Claims more from me than tenderness;
 I would not wrong the slenderest hair
 That clusters round thy forehead fair,
 For all the treasures buried far
 Within the caves of Istakar.
 This morning clouds upon me lowered,
 Reproaches on my head were showered, 360
 And Giaffir almost called me coward!
 Now I have motive to be brave;
 The son of his neglected slave,
 Nay, start not, 'twas the term he gave,
 May show, though little apt to vaunt,
 A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
His son, indeed! — yet, thanks to thee,
 Perchance I am, at least shall be;
 But let our plighted secret vow
 Be only known to us as now. 370
 I know the wretch who dares demand
 From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
 More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
 Holds not a Musselim's control;
 Was he not bred in Egrippo?
 A viler race let Israel show!
 But let that pass — to none be told
 Our oath; the rest shall time unfold.
 To me and mine leave Osman Bey!
 I've partisans for Peril's day: 380
 Think not I am what I appear;
 I've arms — and friends — and vengeance near."

XIII.

"Think not thou art what thou appearest!

My Selim, thou art sadly changed:
This morn I saw thee gentlest — dearest —
But now thou'rt from thyself estranged.
My love thou surely knew'st before,
It ne'er was less — nor can be more.
To see thee — hear thee — near thee stay —
And hate the night — I know not why, 390
Save that we meet not but by day;
With thee to live, with thee to die,
I dare not to my hope deny:
Thy cheek — thine eyes — thy lips to kiss —
Like this — and this — no more than this;
For, Allah! sure thy lips are flame:
What fever in thy veins is flushing?
My own have nearly caught the same,
At least I feel my cheek, too, blushing.
To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health, 400
Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
Or stand with smiles un murmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty;
Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire:
More can I do? or thou require?
But, Selim, thou must answer why
We need so much of mystery?
The cause I cannot dream nor tell, 410
But be it, since thou say'st 'tis well;
Yet what thou mean'st by 'arms' and 'friends,'
Beyond my weaker sense extends.
I meant that Giaffir should have heard
The very vow I plighted thee;
His wrath would not revoke my word:
But surely he would leave me free.
Can this fond wish seem strange in me,
To be what I have ever been?
What other hath Zuleika seen 420
From simple childhood's earliest hour?
What other can she seek to see

Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?
These cherished thoughts with life begun,
Say, why must I no more avow?
What change is wrought to make me shun
The truth — my pride, and thine till now?
To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
Our law — our creed — our God denies; ⁴³⁰
Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
No! happier made by that decree,
He left me all in leaving thee.
Deep were my anguish, thus compelled
To wed with one I ne'er beheld:
This wherefore should I not reveal?
Why wilt thou urge me to conceal?
I know the Pacha's haughty mood
To thee hath never boded good; ⁴⁴⁰
And he so often storms at nought,
Allah! forbid that e'er he ought!
And why I know not, but within
My heart concealment weighs like sin.
If then such secrecy be crime,
And such it feels while lurking here;
Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar,
My father leaves the mimic war; ⁴⁵⁰
I tremble now to meet his eye —
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?"

XIV.

"Zuleika — to thy tower's retreat
Betake thee — Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
There's fearful news from Danube's banks,
Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks

For which the Giaour may give him thanks!
Our Sultan hath a shorter way ⁴⁶⁰
Such costly triumph to repay.
But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warned the troops to food and sleep,
Unto thy cell with Selim come;
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:
Our garden battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel ⁴⁷⁰
Which some have felt, and more may feel.
Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought before:
Trust me, Zuleika — fear not me!
Thou know'st I hold a Haram key.”

“Fear thee, my Selim! ne'er till now
Did words like this — — “

“Delay not thou;
I keep the key — and Haroun's guard
Have *some*, and hope of *more* reward.
To-night, Zuleika, thou shalt hear ⁴⁸⁰
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear.”

CANTO THE SECOND

I.

The winds are high on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young — the beautiful — the brave —
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale, and breaking foam, 490
And shrieking sea-birds warned him home;
And clouds aloft and tides below,
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,
He could not see, he would not hear,
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw that light of Love,
The only star it hailed above;
His ear but rang with Hero's song,
"Ye waves, divide not lovers long!" —
That tale is old, but Love anew 500
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II.

The winds are high and Helle's tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedewed in vain,
The desert of old Priam's pride;
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All — save immortal dreams that could beguile
The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!

III.

Oh! yet — for there my steps have been; 510

These feet have pressed the sacred shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne —
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,
Believing every hillock green
Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
And that around the undoubted scene
Thine own "broad Hellespont" still dashes,
Be long my lot! and cold were he
Who there could gaze denying thee! 520

IV.

The Night hath closed on Helle's stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
That Moon, which shone on his high theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the Mound
Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow:
That mighty heap of gathered ground
Which Ammon's son ran proudly round,
By nations raised, by monarchs crowned, 530
Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
Within — thy dwelling-place how narrow!
Without — can only strangers breathe
The name of him that *was* beneath:
Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou — thy very dust is gone!

V.

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer
The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
Till then — no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling skiff; 540
The scattered lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away;
The only lamp of this lone hour

Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.
Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,
And o'er her silken ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
O'er which her fairy fingers ran;
Near these, with emerald rays beset,
(How could she thus that gem forget?) 550
Her mother's sainted amulet,
Whereon engraved the Koorsee text,
Could smooth this life, and win the next;
And by her Comboloio lies
A Koran of illumined dyes;
And many a bright emblazoned rhyme
By Persian scribes redeemed from Time;
And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
Reclines her now neglected lute;
And round her lamp of fretted gold 560
Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
The richest work of Iran's loom,
And Sheeraz tribute of perfume; All that can eye or sense delight
Are gathered in that gorgeous room:
But yet it hath an air of gloom.
She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
What doth she hence, and on so rude a night?

VI.

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslem wear, 570
To guard from winds of Heaven the breast
As Heaven itself to Selim dear,
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side? 580

How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII.

They reached at length a grotto, hewn
By nature, but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conned apart;
And oft in youthful reverie
She dreamed what Paradise might be:
Where Woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdained to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure, 590
Nor deemed she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss
Without *her*, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII.

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seemed wrought within the grot:
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw 600
A ray of no celestial hue;
But in a nook within the cell
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turbaned Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red — perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet. 610
What may this mean? she turned to see
Her Selim — “Oh! can this be he?”

IX.

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crowned turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore:
That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glittered at his waist,
Where pistols unadorned were braced; 620
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white, the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiote;
Beneath — his golden plated vest
Clung like a cuirass to his breast;
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and bound.
But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand, 630
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiongée.

X.

“I said I was not what I seemed;
And now thou see'st my words were true:
I have a tale thou hast not dreamed,
If sooth — its truth must others rue.
My story now 'twere vain to hide,
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared, 640
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own.
In this I speak not now of love;
That — let Time — Truth — and Peril prove:
But first — Oh! never wed another —

Zuleika! I am not thy brother!”

XI.

“Oh! not my brother! — yet unsay —
God! am I left alone on earth
To mourn — I dare not curse — the day
That saw my solitary birth? 650
Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
My sinking heart foreboded ill;
But know *me* all I was before,
Thy sister — friend — Zuleika still.
Thou led'st me here perchance to kill;
If thou hast cause for vengeance, see!
My breast is offered — take thy fill!
Far better with the dead to be
Than live thus nothing now to thee:
Perhaps far worse, for now I know 660
Why Giaffir always seemed thy foe;
And I, alas! am Giaffir's child,
For whom thou wert contemned, reviled.
If not thy sister — would'st thou save
My life — Oh! bid me be thy slave!”

XII.

“My slave, Zuleika! — nay, I'm thine:
But, gentle love, this transport calm,
Thy lot shall yet be linked with mine;
I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
And be that thought thy sorrow's balm. 670
So may the Koran verse displayed
Upon its steel direct my blade,
In danger's hour to guard us both,
As I preserve that awful oath!
The name in which thy heart hath prided
Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
That tie is widened, not divided,
Although thy Sire's my deadliest foe.

My father was to Giaffir all
That Selim late was deemed to thee; 680
That brother wrought a brother's fall,
But spared, at least, my infancy!
And lulled me with a vain deceit
That yet a like return may meet.
He reared me, not with tender help,
But like the nephew of a Cain;
He watched me like a lion's whelp,
That gnaws and yet may break his chain.
My father's blood in every vein
Is boiling! but for thy dear sake 690
No present vengeance will I take;
Though here I must no more remain.
But first, beloved Zuleika! hear
How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII.

"How first their strife to rancour grew,
If Love or Envy made them foes,
It matters little if I knew;
In fiery spirits, slights, though few
And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
In war Abdallah's arm was strong, 700
Remembered yet in Bosniac song,
And Paswan's rebel hordes attest
How little love they bore such guest:
His death is all I need relate,
The stern effect of Giaffir's hate;
And how my birth disclosed to me,
Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me free.

XIV.

"When Paswan, after years of strife,
At last for power, but first for life,

In Widdin's walls too proudly sate, 710
Our Pachas rallied round the state;
Not last nor least in high command,
Each brother led a separate band;
They gave their Horse-tails to the wind,
And mustering in Sophia's plain
Their tents were pitched, their post assigned;
To one, alas! assigned in vain!
What need of words? the deadly bowl,
By Giaffir's order drugged and given,
With venom subtle as his soul,
Dismissed Abdallah's hence to heaven. 720
Reclined and feverish in the bath,
He, when the hunter's sport was up,
But little deemed a brother's wrath
To quench his thirst had such a cup:
The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
He drank one draught, nor needed more!
If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
Call Haroun — he can tell it out.

XV.

“The deed once done, and Paswan's feud 730
In part suppressed, though ne'er subdued,
Abdallah's Pachalick was gained: —
Thou know'st not what in our Divan
Can wealth procure for worse than man —
Abdallah's honours were obtained
By him a brother's murder stained;
'Tis true, the purchase nearly drained
His ill-got treasure, soon replaced.
Would'st question whence? Survey the waste,
And ask the squalid peasant how 740
His gains repay his broiling brow! —
Why me the stern Usurper spared,
Why thus with me his palace spared,
I know not. Shame — regret — remorse —
And little fear from infant's force —

Besides, adoption as a son
By him whom Heaven accorded none,
Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
Preserved me thus: — but not in peace:
He cannot curb his haughty mood, 750
Nor I forgive a father's blood.

XVI.

“Within thy Father's house are foes;
Not all who break his bread are true:
To these should I my birth disclose,
His days-his very hours were few:
They only want a heart to lead,
A hand to point them to the deed.
But Haroun only knows, or knew
This tale, whose close is almost nigh:
He in Abdallah's palace grew, 760
And held that post in his Serai
Which holds he here — he saw him die;
But what could single slavery do?
Avenge his lord? alas! too late;
Or save his son from such a fate?
He chose the last, and when elate
With foes subdued, or friends betrayed,
Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
He led me helpless to his gate,
And not in vain it seems essayed 770
To save the life for which he prayed.
The knowledge of my birth secured
From all and each, but most from me;
Thus Giaffir's safety was ensured.
Removed he too from Roumelie
To this our Asiatic side,
Far from our seats by Danube's tide,
With none but Haroun, who retains
Such knowledge — and that Nubian feels
A Tyrant's secrets are but chains, 780
From which the captive gladly steals,

And this and more to me reveals:
Such still to guilt just Allah sends —
Slaves, tools, accomplices — no friends!

XVII.

“All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds;
But harsher still my tale must be:
Howe’er my tongue thy softness wounds,
Yet I must prove all truth to thee.”
I saw thee start this garb to see,
Yet is it one I oft have worn, ⁷⁹⁰
And long must wear: this Galiongée,
To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
Is leader of those pirate hordes,
Whose laws and lives are on their swords;
To hear whose desolating tale
Would make thy waning cheek more pale:
Those arms thou see’st my band have brought,
The hands that wield are not remote;
This cup too for the rugged knaves
Is filled — once quaffed, they ne’er repine: ⁸⁰⁰
Our Prophet might forgive the slaves;
They’re only infidels in wine.

XVIII.

“What could I be? Proscribed at home,
And taunted to a wish to roam;
And listless left — for Giaffir’s fear
Denied the courser and the spear —
Though oft — Oh, Mahomet! how oft! —
In full Divan the despot scoffed,
As if *my* weak unwilling hand
Refused the bridle or the brand: ⁸¹⁰
He ever went to war alone,
And pent me here untried — unknown;
To Haroun’s care with women left,
By hope unblest, of fame bereft,

While thou — whose softness long endeared,
Though it unmanned me, still had cheered —
To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
Awaited'st there the field's event.
Haroun who saw my spirit pining
Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke, ⁸²⁰
His captive, though with dread resigning,
My thralldom for a season broke,
On promise to return before
The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
'Tis vain — my tongue can not impart
My almost drunkenness of heart,
When first this liberated eye
Surveyed Earth — Ocean — Sun — and Sky —
As if my Spirit pierced them through,
And all their inmost wonders knew! ⁸³⁰
One word alone can paint to thee
That more than feeling — I was Free!
E'en for thy presence ceased to pine;
The World — nay, Heaven itself was mine!

XIX.

“The shallop of a trusty Moor
Conveyed me from this idle shore;
I longed to see the isles that gem
Old Ocean's purple diadem:
I sought by turns, and saw them all;
But when and where I joined the crew, ⁸⁴⁰
With whom I'm pledged to rise or fall,
When all that we design to do
Is done, 'twill then be time more meet
To tell thee, when the tale's complete.

XX.

“‘Tis true, they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
And every creed, and every race,

With them hath found — may find a place:
But open speech, and ready hand,
Obedience to their Chief's command; 850
A soul for every enterprise,
That never sees with Terror's eyes;
Friendship for each, and faith to all,
And vengeance vowed for those who fall,
Have made them fitting instruments
For more than e'en my own intents.
And some — and I have studied all
Distinguished from the vulgar rank,
But chiefly to my council call
The wisdom of the cautious Frank: — 860
And some to higher thoughts aspire.
The last of Lambro's patriots there
Anticipated freedom share;
And oft around the cavern fire
On visionary schemes debate,
To snatch the Rayahs from their fate.
So let them ease their hearts with prate
Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
I have a love for freedom too.
Aye! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam, 870
Or only know on land the Tartar's home!
My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
Are more than cities and Serais to me:
Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
Across the desert, or before the gale,
Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide, my prow!
But be the Star that guides the wanderer, Thou!
Thou, my Zuleika, share and bless my bark;
The Dove of peace and promise to mine ark!
Or, since that hope denied in worlds of strife, 880
Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
Blest — as the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall
To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call;
Soft — as the melody of youthful days,

That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise;
Dear — as his native song to Exile's ears,
Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.
For thee in those bright isles is built a bower 890
Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour.
A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and hand,
Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy command!
Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
The Haram's languid years of listless ease
Are well resigned for cares — for joys like these:
Not blind to Fate, I see, where'er I rove,
Unnumbered perils, — but one only love!
Yet well my toils shall that fond breast repay, 900
Though Fortune frown, or falser friends betray.
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still!
Be but thy soul, like Selim's firmly shown;
To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;
To soothe each sorrow, share in each delight,
Blend every thought, do all — but disunite!
Once free, 'tis mine our horde again to guide;
Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
Yet there we follow but the bent assigned 910
By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!
He makes a solitude, and calls it — peace!
I like the rest must use my skill or strength,
But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
Power sways but by division — her resource
The blest alternative of fraud or force!
Ours be the last; in time Deceit may come
When cities cage us in a social home:
There ev'n thy soul might err — how oft the heart 920
Corruption shakes which Peril could not part!
And Woman, more than Man, when Death or Woe,
Or even Disgrace, would lay her lover low,
Sunk in the lap of Luxury will shame —
Away suspicion! — *not* Zuleika's name!

But life is hazard at the best; and here
 No more remains to win, and much to fear:
 Yes, fear! — the doubt, the dread of losing thee,
 By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern decree.
 That dread shall vanish with the favouring gale, 930
 Which Love to-night hath promised to my sail:
 No danger daunts the pair his smile hath blest,
 Their steps still roving, but their hearts at rest.
 With thee all toils are sweet, each clime hath charms;
 Earth — sea alike — our world within our arms!
 Aye — let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
 So that those arms cling closer round my neck:
 The deepest murmur of this lip shall be,
 No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee!
 The war of elements no fears impart 940
 To Love, whose deadliest bane is human Art:
There lie the only rocks our course can check;
Here moments menace — *there* are years of wreck!
 But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's shape!
 This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
 Few words remain of mine my tale to close;
 Of thine but *one* to waft us from our foes;
 Yea — foes — to me will Giaffir's hate decline?
 And is not Osman, who would part us, thine?

XXI.

“His head and faith from doubt and death 950
 Returned in time my guard to save;
 Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
 From isle to isle I roved the while:
 And since, though parted from my band
 Too seldom now I leave the land,
 No deed they've done, nor deed shall do,
 Ere I have heard and doomed it too:
 I form the plan — decree the spoil —
 Tis fit I oftener share the toil.
 But now too long I've held thine ear; 960
 Time presses — floats my bark — and here

We leave behind but hate and fear.
To-morrow Osman with his train
Arrives — to-night must break thy chain:
And would'st thou save that haughty Bey, —
Perchance *his* life who gave thee thine, —
With me this hour away — away!
But yet, though thou art plighted mine,
Would'st thou recall thy willing vow,
Appalled by truths imparted now, ⁹⁷⁰
Here rest I — not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on *my* head!”

XXII.

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that Statue of Distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The Mother hardened into stone;
All in the maid that eye could see
Was but a younger Niobé.
But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essayed to speak, or look reply, ⁹⁸⁰
Beneath the garden's wicket porch
Far flashed on high a blazing torch!
Another — and another — and another —
“Oh! fly — no more — yet now my more than brother!”
Far, wide, through every thicket spread
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone — for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand.
They part — pursue — return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel; ⁹⁹⁰
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving:
And now almost they touch the cave —
Oh! must that grot be Selim's grave?

XXIII.

Dauntless he stood — “‘Tis come — soon past —
One kiss, Zuleika — ‘tis my last:
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few — the attempt were rash:
No matter — yet one effort more.” 1000
Forth to the cavern mouth he stept;
His pistol’s echo rang on high,
Zuleika started not, nor wept,
Despair benumbed her breast and eye! —
“They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, ’tis but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more nigh.
Then forth my father’s scimitar,
Thou ne’er hast seen less equal war!
Farewell, Zuleika! — Sweet! retire: 1010
Yet stay within — here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe.
Stir not — lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear’st them for him? — may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire!
No — though by him that poison poured;
No — though again he call me coward!
But tamely shall I meet their steel?
No — as each crest save *his* may feel!” 1020

XXIV.

One bound he made, and gained the sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk:
Another falls — but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes;
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave:
His boat appears — not five oars’ length —
His comrades strain with desperate strength — 1030

Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet — wild — unwearied to the strand
They struggle — now they touch the land!
They come — 'tis but to add to slaughter —
His heart's best blood is on the water.

XXV.

Escaped from shot, unharmed by steel,
Or scarcely grazed its force to feel, 1040
Had Selim won, betrayed, beset,
To where the strand and billows met;
There as his last step left the land,
And the last death-blow dealt his hand —
Ah! wherefore did he turn to look
For her his eye but sought in vain?
That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
Hath doomed his death, or fixed his chain.
Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover's hope remain! 1050
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay,
When, at the instant, hissed the ball —
“So may the foes of Giaffir fall!”
Whose voice is heard? whose carbine rang?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aimed to err?
‘Tis thine — Abdallah's Murderer!
The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate: 1060
Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling,
The whiteness of the sea-foam troubling —
If aught his lips essayed to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI.

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;
Few trophies of the fight are there:
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent; but some signs of fray
That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shivered brand; 1070
Steps stamped; and dashed into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand
May there be marked; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep
There lies a white capote!
'Tis rent in twain — one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o'er in vain:
But where is he who wore? 1080
Ye! who would o'er his relics weep,
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep
And cast on Lemnos' shore:
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow;
That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife, 1090
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
Then levelled with the wave —
What reck's it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?
The bird that tears that prostrate form
Hath only robbed the meaner worm;
The only heart, the only eye
Had bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scattered limbs composed,
And mourned above his turban-stone, 1100
That heart hath burst — that eye was closed —
Yea — closed before his own!

XXVII.

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail!
 And Woman's eye is wet — Man's cheek is pale:
 Zuleika! last of Giaffir's race,
 Thy destined lord is come too late:
 He sees not — ne'er shall see thy face!
 Can he not hear
 The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear?
 Thy handmaids weeping at the gate, ¹¹¹⁰
 The Koran-chanters of the Hymn of Fate,
 The silent slaves with folded arms that wait,
 Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
 Tell him thy tale!
 Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
 That fearful moment when he left the cave
 Thy heart grew chill:
 He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love — thine all,
 And that last thought on him thou could'st not save
 Sufficed to kill; ¹¹²⁰
 Burst forth in one wild cry — and all was still.
 Peace to thy broken heart — and virgin grave!
 Ah! happy! but of life to lose the worst!
 That grief — though deep — though fatal — was thy first!
 Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
 Of absence — shame — pride — hate — revenge — remorse!
 And, oh! that pang where more than Madness lies
 The Worm that will not sleep — and never dies;
 Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
 That dreads the darkness, and yet loathes the light, ¹¹³⁰
 That winds around, and tears the quivering heart!
 Ah! wherefore not consume it — and depart!
 Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting Chief!
 Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy head,
 Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs dost spread:
 By that same hand Abdallah — Selim bled.
 Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
 Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's bed,
 She, whom thy Sultan had but seen to wed,

Thy Daughter's dead! ¹¹⁴⁰
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam,
The Star hath set that shone on Helle's stream.
What quenched its ray? — the blood that thou hast shed!
Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:
“Where is my child?” — an Echo answers — “Where?”

XXVIII.

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms
And withers not, though branch and leaf
Are stamped with an eternal grief, ¹¹⁵⁰
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove —
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair —
So white — so faint — the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky ¹¹⁶⁰
May wring it from the stem — in vain —
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
The stalk some Spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unsheltered by a bower;
Nor droops, though Spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the Summer beam: ¹¹⁷⁰
To it the livelong night there sings
A Bird unseen — but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!

It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain:
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain! 1180
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'Tis sorrow so unmixed with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well!
But when the day-blush bursts from high
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe,
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive, 1190
Yet harsh be they that blame,)
That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound
Into Zuleika's name.
'Tis from her cypress summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word:
'Tis from her lowly virgin earth
That white rose takes its tender birth.
There late was laid a marble stone;
Eve saw it placed — the Morrow gone! 1200
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep fixed pillar to the shore;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell;
Lashed by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave:
And there by night, reclined, 'tis said.
Is seen a ghastly turbaned head:
And hence extended by the billow,
'Tis named the "Pirate-phantom's pillow!" 1210
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourished; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy — coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale!

THE CORSAIR

A TALE.

— — “I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno.”

Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Canto X. [stanza lxxviii. line 8].

INTRODUCTION

A seventh edition of the *Giaour*, including the final additions, and the first edition of the *Bride of Abydos*, were published on the twenty-ninth of November, 1813. In less than three weeks (December 18) Byron began the *Corsair*, and completed the fair copy of the first draft by the last day of the year. The *Corsair* in all but its final shape, together with the sixth edition of the *Bride of Abydos*, the seventh of *Childe Harold*, and the ninth of the *Giaour*, was issued on the first of February, 1814.

A letter from John Murray to Lord Byron, dated February 3, 1814 (*Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 223), presents a vivid picture of a great literary triumph —

“My Lord, — I have been unwilling to write until I had something to say.... I am most happy to tell you that your last poem *is* — what Mr. Southey’s is *called* — a *Carmen Triumphale*. Never in my recollection has any work ... excited such a ferment ... I sold on the day of publication — a thing perfectly unprecedented — 10,000 copies.... Mr. Moore says it is masterly — a wonderful performance. Mr. Hammond, Mr. Heber, D’Israeli, every one who comes ... declare their unlimited approbation. Mr. Ward was here with Mr. Gifford yesterday, and mingled his admiration with the rest ... and Gifford did, what I never knew him do before — he repeated several stanzas from memory, particularly the closing stanza —

“‘His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known.’

“I have the highest encomiums in letters from Croker and Mr. Hay; but I rest most upon the warm feeling it has created in Gifford’s critic heart.... You have no notion of the sensation which the publication has occasioned; and my only regret is that you were not present to witness it.”

For some time before and after the poem appeared, Byron was, as he told Leigh Hunt (February 9, 1814; *Letters*, 1899, iii. 27), “snow-bound and thaw-swamped in ‘the valley of the shadow’ of Newstead Abbey,” and it was not till he had returned to town that he resumed his journal, and bethought him of placing on record some dark sayings with regard to the story of the *Corsair* and the personality of Conrad. Under date February 18, 1814, he writes —

“The *Corsair* has been conceived, written, published, etc., since I last took up this journal [?last day but one]. They tell me it has great success; it was written *con amore* [i.e. during the reign of Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster], and much from *existence*.”

And again, *Journal*, March 10 (*Letters*, 1898, ii. 399),

“He [Hobhouse] told me an odd report, — that *I* am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy [*sic*;?piracy]. Um! people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth. H. don’t know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any one — nor — nor — nor — however, it is a lie — but, ‘I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth.’”

Very little weight can be attached to these “I could an I would” pronouncements, deliberately framed to provoke curiosity, and destined, no doubt, sooner or later to see the light; but the fact remains that Conrad is not a mere presentation of Byron in a fresh disguise, or “The Pirate’s Tale” altogether a “painting of the imagination.”

That the *Corsair* is founded upon fact is argued at some length by the author (an “English Gentleman in the Greek Military Service”) of the *Life, Writings, Opinions, and Times of the R. H. George Gordon Noel Byron*, which was published in 1825. The point of the story (i. 197-201), which need not be repeated at length, is that Byron, on leaving Constantinople and reaching the island of Zea (July, 1810), visited [“strolled about”] the islands of the Archipelago, in company with a Venetian gentleman who had turned buccaneer *malgré lui*, and whose history and adventures, amatory and piratical, prefigured and inspired the “gestes” of Conrad. The tale must be taken for what it is worth; but it is to be remarked that it affords a clue to Byron’s mysterious entries in a journal which did not see the light till 1830, five years after the “English Gentleman” published his volumes of gossiping anecdote. It may, too, be noted that, although, in his correspondence of 1810, 1811, there is no mention of any tour among the “Isles of Greece,” in a letter to Moore dated February 2, 1815 (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 176), Byron recalls “the interesting white squalls and short seas of Archipelago memory.”

How far Byron may have drawn on personal experience for his picture of a pirate *chez lui*, it is impossible to say; but during the year 1809-11, when he was travelling in Greece, the exploits of Lambros Katzones and other Greek pirates sailing under the Russian flag must have been within the remembrance and on the lips of the islanders and the “patriots” of the mainland. The “Pirate’s Island,” from which “Ariadne’s isle” (line 444) was visible, may be intended for Paros or Anti-Paros.

For the inception of Conrad (see Canto I. stanza ii.), the paradoxical hero, an assortment rather than an amalgam of incongruous characteristics, Byron may, perhaps, have been in some measure indebted to the description of Malefort, junior, in Massinger’s *Unnatural Combat*, act i. sc. 2, line 20, sq. —

“I have sat with him in his cabin a day together,
Sigh he did often, as if inward grief
And melancholy at that instant would
Choke up his vital spirits....
When from the maintop
A sail’s descried, all thoughts that do concern
Himself laid by, no lion pinched with hunger
Rouses himself more fiercely from his den,
Then he comes on the deck; and then how wisely
He gives directions,” *etc.*

The *Corsair*, together with the *Bride of Abydos*, was reviewed by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1814, vol. xxiii. p. 198; and together with *Lara*, by George Agar Ellis in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1814, vol. ii. p. 428.

THE CORSAIR,

A TALE.

BY LORD BYRON.

“—— I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non ponno.”
Tasso, *Canto decimo, Gerusalemme Liberata.*

LONDON:
Printed by Thomas Davison, *Whitefriars*,
FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1814.

The first edition title page

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In comparison with the *Giaour*, the additions made to the *Corsair* whilst it was passing through the press were inconsiderable. The original MS., which numbers 1737 lines, is probably the fair copy of a number of loose sheets which have not been preserved. The erasures are few and far between, and the variations between the copy and the text are neither numerous nor important.

In one of the latest revises stanza x. was added to the First Canto. The last four lines of stanza xi. first appeared in the Seventh Edition.

The Second Canto suffered no alteration except the substitution of lines 1131-1133 for two lines which were expunged.

Larger additions were made to the Third Canto. Lines 1299-1375, or stanza v. (included in a revise dated January 6, 1814), stanzas xvii. and xxiii., numbering respectively 77, 32, and 16 lines, and the two last lines of stanza x., 127 lines in all, represent the difference between the text as it now stands and the original MS.

In a note to Byron's *Poetical Works*, 1832, ix. 257, it is stated that the *Corsair* was begun on the 18th and finished on the 31st of December, 1813. In the Introduction to the *Corsair* prefixed to the Library Edition, the poem is said to have been composed in ten days, "at the rate of 200 lines a day." The first page of the MS. is dated "27th of December, 1813," and the last page "December 31, 1813, January 1, 1814." It is probable that the composition of the first draft was begun on the 18th and finished on the 27th of December, and that the work of transcription occupied the last five days of the month. Stanza v. of Canto III. reached the publisher on the 6th, and stanzas xvii. and xxiii. on the 11th and 12th of January, 1814.

The First Edition amounted to 1859 lines (the numeration, owing to the inclusion of broken lines, is given as 1863), and falls short of the existing text by the last four lines of stanza xi. It contains the first dedication to Moore, and numbers 100 pages. To the Second Edition, which numbers 108 pages, the following poems were appended: —

To a Lady Weeping.

From the Turkish.

Sonnet to Genevra ("Thine eyes' blue tenderness," etc.).

Sonnet to Genevra ("Thy cheek is pale with thought," etc.).

Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog.

Farewell.

These occasional poems were not appended to the Third Edition, which only numbered 100 pages; but they reappeared in the Fourth and subsequent editions.

The Seventh Edition contained four additional lines (the last four of stanza xi.), and a note (unnumbered) to line 226, in defence of the *vraisemblance* of the *Corsair's* misanthropy. The Ninth Edition numbered 112 pages. The additional matter consists of a long note to the last line of the poem ("Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes") on the pirates of Barataria.

Twenty-five thousand copies of the *Corsair* were sold between January and March, 1814. An Eighth Edition of fifteen hundred copies was printed in March, and sold before the end of the year. A Ninth Edition of three thousand copies was printed in the beginning of 1815.

TO THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

My dear Moore,

I dedicate to you the last production with which I shall trespass on public patience, and your indulgence, for some years; and I own that I feel anxious to avail myself of this latest and only opportunity of adorning my pages with a name, consecrated by unshaken public principle, and the most undoubted and various talents. While Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots; while you stand alone the first of her bards in her estimation, and Britain repeats and ratifies the decree, permit me, whose only regret, since our first acquaintance, has been the years he had lost before it commenced, to add the humble but sincere suffrage of friendship, to the voice of more than one nation. It will at least prove to you, that I have neither forgotten the gratification derived from your society, nor abandoned the prospect of its renewal, whenever your leisure or inclination allows you to atone to your friends for too long an absence. It is said among those friends, I trust truly, that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be laid in the East; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of your own country, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and feeling of her daughters, may there be found; and Collins, when he denominated his Oriental his Irish Eclogues, was not aware how true, at least, was a part of his parallel. Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality, are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.

May I add a few words on a subject on which all men are supposed to be fluent, and none agreeable? — Self. I have written much, and published more than enough to demand a longer silence than I now meditate; but, for some years to come, it is my intention to tempt no further the award of “Gods, men, nor columns.” In the present composition I have attempted not the most difficult, but, perhaps, the best adapted measure to our language, the good old and now neglected heroic couplet. The stanza of Spenser is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative; though, I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart; Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octosyllabic verse; and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius: in blank verse, Milton, Thomson, and our dramatists, are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they are kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure certainly; but as I did not deviate into the other from a wish to flatter what is called public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology, and

take my chance once more with that versification, in which I have hitherto published nothing but compositions whose former circulation is part of my present, and will be of my future regret.

With regard to my story, and stories in general, I should have been glad to have rendered my personages more perfect and amiable, if possible, inasmuch as I have been sometimes criticised, and considered no less responsible for their deeds and qualities than if all had been personal. Be it so — if I have deviated into the gloomy vanity of “drawing from self,” the pictures are probably like, since they are unfavourable: and if not, those who know me are undeceived, and those who do not, I have little interest in undeceiving. I have no particular desire that any but my acquaintance should think the author better than the beings of his imagining; but I cannot help a little surprise, and perhaps amusement, at some odd critical exceptions in the present instance, when I see several bards (far more deserving, I allow) in very reputable plight, and quite exempted from all participation in the faults of those heroes, who, nevertheless, might be found with little more morality than *The Giaour*, and perhaps — but no — I must admit Childe Harold to be a very repulsive personage; and as to his identity, those who like it must give him whatever “alias” they please.

If, however, it were worth while to remove the impression, it might be of some service to me, that the man who is alike the delight of his readers and his friends, the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own, permits me here and elsewhere to subscribe myself,

Most truly,
And affectionately,
His obedient servant,
BYRON.

January 2, 1814.

THE CORSAIR

CANTO THE FIRST

“ — — nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria, — — “

Dante, *Inferno*, v. 121.

I.

“O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their sway —
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave!
Whose soul would sicken o’er the heaving wave; 10
Not thou, vain lord of Wantonness and Ease!
Whom Slumber soothes not — Pleasure cannot please —
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o’er the waters wide,
The exulting sense — the pulse’s maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And where the feeble faint can only feel — 20
Feel — to the rising bosom’s inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
No dread of Death — if with us die our foes —
Save that it seems even duller than repose;
Come when it will — we snatch the life of Life —
When lost — what reck’s it by disease or strife?
Let him who crawls, enamoured of decay,

Cling to his couch, and sicken years away;
Heave his thick breath, and shake his palsied head;
Ours the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed, — 30
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang — one bound — escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loathed his life may gild his grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in Danger's day,
When those who win at length divide the prey, 40
And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
How had the brave who fell exulted *now!*"

II.

Such were the notes that from the Pirate's isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while:
Such were the sounds that thrilled the rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seemed a song!
In scattered groups upon the golden sand,
They game — carouse — converse — or whet the brand;
Select the arms — to each his blade assign,
And careless eye the blood that dims its shine; 50
Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
While others straggling muse along the shore;
For the wild bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping net:
Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies,
With all the thirsting eye of Enterprise;
Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
And marvel where they next shall seize a spoil:
No matter where — their chief's allotment this;
Theirs to believe no prey nor plan amiss. 60
But who that Chief? his name on every shore
Is famed and feared — they ask and know no more
With these he mingles not but to command;

Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still —
And for his fare — the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have passed untasted too; 70
Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.
But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seems nourished by that abstinence.
"Steer to that shore!" — they sail. "Do this!" — 'tis done:
"Now form and follow me!" — the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few inquire his will; 80
To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye
Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

III.

"A sail! — a sail!" — a promised prize to Hope!
Her nation — flag — how speaks the telescope?
No prize, alas! but yet a welcome sail:
The blood-red signal glitters in the gale.
Yes — she is ours — a home-returning bark —
Blow fair, thou breeze! — she anchors ere the dark.
Already doubled is the cape — our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray. 90
How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying — never from her foes —
She walks the waters like a thing of Life!
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire, the wreck,
To move the monarch of her peopled deck!

IV.

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings:
The sails are furled; and anchoring round she swings;
And gathering loiterers on the land discern
Her boat descending from the latticed stern. 100
'Tis manned — the oars keep concert to the strand,
Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.
Hail to the welcome shout! — the friendly speech!
When hand grasps hand uniting on the beach;
The smile, the question, and the quick reply,
And the Heart's promise of festivity!

V.

The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd:
The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,
And Woman's gentler anxious tone is heard —
Friends' — husbands' — lovers' names in each dear word: 110
"Oh! are they safe? we ask not of success —
But shall we see them? will their accents bless?
From where the battle roars, the billows chafe,
They doubtless boldly did — but who are safe?
Here let them haste to gladden and surprise,
And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes!"

VI.

"Where is our Chief? for him we bear report —
And doubt that joy — which hails our coming — short;
Yet thus sincere — 'tis cheering, though so brief;
But, Juan! instant guide us to our Chief: 120
Our greeting paid, we'll feast on our return,
And all shall hear what each may wish to learn."
Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,
To where his watch-tower beetles o'er the bay,
By bushy brake, the wild flowers blossoming,
And freshness breathing from each silver spring,
Whose scattered streams from granite basins burst,
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst;
From crag to cliff they mount — Near yonder cave,

What lonely straggler looks along the wave? 130
In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?
“‘Tis he — ‘tis Conrad — here — as wont — alone;
On — Juan! — on — and make our purpose known.
The bark he views — and tell him we would greet
His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:
We dare not yet approach — thou know’st his mood,
When strange or uninvited steps intrude.”

VII.

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent; —
He spake not, but a sign expressed assent, 140
These Juan calls — they come — to their salute
He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.
“These letters, Chief, are from the Greek — the spy,
Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:
Whate’er his tidings, we can well report,
Much that” — “Peace, peace!” — he cuts their prating short.
Wondering they turn, abashed, while each to each
Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech:
They watch his glance with many a stealing look,
To gather how that eye the tidings took; 150
But, this as if he guessed, with head aside,
Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,
He read the scroll — “My tablets, Juan, hark —
Where is Gonsalvo?”

“In the anchored bark.”
“There let him stay — to him this order bear —
Back to your duty — for my course prepare:
Myself this enterprise to-night will share.”
“To-night, Lord Conrad?”
“Aye! at set of sun:
The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
My corslet — cloak — one hour and we are gone. 160
Sling on thy bugle — see that free from rust
My carbine-lock springs worthy of my trust;

Be the edge sharpened of my boarding-brand,
And give its guard more room to fit my hand.
This let the Armourer with speed dispose;
Last time, it more fatigued my arm than foes;
Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
To tell us when the hour of stay's expired."

VIII.

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
Too soon to seek again the watery waste: 170
Yet they repine not — so that Conrad guides;
And who dare question aught that he decides?
That man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue;
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy — yet oppose in vain? 180
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind?
The power of Thought — the magic of the Mind!
Linked with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own.
Such hath it been — shall be — beneath the Sun
The many still must labour for the one!
'Tis Nature's doom — but let the wretch who toils,
Accuse not — hate not — *him* who wears the spoils. 190
Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,
How light the balance of his humbler pains!

IX.

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act, but Gods at least in face,
In Conrad's form seems little to admire,

Though his dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire:
Robust but not Herculean — to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men; 200
They gaze and marvel how — and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun-burnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals.
Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen:
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplexed the view, 210
As if within that murkiness of mind
Worked feelings fearful, and yet undefined;
Such might it be — that none could truly tell —
Too close inquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye;
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny, 220
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that Chief's to day.
There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled — and Mercy sighed farewell!

X.

Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
Within — within — 'twas there the spirit wrought!
Love shows all changes — Hate, Ambition, Guile,
Betray no further than the bitter smile; 230
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown

Along the governed aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions; and to judge their mien,
He, who would see, must be himself unseen.
Then — with the hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenched hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear:
Then — with each feature working from the heart,
With feelings, loosed to strengthen — not depart, 240
That rise — convulse — contend — that freeze or glow,
Flush in the cheek, or damp upon the brow;
Then — Stranger! if thou canst, and tremblest not,
Behold his soul — the rest that soothes his lot!
Mark how that lone and blighted bosom sears
The scathing thought of execrated years!
Behold — but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
Man as himself — the secret spirit free?

XI.

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
To lead the guilty — Guilt's worse instrument — 250
His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
Him forth to war with Man and forfeit Heaven.
Warped by the world in Disappointment's school,
In words too wise — in conduct *there* a fool;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop,
Doomed by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betrayed him still;
Nor deemed that gifts bestowed on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again. 260
Feared — shunned — belied — ere Youth had lost her force,
He hated Man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of Wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain — but he deemed
The rest no better than the thing he seemed;
And scorned the best as hypocrites who hid

Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.
He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loathed him, crouched and dreaded too. 270
Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt:
His name could sadden, and his acts surprise;
But they that feared him dared not to despise:
Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The slumbering venom of the folded snake:
The first may turn, but not avenge the blow;
The last expires, but leaves no living foe;
Fast to the doomed offender's form it clings,
And he may crush — not conquer — still it stings! 280

XII.

None are all evil — quickening round his heart,
One softer feeling would not yet depart;
Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of Love!
Yes, it was love — unchangeable — unchanged,
Felt but for one from whom he never ranged;
Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunned, nor sought, but coldly passed them by; 290
Though many a beauty drooped in prisoned bower,
None ever soothed his most unguarded hour,
Yes — it was Love — if thoughts of tenderness,
Tried in temptation, strengthened by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet — Oh more than all! — untired by Time;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were She near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent; 300
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove —

If there be Love in mortals — this was Love!
He was a villain — aye, reproaches shower
On him — but not the Passion, nor its power,
Which only proved — all other virtues gone —
Not Guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!

XIII.

He paused a moment — till his hastening men
Passed the first winding downward to the glen. 310
“Strange tidings! — many a peril have I passed,
Nor know I why this next appears the last!
Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear,
Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
‘Tis rash to meet — but surer death to wait
Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
And, if my plan but hold, and Fortune smile,
We’ll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
Aye, let them slumber — peaceful be their dreams!
Morn ne’er awoke them with such brilliant beams 320
As kindle high to-night (but blow, thou breeze!)
To warm these slow avengers of the seas.
Now to Medora — Oh! my sinking heart,
Long may her own be lighter than thou art!
Yet was I brave — mean boast where all are brave!
Ev’n insects sting for aught they seek to save.
This common courage which with brutes we share,
That owes its deadliest efforts to Despair,
Small merit claims — but ‘twas my nobler hope
To teach my few with numbers still to cope; 330
Long have I led them — not to vainly bleed:
No medium now — we perish or succeed!
So let it be — it irks not me to die;
But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.
My lot hath long had little of my care,
But chafes my pride thus baffled in the snare:
Is this my skill? my craft? to set at last
Hope, Power and Life upon a single cast?
Oh, Fate! — accuse thy folly — not thy fate;

She may redeem thee still — nor yet too late.” 340

XIV.

Thus with himself communion held he, till
He reached the summit of his tower-crowned hill:
There at the portal paused — for wild and soft
He heard those accents never heard too oft!
Through the high lattice far yet sweet they rung,
And these the notes his Bird of Beauty sung:

1.

“Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before. 350

2.

“There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal — but unseen;
Which not the darkness of Despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3.

“Remember me — Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline:
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4.

“My fondest — faintest — latest accents hear —
Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove; 360
Then give me all I ever asked — a tear,
The first — last — sole reward of so much love!”

He passed the portal, crossed the corridor,

And reached the chamber as the strain gave o'er:
"My own Medora! sure thy song is sad — "

"In Conrad's absence would'st thou have it glad?
Without thine ear to listen to my lay,
Still must my song my thoughts, my soul betray:
Still must each accent to my bosom suit,
My heart unhushed — although my lips were mute! 370
Oh! many a night on this lone couch reclined,
My dreaming fear with storms hath winged the wind,
And deemed the breath that faintly fanned thy sail
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;
Though soft — it seemed the low prophetic dirge,
That mourned thee floating on the savage surge:
Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire;
And many a restless hour outwatched each star,
And morning came — and still thou wert afar. 380
Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom blew,
And day broke dreary on my troubled view,
And still I gazed and gazed — and not a prow
Was granted to my tears — my truth — my vow!
At length — 'twas noon — I hailed and blest the mast
That met my sight — it neared — Alas! it passed!
Another came — Oh God! 'twas thine at last!
Would that those days were over! wilt thou ne'er,
My Conrad! learn the joys of peace to share?
Sure thou hast more than wealth, and many a home 390
As bright as this invites us not to roam:
Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,
I only tremble when thou art not here;
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
Which flies from love and languishes for strife —
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
Should war with Nature and its better will!"

"Yea, strange indeed — that heart hath long been changed;
Worm-like 'twas trampled — adder-like avenged —
Without one hope on earth beyond thy love, 400

And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.
Yet the same feeling which thou dost condemn,
My very love to thee is hate to them,
So closely mingling here, that disentwined,
I cease to love thee when I love Mankind:
Yet dread not this — the proof of all the past
Assures the future that my love will last;
But — Oh, Medora! nerve thy gentler heart;
This hour again — but not for long — we part.”

“This hour we part! — my heart foreboded this: 410
Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
This hour — it cannot be — this hour away!
Yon bark hath hardly anchored in the bay:
Her consort still is absent, and her crew
Have need of rest before they toil anew;
My Love! thou mock'st my weakness; and wouldst steel
My breast before the time when it must feel;
But trifle now no more with my distress,
Such mirth hath less of play than bitterness.
Be silent, Conrad! — dearest! come and share 420
The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
See, I have plucked the fruit that promised best,
And where not sure, perplexed, but pleased, I guessed
At such as seemed the fairest; thrice the hill
My steps have wound to try the coolest rill;
Yes! thy Sherbet to-night will sweetly flow,
See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!
The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never cheers;
Thou more than Moslem when the cup appears: 430
Think not I mean to chide — for I rejoice
What others deem a penance is thy choice.
But come, the board is spread; our silver lamp
Is trimmed, and heeds not the Sirocco's damp:
Then shall my handmaids while the time along,
And join with me the dance, or wake the song;
Or my guitar, which still thou lov'st to hear,
Shall soothe or lull — or, should it vex thine ear,

We'll turn the tale, by Ariosto told,
Of fair Olympia loved and left of old. 440
Why, thou wert worse than he who broke his vow
To that lost damsel, should thou leave me *now* —
Or even that traitor chief — I've seen thee smile,
When the clear sky showed Ariadne's Isle,
Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
And thus half sportive — half in fear — I said,
Lest Time should raise that doubt to more than dread,
Thus Conrad, too, will quit me for the main:
And he deceived me — for — he came again!"

"Again, again — and oft again — my Love! 450
If there be life below, and hope above,
He will return — but now, the moments bring
The time of parting with redoubled wing:
The why, the where — what boots it now to tell?
Since all must end in that wild word — Farewell!
Yet would I fain — did time allow — disclose —
Fear not — these are no formidable foes!
And here shall watch a more than wonted guard,
For sudden siege and long defence prepared:
Nor be thou lonely, though thy Lord's away, 460
Our matrons and thy handmaids with thee stay;
And this thy comfort — that, when next we meet,
Security shall make repose more sweet.
List! — 'tis the bugle!" — Juan shrilly blew —
"One kiss — one more — another — Oh! Adieu!"
She rose — she sprung — she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face:
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast drooped in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms, 470
In all the wildness of dishevelled charms;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt
So full — *that* feeling seem'd almost unfelt!
Hark — peals the thunder of the signal-gun!
It told 'twas sunset, and he cursed that sun.
Again — again — that form he madly pressed,

Which mutely clasped, imploringly caressed!
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,
One moment gazed — as if to gaze no more;
Felt that for him Earth held but her alone, 480
Kissed her cold forehead — turned — is Conrad gone?

XV.

“And is he gone?” — on sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude!
“‘Twas but an instant past, and here he stood!
And now” — without the portal’s porch she rushed,
And then at length her tears in freedom gushed;
Big, bright, and fast, unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send — “Farewell!”
For in that word — that fatal word — howe’er
We promise — hope — believe — there breathes Despair. 490
O’er every feature of that still, pale face,
Had Sorrow fixed what Time can ne’er erase:
The tender blue of that large loving eye
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
Till — Oh, how far! — it caught a glimpse of him,
And then it flowed, and phrensied seemed to swim
Through those long, dark, and glistening lashes dewed
With drops of sadness oft to be renewed.
“He’s gone!” — against her heart that hand is driven,
Convulsed and quick — then gently raised to Heaven: 500
She looked and saw the heaving of the main:
The white sail set — she dared not look again;
But turned with sickening soul within the gate —
“It is no dream — and I am desolate!”

XVI.

From crag to crag descending, swiftly sped
Stern Conrad down, nor once he turned his head;
But shrunk whene’er the windings of his way
Forced on his eye what he would not survey,
His lone, but lovely dwelling on the steep,

That hailed him first when homeward from the deep: 510
And she — the dim and melancholy Star,
Whose ray of Beauty reached him from afar,
On her he must not gaze, he must not think —
There he might rest — but on Destruction's brink:
Yet once almost he stopped — and nearly gave
His fate to chance, his projects to the wave:
But no — it must not be — a worthy chief
May melt, but not betray to Woman's grief.
He sees his bark, he notes how fair the wind,
And sternly gathers all his might of mind: 520
Again he hurries on — and as he hears
The clang of tumult vibrate on his ears,
The busy sounds, the bustle of the shore,
The shout, the signal, and the dashing oar;
As marks his eye the seaboy on the mast,
The anchors rise, the sails unfurling fast,
The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that urge
That mute Adieu to those who stem the surge;
And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft,
He marvelled how his heart could seem so soft. 530
Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
He feels of all his former self possess;
He bounds — he flies — until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed; but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew;
Nor rush, disturbed by haste, to vulgar view:
For well had Conrad learned to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil, and oft preserve the proud; 540
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight — and awes if seen:
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy;
All these he wielded to command assent:
But where he wished to win, so well unbent,
That Kindness cancelled fear in those who heard,
And others' gifts showed mean beside his word,

When echoed to the heart as from his own
His deep yet tender melody of tone: 550
But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
He cared not what he softened, but subdued;
The evil passions of his youth had made
Him value less who loved — than what obeyed.

XVII.

Around him mustering ranged his ready guard.
Before him Juan stands — “Are all prepared?”
“They are — nay more — embarked: the latest boat
Waits but my chief — — “
“My sword, and my capote.”
Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,
His belt and cloak were o’er his shoulders flung: 560
“Call Pedro here!” He comes — and Conrad bends,
With all the courtesy he deigned his friends;
“Receive these tablets, and peruse with care,
Words of high trust and truth are graven there;
Double the guard, and when Anselmo’s bark
Arrives, let him alike these orders mark:
In three days (serve the breeze) the sun shall shine
On our return — till then all peace be thine!”
This said, his brother Pirate’s hand he wrung,
Then to his boat with haughty gesture sprung. 570
Flashed the dipt oars, and sparkling with the stroke,
Around the waves’ phosphoric brightness broke;
They gain the vessel — on the deck he stands, —
Shrieks the shrill whistle, ply the busy hands —
He marks how well the ship her helm obeys,
How gallant all her crew, and deigns to praise.
His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo turn —
Why doth he start, and inly seem to mourn?
Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower,
And live a moment o’er the parting hour; 580
She — his Medora — did she mark the prow?
Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of day —

Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan — his means, and ends;
Before them burns the lamp, and spreads the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract debate;
To anxious eyes what hour is ever late? 590
Meantime, the steady breeze serenely blew,
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Passed the high headlands of each clustering isle,
To gain their port — long — long ere morning smile:
And soon the night-glass through the narrow bay
Discovers where the Pacha's galleys lay.
Count they each sail, and mark how there supine
The lights in vain o'er heedless Moslem shine.
Secure, unnoted, Conrad's prow passed by,
And anchored where his ambush meant to lie; 600
Screened from espial by the jutting cape,
That rears on high its rude fantastic shape.
Then rose his band to duty — not from sleep —
Equipped for deeds alike on land or deep;
While leaned their Leader o'er the fretting flood,
And calmly talked — and yet he talked of blood!

CANTO THE SECOND

“Conosceste i dubbiosi desiri?”

Dante, *Inferno*, v, 120.

I.

In Coron's bay floats many a galley light,
Through Coron's lattices the lamps are bright,
For Seyd, the Pacha, makes a feast to-night:
A feast for promised triumph yet to come, 610
When he shall drag the fettered Rovers home;
This hath he sworn by Allah and his sword,
And faithful to his firman and his word,
His summoned prows collect along the coast,
And great the gathering crews, and loud the boast;
Already shared the captives and the prize,
Though far the distant foe they thus despise;
'Tis but to sail — no doubt to-morrow's Sun
Will see the Pirates bound — their haven won!
Meantime the watch may slumber, if they will, 620
Nor only wake to war, but dreaming kill.
Though all, who can, disperse on shore and seek
To flesh their glowing valour on the Greek;
How well such deed becomes the turbaned brave —
To bare the sabre's edge before a slave!
Infest his dwelling — but forbear to slay,
Their arms are strong, yet merciful to-day,
And do not deign to smite because they may!
Unless some gay caprice suggests the blow,
To keep in practice for the coming foe. 630
Revel and rout the evening hours beguile,
And they who wish to wear a head must smile;
For Moslem mouths produce their choicest cheer,
And hoard their curses, till the coast is clear.

II.

High in his hall reclines the turbaned Seyd;
Around — the bearded chiefs he came to lead.
Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff —
Forbidden draughts, 'tis said, he dared to quaff,
Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems' use; 640
The long chibouque's dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chiefs embark;
But waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark:
And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o'er the rugged deep:
Feast there who can — nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans trust;
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's boast. 650

III.

With cautious reverence from the outer gate
Slow stalks the slave, whose office there to wait,
Bows his bent head — his hand salutes the floor,
Ere yet his tongue the trusted tidings bore:
"A captive Dervise, from the Pirate's nest
Escaped, is here — himself would tell the rest."
He took the sign from Seyd's assenting eye,
And led the holy man in silence nigh.
His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
His step was feeble, and his look deprest; 660
Yet worn he seemed of hardship more than years,
And pale his cheek with penance, not from fears.
Vowed to his God — his sable locks he wore,
And these his lofty cap rose proudly o'er:
Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
And wrapt a breast bestowed on heaven alone;
Submissive, yet with self-possession manned,
He calmly met the curious eyes that scanned;
And question of his coming fain would seek,
Before the Pacha's will allowed to speak. 670

IV.

“Whence com’st thou, Dervise?”

“From the Outlaw’s den

A fugitive — “

“Thy capture where and when?”

“From Scalanova’s port to Scio’s isle,

The Saick was bound; but Allah did not smile

Upon our course — the Moslem merchant’s gains

The Rovers won; our limbs have worn their chains.

I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast,

Beyond the wandering freedom which I lost;

At length a fisher’s humble boat by night

Afforded hope, and offered chance of flight; 680

I seized the hour, and find my safety here —

With thee — most mighty Pacha! who can fear?”

“How speed the outlaws? stand they well prepared,

Their plundered wealth, and robber’s rock, to guard?

Dream they of this our preparation, doomed

To view with fire their scorpion nest consumed?”

“Pacha! the fettered captive’s mourning eye,

That weeps for flight, but ill can play the spy;

I only heard the reckless waters roar,

Those waves that would not bear me from the shore; 690

I only marked the glorious Sun and sky,

Too bright — too blue — for my captivity;

And felt that all which Freedom’s bosom cheers

Must break my chain before it dried my tears.

This mayst thou judge, at least, from my escape,

They little deem of aught in Peril’s shape;

Else vainly had I prayed or sought the Chance

That leads me here — if eyed with vigilance:

The careless guard that did not see me fly,

May watch as idly when thy power is nigh. 700

Pacha! my limbs are faint — and nature craves

Food for my hunger, rest from tossing waves:

Permit my absence — peace be with thee! Peace

With all around! — now grant repose — release.”

“Stay, Dervise! I have more to question — stay,
I do command thee — sit — dost hear? — obey!
More I must ask, and food the slaves shall bring;
Thou shalt not pine where all are banqueting:
The supper done — prepare thee to reply,
Clearly and full — I love not mystery.” 710

‘Twere vain to guess what shook the pious man,
Who looked not lovingly on that Divan;
Nor showed high relish for the banquet prest,
And less respect for every fellow guest.
Twas but a moment’s peevish hectic passed
Along his cheek, and tranquillised as fast:
He sate him down in silence, and his look
Resumed the calmness which before forsook:
The feast was ushered in — but sumptuous fare
He shunned as if some poison mingled there. 720
For one so long condemned to toil and fast,
Methinks he strangely spares the rich repast.
“What ails thee, Dervise? eat — dost thou suppose
This feast a Christian’s? or my friends thy foes?
Why dost thou shun the salt? that sacred pledge,
Which, once partaken, blunts the sabre’s edge,
Makes even contending tribes in peace unite,
And hated hosts seem brethren to the sight!”

“Salt seasons dainties — and my food is still
The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill; 730
And my stern vow and Order’s laws oppose
To break or mingle bread with friends or foes;
It may seem strange — if there be aught to dread
That peril rests upon my single head;
But for thy sway — nay more — thy Sultan’s throne,
I taste nor bread nor banquet — save alone;
Infringed our Order’s rule, the Prophet’s rage
To Mecca’s dome might bar my pilgrimage.”

“Well — as thou wilt — ascetic as thou art —

One question answer; then in peace depart. 740
How many? — Ha! it cannot sure be day?
What Star — what Sun is bursting on the bay?
It shines a lake of fire! — away — away!
Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
The galleys feed the flames — and I afar!
Accurséd Dervise! — these thy tidings — thou
Some villain spy — seize — cleave him — slay him now!”

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of light,
Nor less his change of form appalled the sight:
Up rose that Dervise — not in saintly garb, 750
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dashed his high cap, and tore his robe away —
Shone his mailed breast, and flashed his sabre’s ray!
His close but glittering casque, and sable plume,
More glittering eye, and black brow’s sabler gloom,
Glared on the Moslems’ eyes some Afrit Sprite,
Whose demon death-blow left no hope for fight.
The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high, and torches from below;
The shriek of terror, and the mingling yell — 760
For swords began to clash, and shouts to swell —
Flung o’er that spot of earth the air of Hell!
Distracted, to and fro, the flying slaves
Behold but bloody shore and fiery waves;
Nought heeded they the Pacha’s angry cry,
They seize that Dervise! — seize on Zatanai!
He saw their terror — checked the first despair
That urged him but to stand and perish there,
Since far too early and too well obeyed,
The flame was kindled ere the signal made; 770
He saw their terror — from his baldric drew
His bugle — brief the blast — but shrilly blew;
‘Tis answered — “Well ye speed, my gallant crew!
Why did I doubt their quickness of career?
And deem design had left me single here?”
Sweeps his long arm — that sabre’s whirling sway
Sheds fast atonement for its first delay;

Completes his fury, what their fear begun,
 And makes the many basely quail to one.
 The cloven turbans o'er the chamber spread, 780
 And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its head:
 Even Seyd, convulsed, o'erwhelmed, with rage, surprise,
 Retreats before him, though he still defies.
 No craven he — and yet he dreads the blow,
 So much Confusion magnifies his foe!
 His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
 He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight;
 For now the pirates passed the Haram gate,
 And burst within — and it were death to wait;
 Where wild Amazement shrieking — kneeling — throws 790
 The sword aside — in vain — the blood o'erflows!
 The Corsairs pouring, haste to where within
 Invited Conrad's bugle, and the din
 Of groaning victims, and wild cries for life,
 Proclaimed how well he did the work of strife.
 They shout to find him grim and lonely there,
 A glutted tiger mangling in his lair!
 But short their greeting, shorter his reply —
 "Tis well — but Seyd escapes — and he must die —
 Much hath been done — but more remains to do — 800
 Their galleys blaze — why not their city too?"

V.

Quick at the word they seized him each a torch,
 And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
 A stern delight was fixed in Conrad's eye,
 But sudden sunk — for on his ear the cry
 Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
 Knocked at that heart unmoved by Battle's yell.
 "Oh! burst the Haram — wrong not on your lives
 One female form — remember — we have wives.
 On them such outrage Vengeance will repay; 810
 Man is our foe, and such 'tis ours to slay:
 But still we spared — must spare the weaker prey.
 Oh! I forgot — but Heaven will not forgive

If at my word the helpless cease to live;
Follow who will — I go — we yet have time
Our souls to lighten of at least a crime.”
He climbs the crackling stair — he bursts the door,
Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the floor;
His breath choked gasping with the volumed smoke,
But still from room to room his way he broke. 820
They search — they find — they save: with lusty arms
Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
Calm their loud fears; sustain their sinking frames
With all the care defenceless Beauty claims:
So well could Conrad tame their fiercest mood,
And check the very hands with gore imbrued.
But who is she? whom Conrad’s arms convey,
From reeking pile and combat’s wreck, away —
Who but the love of him he dooms to bleed?
The Haram queen — but still the slave of Seyd! 830

VI.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,
Few words to reassure the trembling Fair;
For in that pause Compassion snatched from War,
The foe before retiring, fast and far,
With wonder saw their footsteps unpursued,
First slower fled — then rallied — then withstood.
This Seyd perceives, then first perceives how few,
Compared with his, the Corsair’s roving crew,
And blushes o’er his error, as he eyes
The ruin wrought by Panic and Surprise. 840
Alla il Alla! Vengeance swells the cry —
Shame mounts to rage that must atone or die!
And flame for flame and blood for blood must tell.
The tide of triumph ebbs that flowed too well —
When Wrath returns to renovated strife,
And those who fought for conquest strike for life.
Conrad beheld the danger — he beheld
His followers faint by freshening foes repelled:
“One effort — one — to break the circling host!”

They form — unite — charge — waver — all is lost! 850
Within a narrower ring compressed, beset,
Hopeless, not heartless, strive and struggle yet —
Ah! now they fight in firmest file no more,
Hemmed in — cut off — cleft down and trampled o'er;
But each strikes singly — silently — and home,
And sinks outwearied rather than o'ercome —
His last faint quittance rendering with his breath,
Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of Death!

VII.

But first, ere came the rallying host to blows,
And rank to rank, and hand to hand oppose, 860
Gulnare and all her Haram handmaids freed,
Safe in the dome of one who held their creed,
By Conrad's mandate safely were bestowed,
And dried those tears for life and fame that flowed:
And when that dark-eyed lady, young Gulnare,
Recalled those thoughts late wandering in despair,
Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
That smoothed his accents, softened in his eye —
'Twas strange — *that* robber thus with gore bedewed,
Seemed gentler then than Seyd in fondest mood. 870
The Pacha wooed as if he deemed the slave
Must seem delighted with the heart he gave;
The Corsair vowed protection, soothed affright,
As if his homage were a Woman's right.
"The wish is wrong — nay, worse for female — vain:
Yet much I long to view that Chief again;
If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
The life — my loving Lord remembered not!"

VIII.

And him she saw, where thickest carnage spread,
But gathered breathing from the happier dead; 880
Far from his band, and battling with a host
That deem right dearly won the field he lost,

Felled — bleeding — baffled of the death he sought,
And snatched to expiate all the ills he wrought;
Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance pondered o'er new plans of pain,
And stanch'd the blood she saves to shed again —
But drop by drop, for Seyd's unglutted eye
Would doom him ever dying — ne'er to die!
Can this be he? triumphant late she saw, ⁸⁹⁰
When his red hand's wild gesture waved, a law!
'Tis he indeed — disarmed but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possest;
His wounds too slight, though taken with that will,
Which would have kissed the hand that then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul — he scarcely asked to Heaven?
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striven and struck for death?
He deeply felt — what mortal hearts must feel, ⁹⁰⁰
When thus reversed on faithless Fortune's wheel,
For crimes committed, and the victor's threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt —
He deeply, darkly felt; but evil Pride
That led to perpetrate — now serves to hide.
Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen,
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffening wound,
But few that saw — so calmly gazed around:
Though the far shouting of the distant crowd, ⁹¹⁰
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear;
And the grim guards that to his durance led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

IX.

The Leech was sent — but not in mercy — there,
To note how much the life yet left could bear;
He found enough to load with heaviest chain,

And promise feeling for the wretch of Pain;
To-morrow — yea — to-morrow's evening Sun 920
Will, sinking, see Impalement's pangs begun,
And rising with the wonted blush of morn
Behold how well or ill those pangs are borne.
Of torments this the longest and the worst,
Which adds all other agony to thirst,
That day by day Death still forbears to slake,
While famished vultures flit around the stake.
"Oh! water — water!" — smiling Hate denies
The victim's prayer, for if he drinks he dies.
This was his doom; — the Leech, the guard, were gone, 930
And left proud Conrad fettered and alone.

X.

'Twere vain to paint to what his feelings grew —
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.
There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed, combined
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse —
That juggling fiend, who never spake before,
But cries "I warned thee!" when the deed is o'er.
Vain voice! the spirit burning but unbent, 940
May writhe — rebel — the weak alone repent!
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself, all — all that self reveals, —
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest, as once, unseen, unsought,
But the wild prospect when the Soul reviews,
All rushing through their thousand avenues —
Ambition's dreams expiring, Love's regret,
Endangered Glory, Life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate 950
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in our fate;
The hopeless past, the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess if Hell or Heaven;
Deeds — thoughts — and words, perhaps remembered not

So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern Reflection each a crime;
The withering sense of Evil unrevealed,
Not cankering less because the more concealed;
All, in a word, from which all eyes must start, 960
That opening sepulchre, the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes — till Pride awake,
To snatch the mirror from the soul, and break.
Aye, Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all —
All — all — before — beyond — the deadliest fall.
Each hath some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise:
Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies;
But he who looks on Death — and silent dies:
So, steeled by pondering o'er his far career, 970
He half-way meets Him should He menace near!

XI.

In the high chamber of his highest tower
Sate Conrad, fettered in the Pacha's power.
His palace perished in the flame — this fort
Contained at once his captive and his court.
Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame,
His foe, if vanquished, had but shared the same: —
Alone he sate — in solitude had scanned
His guilty bosom, but that breast he manned:
One thought alone he could not — dared not meet — 980
“Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?”
Then — only then — his clanking hands he raised,
And strained with rage the chain on which he gazed;
But soon he found, or feigned, or dreamed relief,
And smiled in self-derision of his grief,
“And now come Torture when it will, or may —
More need of rest to nerve me for the day!”
This said, with langour to his mat he crept,
And, whatso'er his visions, quickly slept.

'Twas hardly midnight when that fray begun, 990
For Conrad's plans matured, at once were done,
And Havoc loathes so much the waste of time,
She scarce had left an uncommitted crime.
One hour beheld him since the tide he stemmed —
Disguised — discovered — conquering — ta'en — condemned —
A Chief on land — an outlaw on the deep —
Destroying — saving — prisoned — and asleep!

XII.

He slept in calmest seeming, for his breath
Was hushed so deep — Ah! happy if in death!
He slept — Who o'er his placid slumber bends? 1000
His foes are gone — and here he hath no friends;
Is it some Seraph sent to grant him grace?
No, 'tis an earthly form with heavenly face!
Its white arm raised a lamp — yet gently hid,
Lest the ray flash abruptly on the lid
Of that closed eye, which opens but to pain,
And once unclosed — but once may close again.
That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so fair,
And auburn waves of gemmed and braided hair;
With shape of fairy lightness — naked foot, 1010
That shines like snow, and falls on earth as mute —
Through guards and dunest night how came it there?
Ah! rather ask what will not Woman dare?
Whom Youth and Pity lead like thee, Gulnare!
She could not sleep — and while the Pacha's rest
In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-guest,
She left his side — his signet-ring she bore,
Which oft in sport adorned her hand before —
And with it, scarcely questioned, won her way
Through drowsy guards that must that sign obey. 1020
Worn out with toil, and tired with changing blows,
Their eyes had envied Conrad his repose;
And chill and nodding at the turret door,
They stretch their listless limbs, and watch no more;
Just raised their heads to hail the signet-ring,

Nor ask or what or who the sign may bring.

XIII.

She gazed in wonder, "Can he calmly sleep,
While other eyes his fall or ravage weep?
And mine in restlessness are wandering here —
What sudden spell hath made this man so dear? 1030
True — 'tis to him my life, and more, I owe,
And me and mine he spared from worse than woe:
'Tis late to think — but soft — his slumber breaks —
How heavily he sighs! — he starts — awakes!"
He raised his head, and dazzled with the light,
His eye seemed dubious if it saw aright:
He moved his hand — the grating of his chain
Too harshly told him that he lived again.
"What is that form? if not a shape of air,
Methinks, my jailor's face shows wondrous fair!" 1040
"Pirate! thou know'st me not, but I am one,
Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely done;
Look on me — and remember her, thy hand
Snatched from the flames, and thy more fearful band.
I come through darkness — and I scarce know why —
Yet not to hurt — I would not see thee die."

"If so, kind lady! thine the only eye
That would not here in that gay hope delight:
Theirs is the chance — and let them use their right.
But still I thank their courtesy or thine, 1050
That would confess me at so fair a shrine!"

Strange though it seem — yet with extremest grief
Is linked a mirth — it doth not bring relief —
That playfulness of Sorrow ne'er beguiles,
And smiles in bitterness — but still it smiles;
And sometimes with the wisest and the best,
Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!
Yet not the joy to which it seems akin —
It may deceive all hearts, save that within.

Whate'er it was that flashed on Conrad, now 1060
A laughing wildness half unbent his brow:
And these his accents had a sound of mirth,
As if the last he could enjoy on earth;
Yet 'gainst his nature — for through that short life,
Few thoughts had he to spare from gloom and strife.

XIV.

“Corsair! thy doom is named — but I have power
To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
Thee would I spare — nay more — would save thee now,
But this — Time — Hope — nor even thy strength allow;
But all I can, — I will — at least delay 1070
The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
More now were ruin — even thyself were loth
The vain attempt should bring but doom to both.”

“Yes! — loth indeed: — my soul is nerved to all,
Or fall'n too low to fear a further fall:
Tempt not thyself with peril — me with hope
Of flight from foes with whom I could not cope:
Unfit to vanquish — shall I meanly fly,
The one of all my band that would not die?
Yet there is one — to whom my Memory clings, 1080
Till to these eyes her own wild softness springs.
My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these — my bark — my sword — my love — my God!
The last I left in youth! — He leaves me now —
And Man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of Despair;
It is enough — I breathe — and I can bear.
My sword is shaken from the worthless hand
That might have better kept so true a brand; 1090
My bark is sunk or captive — but my Love —
For her in sooth my voice would mount above:
Oh! she is all that still to earth can bind —
And this will break a heart so more than kind,

And blight a form — till thine appeared, Gulnare!
Mine eye ne'er asked if others were as fair."

"Thou lov'st another then? — but what to me
Is this — 'tis nothing — nothing e'er can be:
But yet — thou lov'st — and — Oh! I envy those
Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose, 1100
Who never feel the void — the wandering thought
That sighs o'er visions — such as mine hath wrought."

"Lady — methought thy love was his, for whom
This arm redeemed thee from a fiery tomb."

"My love stern Seyd's! Oh — No — No — not my love —
Yet much this heart, that strives no more, once strove
To meet his passion — but it would not be.
I felt — I feel — Love dwells with — with the free.
I am a slave, a favoured slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very blest! 1110
Oft must my soul the question undergo,
Of — 'Dost thou love?' and burn to answer, 'No!'
Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one — perhaps another there.
He takes the hand I give not — nor withhold —
Its pulse nor checked — nor quickened — calmly cold:
And when resigned, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate. 1120
No warmth these lips return by his imprest,
And chilled Remembrance shudders o'er the rest.
Yes — had I ever proved that Passion's zeal,
The change to hatred were at least to feel:
But still — he goes unmourned — returns unsought —
And oft when present — absent from my thought.
Or when Reflection comes — and come it must —
I fear that henceforth 'twill but bring disgust;
I am his slave — but, in despite of pride,

'Twere worse than bondage to become his bride. 1130
 Oh! that this dotage of his breast would cease!
 Or seek another and give mine release,
 But yesterday — I could have said, to peace!
 Yes, if unwonted fondness now I feign,
 Remember — Captive! 'tis to break thy chain;
 Repay the life that to thy hand I owe;
 To give thee back to all endeared below,
 Who share such love as I can never know.
 Farewell — Morn breaks — and I must now away:
 'Twill cost me dear — but dread no death to-day!" 1140

XV.

She pressed his fettered fingers to her heart,
 And bowed her head, and turned her to depart,
 And noiseless as a lovely dream is gone.
 And was she here? and is he now alone?
 What gem hath dropped and sparkles o'er his chain?
 The tear most sacred, shed for others' pain,
 That starts at once — bright — pure — from Pity's mine,
 Already polished by the hand divine!
 Oh! too convincing — dangerously dear —
 In Woman's eye the unanswerable tear! 1150
 That weapon of her weakness she can wield,
 To save, subdue — at once her spear and shield:
 Avoid it — Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
 Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!
 What lost a world, and bade a hero fly?
 The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.
 Yet be the soft Triumvir's fault forgiven;
 By this — how many lose not earth — but Heaven!
 Consign their souls to Man's eternal foe,
 And seal their own to spare some Wanton's woe! 1160

XVI.

'Tis Morn — and o'er his altered features play
 The beams — without the Hope of yesterday.
 What shall he be ere night? perchance a thing

What shall he see ere night, perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing,
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt;
While sets that Sun, and dews of Evening melt,
Chill, wet, and misty round each stiffened limb,
Refreshing earth — reviving all but him!

CANTO THE THIRD

“Come vedi — ancor non m’abbandona.”

Dante, *Inferno*, v. 105.

I.

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea’s hills the setting Sun; ¹¹⁷⁰
Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light!
O’er the hushed deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows.
On old Ægina’s rock, and Idra’s isle,
The God of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O’er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine.
Descending fast the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquered Salamis! ¹¹⁸⁰
Their azure arches through the long expanse
More deeply purpled met his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of Heaven;
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast,
When — Athens! here thy Wisest looked his last.
How watched thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murdered Sage’s latest day! ¹¹⁹⁰
Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill —
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain’s once delightful dyes:
Gloom o’er the lovely land he seemed to pour,
The land, where Phoebus never frowned before:
But ere he sunk below Cithæron’s head,

The cup of woe was quaffed — the Spirit fled;
The Soul of him who scorned to fear or fly —
Who lived and died, as none can live or die! 1200

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The Queen of night asserts her silent reign.
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, nor girds her glowing form;
With cornice glimmering as the moon-beams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And bright around with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the Minaret:
The groves of olive scattered dark and wide
Where meek Cephissus pours his scanty tide; 1210
The cypress saddening by the sacred Mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay Kiosk;
And, dun and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm,
All tinged with varied hues arrest the eye —
And dull were his that passed him heedless by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war;
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long array of sapphire and of gold, 1220
Mixed with the shades of many a distant isle,
That frown — where gentler Ocean seems to smile.

II.

Not now my theme — why turn my thoughts to thee?
Oh! who can look along thy native sea,
Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the tale,
So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
Who that beheld that Sun upon thee set,
Fair Athens! could thine evening face forget?
Not he — whose heart nor time nor distance frees,
Spell-bound within the clustering Cyclades! 1230
Nor seems this homage foreign to its strain,

His Corsair's isle was once thine own domain —
Would that with freedom it were thine again!

III.

The Sun hath sunk — and, darker than the night,
Sinks with its beam upon the beacon height
Medora's heart — the third day's come and gone —
With it he comes not — sends not — faithless one!
The wind was fair though light! and storms were none.
Last eve Anselmo's bark returned, and yet
His only tidings that they had not met! 1240
Though wild, as now, far different were the tale
Had Conrad waited for that single sail.
The night-breeze freshens — she that day had passed
In watching all that Hope proclaimed a mast;
Sadly she sate on high — Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,
And there she wandered, heedless of the spray
That dashed her garments oft, and warned away:
She saw not, felt not this — nor dared depart,
Nor deemed it cold — her chill was at her heart; 1250
Till grew such certainty from that suspense —
His very Sight had shocked from life or sense!

It came at last — a sad and shattered boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought;
Some bleeding — all most wretched — these the few —
Scarce knew they how escaped — *this* all they knew.
In silence, darkling, each appeared to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's fate:
Something they would have said; but seemed to fear
To trust their accents to Medora's ear. 1260
She saw at once, yet sunk not — trembled not —
Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot,
Within that meek fair form, were feelings high,
That deemed not till they found their energy.
While yet was Hope they softened, fluttered, wept —
All lost — that Softness died not — but it slept;

And o'er its slumber rose that Strength which said,
"With nothing left to love, there's nought to dread."
'Tis more than Nature's — like the burning might
Delirium gathers from the fever's height. 1270

"Silent you stand — nor would I hear you tell
What — speak not — breathe not — for I know it well —
Yet would I ask — almost my lip denies
The — quick your answer — tell me where he lies."

"Lady! we know not — scarce with life we fled;
But here is one denies that he is dead:
He saw him bound; and bleeding — but alive."

She heard no further — 'twas in vain to strive —
So throbbed each vein — each thought — till then withstood;
Her own dark soul — these words at once subdued: 1280
She totters — falls — and senseless had the wave
Perchance but snatched her from another grave;
But that with hands though rude, yet weeping eyes,
They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the ocean dew,
Raise, fan, sustain — till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons leave
That fainting form o'er which they gaze and grieve;
Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious — when the triumph short. 1290

IV.

In that wild council words waxed warm and strange,
With thoughts of ransom, rescue, and revenge;
All, save repose or flight: still lingering there
Breathed Conrad's spirit, and forbade despair;
Whate'er his fate — the breasts he formed and led
Will save him living, or appease him dead.
Woe to his foes! there yet survive a few,
Whose deeds are daring, as their hearts are true.

V.

Within the Haram's secret chamber sate
Stern Seyd, still pondering o'er his Captive's fate; 1300
His thoughts on love and hate alternate dwell,
Now with Gulnare, and now in Conrad's cell;
Here at his feet the lovely slave reclined
Surveys his brow — would soothe his gloom of mind;
While many an anxious glance her large dark eye
Sends in its idle search for sympathy,
His only bends in seeming o'er his beads,
But inly views his victim as he bleeds.

“Pacha! the day is thine; and on thy crest
Sits Triumph — Conrad taken — fall'n the rest! 1310
His doom is fixed — he dies; and well his fate
Was earned — yet much too worthless for thy hate:
Methinks, a short release, for ransom told
With all his treasure, not unwisely sold;
Report speaks largely of his pirate-hoard —
Would that of this my Pacha were the lord!
While baffled, weakened by this fatal fray —
Watched — followed — he were then an easier prey;
But once cut off — the remnant of his band
Embark their wealth, and seek a safer strand.” 1320

“Gulnare! — if for each drop of blood a gem
Where offered rich as Stamboul's diadem;
If for each hair of his a massy mine
Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;
If all our Arab tales divulge or dream
Of wealth were here — that gold should not redeem!
It had not now redeemed a single hour,
But that I know him fettered, in my power;
And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
On pangs that longest rack — and latest kill.” 1330

“Nay, Seyd! I seek not to restrain thy rage,
Too justly moved for Mercy to assuage;

My thoughts were only to secure for thee
His riches — thus released, he were not free:
Disabled — shorn of half his might and band,
His capture could but wait thy first command.”

“His capture *could!* — and shall I then resign
One day to him — the wretch already mine?
Release my foe! — at whose remonstrance? — thine!
Fair suitor! — to thy virtuous gratitude, ¹³⁴⁰
That thus repays this Giaour’s relenting mood,
Which thee and thine alone of all could spare —
No doubt, regardless — if the prize were fair —
My thanks and praise alike are due — now hear!
I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
I do mistrust thee, Woman! and each word
Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.
Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai —
Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?
Thou need’st not answer — thy confession speaks, ¹³⁵⁰
Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks:
Then — lovely Dame — bethink thee! and beware:
‘Tis not *his* life alone may claim such care!
Another word and — nay — I need no more.
Accursed was the moment when he bore
Thee from the flames, which better far — but no —
I then had mourned thee with a lover’s woe —
Now ‘tis thy lord that warns — deceitful thing!
Know’st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?
In words alone I am not wont to chafe: ¹³⁶⁰
Look to thyself — nor deem thy falsehood safe!”

He rose — and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,
Rage in his eye, and threats in his adieu:
Ah! little recked that Chief of womanhood —
Which frowns ne’er quelled, nor menaces subdued;
And little deemed he what thy heart, Gulnare!
When soft could feel — and when incensed could dare!
His doubts appeared to wrong — nor yet she knew

How deep the root from whence Compassion grew —
She was a slave — from such may captives claim 1370
A fellow-feeling, differing but in name;
Still half unconscious — heedless of his wrath,
Again she ventured on the dangerous path,
Again his rage repelled — until arose
That strife of thought, the source of Woman's woes!

VI.

Meanwhile — long — anxious — weary — still the same
Rolled day and night: his soul could Terror tame —
This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead;
When every step that echoed by the gate, 1380
Might entering lead where axe and stake await;
When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear;
Could Terror tame — that Spirit stern and high
Had proved unwilling as unfit to die;
'Twas worn — perhaps decayed — yet silent bore
That conflict, deadlier far than all before:
The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale,
Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail:
But bound and fixed in fettered solitude, 1390
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;
To gaze on thine own heart — and meditate
Irrevocable faults, and coming fate —
Too late the last to shun — the first to mend —
To count the hours that struggle to thine end,
With not a friend to animate and tell
To other ears that Death became thee well;
Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot Life's latest scene with calumny;
Before thee tortures, which the Soul can dare, 1400
Yet doubts how well the shrinking flesh may bear;
But deeply feels a single cry would shame,
To Valour's praise thy last and dearest claim;
The life thou leav'st below, denied above

By kind monopolists of heavenly love;
And more than doubtful Paradise — thy Heaven
Of earthly hope — thy loved one from thee riven.
Such were the thoughts that outlaw must sustain,
And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
And those sustained he — boots it well or ill? 1410
Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

VII.

The first day passed — he saw not her — Gulnare —
The second, third — and still she came not there;
But what her words avouched, her charms had done,
Or else he had not seen another Sun.
The fourth day rolled along, and with the night
Came storm and darkness in their mingling might.
Oh! how he listened to the rushing deep,
That ne'er till now so broke upon his sleep;
And his wild Spirit wilder wishes sent, 1420
Roused by the roar of his own element!
Oft had he ridden on that wingéd wave,
And loved its roughness for the speed it gave;
And now its dashing echoed on his ear,
A long known voice — alas! too vainly near!
Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
And flashed the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the Midnight Star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragged his chain, 1430
And hoped *that* peril might not prove in vain.
He rais'd his iron hand to Heaven, and prayed
One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
His steel and impious prayer attract alike —
The storm rolled onward, and disdained to strike;
Its peal waxed fainter — ceased — he felt alone,
As if some faithless friend had spurned his groan!

VIII.

The midnight passed, and to the massy door
A light step came — it paused — it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key: 1440
‘Tis as his heart foreboded — that fair She!
Whate’er her sins, to him a Guardian Saint,
And beauteous still as hermit’s hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within that cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame:
On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
Which spoke before her accents — “Thou must die!
Yes, thou must die — there is but one resource,
The last — the worst — if torture were not worse.”

“Lady! I look to none; my lips proclaim 1450
What last proclaimed they — Conrad still the same:
Why should’st thou seek an outlaw’s life to spare,
And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
Well have I earned — nor here alone — the meed
Of Seyd’s revenge, by many a lawless deed.”

“Why should I seek? because — Oh! did’st thou not
Redeem my life from worse than Slavery’s lot?
Why should I seek? — hath Misery made thee blind
To the fond workings of a woman’s mind?
And must I say? — albeit my heart rebel 1460
With all that Woman feels, but should not tell —
Because — despite thy crimes — that heart is moved:
It feared thee — thanked thee — pitied — maddened — loved.
Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
Thou lov’st another — and I love in vain:
Though fond as mine her bosom, form more fair,
I rush through peril which she would not dare.
If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
Were I thine own — thou wert not lonely here:
An outlaw’s spouse — and leave her Lord to roam! 1470
What hath such gentle dame to do with home?
But speak not now — o’er thine and o’er my head
Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread;
If thou hast courage still, and would’st be free,

Receive this poniard — rise and follow me!”

“Aye — in my chains! my steps will gently tread,
With these adornments, o’er such slumbering head!
Thou hast forgot — is this a garb for flight?
Or is that instrument more fit for fight?”

“Misdoubting Corsair! I have gained the guard, 1480
Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
A single word of mine removes that chain:
Without some aid how here could I remain?
Well, since we met, hath sped my busy time,
If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime:
The crime — ‘tis none to punish those of Seyd.
That hatred tyrant, Conrad — he must bleed!
I see thee shudder, but my soul is changed —
Wronged — spurned — reviled — and it shall be avenged —
Accused of what till now my heart disdained — 1490
Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chained.
Yes, smile! — but he had little cause to sneer,
I was not treacherous then, nor thou too dear:
But he has said it — and the jealous well, —
Those tyrants — teasing — tempting to rebel, —
Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell.
I never loved — he bought me — somewhat high —
Since with me came a heart he could not buy.
I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
But for his rescue I with thee had fled. 1500
‘Twas false thou know’st — but let such Augurs rue,
Their words are omens Insult renders true.
Nor was thy respite granted to my prayer;
This fleeting grace was only to prepare
New torments for thy life, and my despair.
Mine too he threatens; but his dotage still
Would fain reserve me for his lordly will:
When wearier of these fleeting charms and me,
There yawns the sack — and yonder rolls the sea!
What, am I then a toy for dotard’s play, 1510
To wear but till the gilding frets away?

I saw thee — loved thee — owe thee all — would save,
If but to show how grateful is a slave.
But had he not thus menaced fame and life, —
And well he keeps his oaths pronounced in strife —
I still had saved thee — but the Pacha spared:
Now I am all thine own — for all prepared:
Thou lov'st me not — nor know'st — or but the worst.
Alas! *this* love — *that* hatred — are the first —
Oh! could'st thou prove my truth, thou would'st not start, 1520
Nor fear the fire that lights an Eastern heart;
'Tis now the beacon of thy safety — now
It points within the port a Mainote prow:
But in one chamber, where our path must lead,
There sleeps — he must not wake — the oppressor Seyd!"

"Gulnare — Gulnare — I never felt till now
My abject fortune, withered fame so low:
Seyd is mine enemy; had swept my band
From earth with ruthless but with open hand,
And therefore came I, in my bark of war, 1530
To smite the smiter with the scimitar;
Such is my weapon — not the secret knife;
Who spares a Woman's seeks not Slumber's life.
Thine saved I gladly, Lady — not for this;
Let me not deem that mercy shown amiss.
Now fare thee well — more peace be with thy breast!
Night wears apace, my last of earthly rest!"

"Rest! rest! by sunrise must thy sinews shake,
And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake,
I heard the order — saw — I will not see — 1540
If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.
My life — my love — my hatred — all below
Are on this cast — Corsair! 'tis but a blow!
Without it flight were idle — how evade
His sure pursuit? — my wrongs too unrepaid,
My youth disgraced — the long, long wasted years,
One blow shall cancel with our future fears;
But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,

I'll try the firmness of a female hand.
The guards are gained — one moment all were o'er — 1550
Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;
If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud
Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud."

IX.

She turned, and vanished ere he could reply,
But his glance followed far with eager eye;
And gathering, as he could, the links that bound
His form, to curl their length, and curb their sound,
Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,
He, fast as fettered limbs allow, pursued.
'Twas dark and winding, and he knew not where 1560
That passage led; nor lamp nor guard was there:
He sees a dusky glimmering — shall he seek
Or shun that ray so indistinct and weak?
Chance guides his steps — a freshness seems to bear
Full on his brow as if from morning air;
He reached an open gallery — on his eye
Gleamed the last star of night, the clearing sky:
Yet scarcely heeded these — another light
From a lone chamber struck upon his sight.
Towards it he moved; a scarcely closing door 1570
Revealed the ray within, but nothing more.
With hasty step a figure outward passed,
Then paused, and turned — and paused — 'tis She at last!
No poniard in that hand, nor sign of ill —
"Thanks to that softening heart — she could not kill!"
Again he looked, the wildness of her eye
Starts from the day abrupt and fearfully.
She stopped — threw back her dark far-floating hair,
That nearly veiled her face and bosom fair,
As if she late had bent her leaning head 1580
Above some object of her doubt or dread.
They meet — upon her brow — unknown — forgot —
Her hurrying hand had left — 'twas but a spot —
Its hue was all he saw, and scarce withstood —

Oh! slight but certain pledge of crime — 'tis Blood!

X.

He had seen battle — he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced Guilt foreshown;
He had been tempted — chastened — and the chain
Yet on his arms might ever there remain:
But ne'er from strife — captivity — remorse — 1590
From all his feelings in their inmost force —
So thrilled, so shuddered every creeping vein,
As now they froze before that purple stain.
That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,
Had banished all the beauty from her cheek!
Blood he had viewed — could view unmoved — but then
It flowed in combat, or was shed by men!

XI.

“'Tis done — he nearly waked — but it is done.
Corsair! he perished — thou art dearly won.
All words would now be vain — away — away! 1600
Our bark is tossing — 'tis already day.
The few gained over, now are wholly mine,
And these thy yet surviving band shall join:
Anon my voice shall vindicate my hand,
When once our sail forsakes this hated strand.”

XII.

She clapped her hands, and through the gallery pour,
Equipped for flight, her vassals — Greek and Moor;
Silent but quick they stoop, his chains unbind;
Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heavy heart such sadness sate, 1610
As if they there transferred that iron weight.
No words are uttered — at her sign, a door
Reveals the secret passage to the shore;
The city lies behind — they speed, they reach

The glad waves dancing on the yellow beach;
And Conrad following, at her beck, obeyed,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betrayed;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

XIII.

Embarked — the sail unfurled — the light breeze blew — 1620
How much had Conrad's memory to review!
Sunk he in contemplation, till the Cape
Where last he anchored reared its giant shape.
Ah! — since that fatal night, though brief the time,
Had swept an age of terror, grief, and crime.
As its far shadow frowned above the mast,
He veiled his face, and sorrowed as he passed;
He thought of all — Gonsalvo and his band,
His fleeting triumph and his failing hand;
He thought on her afar, his lonely bride: 1630
He turned and saw — Gulnare, the Homicide!

XIV.

She watched his features till she could not bear
Their freezing aspect and averted air;
And that strange fierceness foreign to her eye
Fell quenched in tears, too late to shed or dry.
She knelt beside him and his hand she pressed,
"Thou may'st forgive though Allah's self detest;
But for that deed of darkness what wert thou?
Reproach me — but not yet — Oh! spare me *now*!
I am not what I seem — this fearful night 1640
My brain bewildered — do not madden quite!
If I had never loved — though less my guilt —
Thou hadst not lived to — hate me — if thou wilt."

XV.

She wrongs his thoughts — they more himself upbraid

Than her — though undesigned — the wretch he made;
But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexpressed,
They bleed within that silent cell — his breast.
Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge;
Far on the Horizon's verge appears a speck, 1650
A spot — a mast — a sail — an armed deck!
Their little bark her men of watch descry,
And ampler canvass woos the wind from high;
She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier;
A flash is seen — the ball beyond her bow
Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.
Up rose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance;
“‘Tis mine — my blood-rag flag! again — again — 1660
I am not all deserted on the main!”
They own the signal, answer to the hail,
Hoist out the boat at once, and slacken sail.
“‘Tis Conrad! Conrad!” shouting from the deck,
Command nor Duty could their transport check!
With light alacrity and gaze of Pride,
They view him mount once more his vessel's side;
A smile relaxing in each rugged face,
Their arms can scarce forbear a rough embrace.
He, half forgetting danger and defeat, 1670
Returns their greeting as a Chief may greet,
Wrings with a cordial grasp Anselmo's hand,
And feels he yet can conquer and command!

XVI.

These greetings o'er, the feelings that o'erflow,
Yet grieve to win him back without a blow;
They sailed prepared for vengeance — had they known
A woman's hand secured that deed her own,
She were their Queen — less scrupulous are they
Than haughty Conrad how they win their way.
With many an asking smile, and wondering stare, 1680

They whisper round, and gaze upon Gulnare;
And her, at once above — beneath her sex,
Whom blood appalled not, their regards perplex.
To Conrad turns her faint imploring eye,
She drops her veil, and stands in silence by;
Her arms are meekly folded on that breast,
Which — Conrad safe — to Fate resigned the rest.
Though worse than frenzy could that bosom fill,
Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
The worst of crimes had left her Woman still! 1690

XVII.

This Conrad marked, and felt — ah! could he less? —
Hate of that deed — but grief for her distress;
What she has done no tears can wash away,
And Heaven must punish on its angry day:
But — it was done: he knew, whate'er her guilt,
For him that poniard smote, that blood was spilt;
And he was free! — and she for him had given
Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven!
And now he turned him to that dark-eyed slave
Whose brow was bowed beneath the glance he gave, 1700
Who now seemed changed and humbled, faint and meek,
But varying oft the colour of her cheek
To deeper shades of paleness — all its red
That fearful spot which stained it from the dead!
He took that hand — it trembled — now too late —
So soft in love — so wildly nerved in hate;
He clasped that hand — it trembled — and his own
Had lost its firmness, and his voice its tone.
“Gulnare!” — but she replied not — “dear Gulnare!”
She raised her eye — her only answer there — 1710
At once she sought and sunk in his embrace:
If he had driven her from that resting-place,
His had been more or less than mortal heart,
But — good or ill — it bade her not depart.
Perchance, but for the bodings of his breast,
His latest virtue then had joined the rest.

Yet even Medora might forgive the kiss
That asked from form so fair no more than this,
The first, the last that Frailty stole from Faith —
To lips where Love had lavished all his breath, 1720
To lips — whose broken sighs such fragrance fling,
As he had fanned them freshly with his wing!

XVIII.

They gain by twilight's hour their lonely isle.
To them the very rocks appear to smile;
The haven hums with many a cheering sound,
The beacons blaze their wonted stations round,
The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
And sportive Dolphins bend them through the spray;
Even the hoarse sea-bird's shrill, discordant shriek,
Greets like the welcome of his tuneless beak! 1730
Beneath each lamp that through its lattice gleams,
Their fancy paints the friends that trim the beams.
Oh! what can sanctify the joys of home,
Like Hope's gay glance from Ocean's troubled foam?

XIX.

The lights are high on beacon and from bower,
And 'midst them Conrad seeks Medora's tower:
He looks in vain — 'tis strange — and all remark,
Amid so many, hers alone is dark.
'Tis strange — of yore its welcome never failed,
Nor now, perchance, extinguished — only veiled. 1740
With the first boat descends he for the shore,
And looks impatient on the lingering oar.
Oh! for a wing beyond the falcon's flight,
To bear him like an arrow to that height!
With the first pause the resting rowers gave,
He waits not — looks not — leaps into the wave,
Strives through the surge, bestrides the beach, and high
Ascends the path familiar to his eye.

He reached his turret door — he paused — no sound
Broke from within; and all was night around. 1750
He knocked, and loudly — footstep nor reply
Announced that any heard or deemed him nigh:
He knocked, but faintly — for his trembling hand
Refused to aid his heavy heart's demand.
The portal opens — 'tis a well known face —
But not the form he panted to embrace.
Its lips are silent — twice his own essayed,
And failed to frame the question they delayed;
He snatched the lamp — its light will answer all —
It quits his grasp, expiring in the fall. 1760
He would not wait for that reviving ray —
As soon could he have lingered there for day;
But, glimmering through the dusky corridor,
Another chequers o'er the shadowed floor;
His steps the chamber gain — his eyes behold
All that his heart believed not — yet foretold!

XX.

He turned not — spoke not — sunk not — fixed his look,
And set the anxious frame that lately shook:
He gazed — how long we gaze despite of pain,
And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain! 1770
In life itself she was so still and fair,
That Death with gentler aspect withered there;
And the cold flowers her colder hand contained,
In that last grasp as tenderly were strained
As if she scarcely felt, but feigned a sleep —
And made it almost mockery yet to weep:
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of snow,
And veiled — Thought shrinks from all that lurked below — Oh!
o'er the eye Death most exerts his might,
And hurls the Spirit from her throne of light; 1780
Sinks those blue orbs in that long last eclipse,
But spares, as yet, the charm around her lips —
Yet, yet they seem as they forebore to smile,
And wished repose, — but only for a while;

But the white shroud, and each extended tress,
Long, fair — but spread in utter lifelessness,
Which, late the sport of every summer wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to bind;
These — and the pale pure cheek, became the bier —
But She is nothing — wherefore is he here? 1790

XXI.

He asked no question — all were answered now
By the first glance on that still, marble brow.
It was enough — she died — what recked it how?
The love of youth, the hope of better years,
The source of softest wishes, tenderest fears,
The only living thing he could not hate,
Was reft at once — and he deserved his fate,
But did not feel it less; — the Good explore,
For peace, those realms where Guilt can never soar:
The proud, the wayward — who have fixed below 1800
Their joy, and find this earth enough for woe,
Lose in that one their all — perchance a mite —
But who in patience parts with all delight?
Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern
Mask hearts where Grief hath little left to learn;
And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,
In smiles that least befit who wear them most.

XXII.

By those, that deepest feel, is ill exprest
The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
Where thousand thoughts begin to end in one, 1810
Which seeks from all the refuge found in none;
No words suffice the secret soul to show,
For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
On Conrad's stricken soul Exhaustion prest,
And Stupor almost lulled it into rest;
So feeble now — his mother's softness crept
To those wild eyes, which like an infant's wept:

It was the very weakness of his brain,
Which thus confessed without relieving pain.
None saw his trickling tears — perchance, if seen, 1820
That useless flood of grief had never been:
Nor long they flowed — he dried them to depart,
In helpless — hopeless — brokenness of heart:
The Sun goes forth, but Conrad's day is dim:
And the night cometh — ne'er to pass from him.
There is no darkness like the cloud of mind,
On Grief's vain eye — the blindest of the blind!
Which may not — dare not see — but turns aside
To blackest shade — nor will endure a guide!

XXIII.

His heart was formed for softness — warped to wrong, 1830
Betrayed too early, and beguiled too long;
Each feeling pure — as falls the dropping dew
Within the grot — like that had hardened too;
Less clear, perchance, its earthly trials passed,
But sunk, and chilled, and petrified at last.
Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves the rock;
If such his heart, so shattered it the shock.
There grew one flower beneath its rugged brow,
Though dark the shade — it sheltered — saved till now.
The thunder came — that bolt hath blasted both, 1840
The Granite's firmness, and the Lily's growth:
The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
Its tale, but shrunk and withered where it fell;
And of its cold protector, blacken round
But shivered fragments on the barren ground!

XXIV.

'Tis morn — to venture on his lonely hour
Few dare; though now Anselmo sought his tower.
He was not there, nor seen along the shore;
Ere night, alarmed, their isle is traversed o'er:
Another morn — another bids them seek, 1850

And shout his name till Echo waxeth weak;
Mount — grotto — cavern — valley searched in vain,
They find on shore a sea-boat's broken chain:
Their hope revives — they follow o'er the main.
'Tis idle all — moons roll on moons away,
And Conrad comes not, came not since that day:
Nor trace nor tidings of his doom declare
Where lives his grief, or perished his despair!
Long mourned his band whom none could mourn beside;
And fair the monument they gave his Bride: 1860
For him they raise not the recording stone —
His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known;
He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Linked with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.

LARA

A TALE.

INTRODUCTION

The MS. of *Lara* is dated May 14, 1814. The opening lines, which were not prefixed to the published poem, and were first printed in *Murray's Magazine* (January, 1887), are of the nature of a Dedication. They were probably written a few days after the well-known song, "I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name," which was enclosed to Moore in a letter dated May 4, 1814. There can be little doubt that both song and dedication were addressed to Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster, and that *Lara*, like the *Corsair* and the *Bride of Abydos*, was written *con amore*, and because the poet was "eating his heart away."

By the 14th of June Byron was able to announce to Moore that "*Lara* was finished, and that he had begun copying." It was written, owing to the length of the London season, "amidst balls and fooleries, and after coming home from masquerades and routs, in the summer of the sovereigns" (Letter to Moore, June 8, 1822, *Life*, p. 561).

By way of keeping his engagement — already broken by the publication of the *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* — not to "trespass on public patience," Byron began by protesting (June 14) that *Lara* was not to be published separately, but "might be included in a third volume now collecting." A fortnight later (June 27) an interchange of unpublished poems between himself and Rogers, "two cantos of darkness and dismay" in return for a privately printed copy of *Jacqueline*, who is "all grace and softness and poetry" (Letter to Rogers, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 101), suggested another and happier solution of the difficulty, a coalescing with Rogers, and, if possible, Moore (*Life*, 1892, p. 257, note 2), "into a joint invasion of the public" (Letter to Moore, July 8, 1814, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 102). But Rogers hesitated, and Moore refused to embark on so doubtful a venture, with the result that, as late as the 3rd of August, Byron thought fit to remonstrate with Murray for "advertising *Lara and Jacqueline*," and confessed to Moore that he was "still demurring and delaying and in a fuss" (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 115, 119). Murray knew his man, and, though he waited for Byron's formal and ostensibly reluctant word of command, "Out with *Lara*, since it must be" (August 5, 1814, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 122), he admitted (August 6, *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 230) that he had "anticipated his consent," and "had done everything but actually

deliver the copies of *Lara*.” “The moment,” he adds, “I received your letter, for for it I waited, I cut the last cord of my aerial work, and at this instant 6000 copies are sold.” *Lara, a Tale; Jacqueline, a Tale*, was published on Saturday, August 6, 1814.

Jacqueline is a somewhat insipid pastoral, betraying the influence of the Lake School, more especially Coleridge, on a belated and irresponsible disciple, and wholly out of place as contrast or foil to the melodramatic *Lara*.

No sooner had the “lady,” as Byron was pleased to call her, played her part as decoy, than she was discharged as *emerita*. A week after publication (August 12, 1814, *Letters*, iii. 125) Byron told Moore that “Murray talks of divorcing Larry and Jacky — a bad sign for the authors, who will, I suppose, be divorced too.... Seriously, I don’t care a cigar about it.” The divorce was soon pronounced, and, contrary to Byron’s advice (September 2, 1814, *Letters*, iii. 131), at least four separate editions of *Lara* were published during the autumn of 1814.

The “advertisement” to *Lara and Jacqueline* contains the plain statement that “the reader ... may probably regard it [*Lara*] as a sequel to the *Corsair*” — an admission on the author’s part which forestalls and renders nugatory any prolonged discussion on the subject. It is evident that *Lara* is Conrad, and that Kaled, the “darkly delicate” and mysterious page, whose “hand is femininely white,” is Gulnare in a transparent and temporary disguise.

If the facts which the “English Gentleman in the Greek Military Service” (*Life, Writings, etc., of Lord Byron*, 1825, i. 191-201) gives in detail with regard to the sources of the *Corsair* are not wholly imaginary, it is possible that the original Conrad’s determination to “quit so horrible a mode of life” and return to civilization may have suggested to Byron the possible adventures and fate of a *grand seigneur* who had played the pirate in his time, and resumed his ancestral dignities only to be detected and exposed by some rival or victim of his wild and lawless youth.

Lara was reviewed together with the *Corsair*, by George Agar Ellis in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1814, vol. xi. p. 428; and in the *Portfolio*, vol. xiv. p. 33.

LARA

CANTO THE FIRST

I.

The Serfs are glad through Lara's wide domain,
And Slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhop'd, but unforgotten lord,
The long self-exil'd Chieftain, is restored:
There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall;
Far checkering o'er the pictured window, plays
The unwonted faggot's hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth. 10

II.

The Chief of Lara is returned again:
And why had Lara crossed the bounding main?
Left by his Sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself, — that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest! —
With none to check, and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime;
Then, when he most required commandment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood governed men. 20
It skills not, boots not step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of its race;
Short was the course his restlessness had run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III.

And Lara left in youth his father-land;
But from the hour he waved his parting hand

Each trace waxed fainter of his course, till all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.
His sire was dust, his vassals could declare,
'Twas all they knew, that Lara was not there; 30
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had died;
"Yet doth he live!" exclaims the impatient heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy grace
The Laras' last and longest dwelling-place; 40
But one is absent from the mouldering file,
That now were welcome in that Gothic pile.

IV.

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greeting's o'er
Not that he came, but came not long before:
No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect, and of tender age.
Years had rolled on, and fast they speed away
To those that wander as to those that stay; 50
But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.
They see, they recognise, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his Manhood's prime,
Though seared by toil, and something touched by Time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;
Nor good nor ill of late were known, his name
Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame: 60
His soul in youth was haughty, but his sins

No more than pleasure from the stripling wins;
And such, if not yet hardened in their course,
Might be redeemed, nor ask a long remorse.

V.

And they indeed were changed — 'tis quickly seen,
Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had been:
That brow in furrowed lines had fixed at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past:
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise; 70
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound;
All these seemed his, and something more beneath
Than glance could well reveal, or accent breathe.
Ambition, Glory, Love, the common aim,
That some can conquer, and that all would claim, 80
Within his breast appeared no more to strive,
Yet seemed as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lightened o'er his livid face.

VI.

Not much he loved long question of the past,
Nor told of wondrous wilds, and deserts vast,
In those far lands where he had wandered lone,
And — as himself would have it seem — unknown:
Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely scan,
Nor glean experience from his fellow man; 90
But what he had beheld he shunned to show,
As hardly worth a stranger's care to know;
If still more prying such inquiry grew,
His brow fell darker, and his words more few.

VII.

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of men;
Born of high lineage, linked in high command,
He mingled with the Magnates of his land;
Joined the carousals of the great and gay,
And saw them smile or sigh their hours away; 100
But still he only saw, and did not share,
The common pleasure or the general care;
He did not follow what they all pursued
With hope still baffled still to be renewed;
Nor shadowy Honour, nor substantial Gain,
Nor Beauty's preference, and the rival's pain:
Around him some mysterious circle thrown
Repelled approach, and showed him still alone;
Upon his eye sat something of reproof,
That kept at least Frivolity aloof; 110
And things more timid that beheld him near
In silence gazed, or whispered mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few confessed
They deemed him better than his air expressed.

VIII.

Twas strange — in youth all action and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman — the Field — the Ocean, all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried — he ransacked all below,
And found his recompense in joy or woe, 120
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings sought
In that intenseness an escape from thought:
The Tempest of his Heart in scorn had gazed
On that the feebler Elements hath raised;
The Rapture of his Heart had looked on high,
And asked if greater dwelt beyond the sky:
Chained to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of that dream!

Alas! he told not — but he did awake
To curse the withered heart that would not break. 130

IX.

Books, for his volume heretofore was Man,
With eye more curious he appeared to scan,
And oft in sudden mood, for many a day,
From all communion he would start away:
And then, his rarely called attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his hurried tread
O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frowned
In rude but antique portraiture around:
They heard, but whispered — "*that* must not be known —
The sound of words less earthly than his own. 140
Yes, they who chose might smile, but some had seen
They scarce knew what, but more than should have been.
Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
Which hands profane had gathered from the dead,
That still beside his opened volume lay,
As if to startle all save him away?
Why slept he not when others were at rest?
Why heard no music, and received no guest?
All was not well, they deemed — but where the wrong?
Some knew perchance — but 'twere a tale too long; 150
And such besides were too discreetly wise,
To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;
But if they would — they could" — around the board
Thus Lara's vassals prattled of their lord.

X.

It was the night — and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged beam;
So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like Happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high

The immortal lights that live along the sky: 160
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.
These deck the shore; the waves their channel make
In windings bright and mazy like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night! 170
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deemed, nor longer there he stood,
But turned in silence to his castle-gate;
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate:
Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now —
No — no — the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt, unsparing — but a night like this,
A night of Beauty, mocked such breast as his. 180

XI.

He turned within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall:
There were the painted forms of other times,
‘Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults;
And half a column of the pompous page,
That speeds the specious tale from age to age;
Where History’s pen its praise or blame supplies,
And lies like Truth, and still most truly lies. 190
He wandering mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice, o’er the floor of stone,
And the high fretted roof, and saints, that there

O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer,
Reflected in fantastic figures grew,
Like life, but not like mortal life, to view;
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes — and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave. 200

XII.

'Twas midnight — all was slumber; the lone light
Dimmed in the lamp, as both to break the night.
Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's hall —
A sound — a voice — a shriek — a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek — and silence — did they hear
That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?
They heard and rose, and, tremulously brave,
Rush where the sound invoked their aid to save;
They come with half-lit tapers in their hands,
And snatched in startled haste unbelted brands. 210

XIII.

Cold as the marble where his length was laid,
Pale as the beam that o'er his features played,
Was Lara stretched; his half-drawn sabre near,
Dropped it should seem in more than Nature's fear;
Yet he was firm, or had been firm till now,
And still Defiance knit his gathered brow;
Though mixed with terror, senseless as he lay,
There lived upon his lip the wish to slay;
Some half formed threat in utterance there had died,
Some imprecation of despairing Pride; 220
His eye was almost sealed, but not forsook,
Even in its trance, the gladiator's look,
That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
And now was fixed in horrible repose.
They raise him — bear him; — hush! he breathes, he speaks,
The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks,

His lip resumes its red, his eye, though dim,
Rolls wide and wild, each slowly quivering limb
Recalls its function, but his words are strung
In terms that seem not of his native tongue; 230
Distinct but strange, enough they understand
To deem them accents of another land;
And such they were, and meant to meet an ear
That hears him not — alas! that cannot hear!

XIV.

His page approached, and he alone appeared
To know the import of the words they heard;
And, by the changes of his cheek and brow,
They were not such as Lara should avow,
Nor he interpret, — yet with less surprise
Than those around their Chieftain's state he eyes, 240
But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
And in that tongue which seemed his own replied;
And Lara heeds those tones that gently seem
To soothe away the horrors of his dream —
If dream it were, that thus could overthrow
A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV.

Whate'er his frenzy dreamed or eye beheld, —
If yet remembered ne'er to be revealed, —
Rests at his heart: the custom'd morning came,
And breathed new vigour in his shaken frame; 250
And solace sought he none from priest nor leech,
And soon the same in movement and in speech,
As heretofore he filled the passing hours,
Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead lowers,
Than these were wont; and if the coming night
Appeared less welcome now to Lara's sight,
He to his marvelling vassals showed it not,
Whose shuddering proved *their* fear was less forgot.
In trembling pairs (alone they dared not) crawl

The astonished slaves, and shun the fated hall; 260
The waving banner, and the clapping door,
The rustling tapestry, and the echoing floor;
The long dim shadows of surrounding trees,
The flapping bat, the night song of the breeze;
Aught they behold or hear their thought appals,
As evening saddens o'er the dark grey walls.

XVI.

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravelled gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness, that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid. 270
Had Memory vanished then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betrayed a feeling that recalled to these
That fevered moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppressed, o'erlaboured heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffered so forget,
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet? 280
Or did that silence prove his memory fixed
Too deep for words, indelible, unmixed
In that corroding secrecy which gnaws
The heart to show the effect, but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choke the feeble words that would unfold.

XVII.

In him inexplicably mixed appeared
Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared; 290

Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot:
His silence formed a theme for others' prate —
They guessed — they gazed — they fain would know his fate.
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walked their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,
With them he could seem gay amidst the gay;
But owned that smile, if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth, and withered to a sneer; 300
That smile might reach his lip, but passed not by,
Nor e'er could trace its laughter to his eye:
Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his Spirit seemed to chide
Such weakness, as unworthy of its pride,
And steeled itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which Tenderness might once have wrung from Rest; 310
In vigilance of Grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII.

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fallen which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring Spirit from another hurled;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped;
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret: 320
With more capacity for love than Earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth.
His early dreams of good outstripped the truth,
And troubled Manhood followed baffled Youth;
With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent;

And fiery passions that had poured their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife
In wild reflection o'er his stormy life; 330
But haughty still, and loth himself to blame,
He called on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul, and feast the worm:
Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will:
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity — not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought, 340
That swayed him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soared beyond, or sunk beneath,
The men with whom he felt condemned to breathe,
And longed by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state;
His mind abhorring this had fixed her throne
Far from the world, in regions of her own: 350
Thus coldly passing all that passed below,
His blood in temperate seeming now would flow:
Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had glowed,
But ever in that icy smoothness flowed!
'Tis true, with other men their path he walked,
And like the rest in seeming did and talked,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor start,
His Madness was not of the head, but heart;
And rarely wandered in his speech, or drew
His thoughts so forth as to offend the view. 360

XIX.

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
And seeming gladness to remain unseen,

He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an art
Of fixing memory on another's heart:
It was not love perchance — nor hate — nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And once beheld — would ask of him again:
And those to whom he spake remembered well,
And on the words, however light, would dwell: 370
None knew, nor how, nor why, but he entwined
Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
There he was stamped, in liking, or in hate,
If greeted once; however brief the date
That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
Still there within the inmost thought he grew.
You could not penetrate his soul, but found,
Despite your wonder, to your own he wound;
His presence haunted still; and from the breast
He forced an all unwilling interest: 380
Vain was the struggle in that mental net —
His Spirit seemed to dare you to forget!

XX.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear — a high-born and a welcome guest
To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
The long carousal shakes the illumined hall,
Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain: 390
Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
That mingle there in well according bands;
It is a sight the careful brow might smooth,
And make Age smile, and dream itself to youth,
And Youth forget such hour was past on earth,
So springs the exulting bosom to that mirth!

XXI.

And Lara gazed on these, sedately glad,
His brow belied him if his soul was sad;
And his glance followed fast each fluttering fair,
Whose steps of lightness woke no echo there: 400
He leaned against the lofty pillar nigh,
With folded arms and long attentive eye,
Nor marked a glance so sternly fixed on his —
Ill brooked high Lara scrutiny like this:
At length he caught it — 'tis a face unknown,
But seems as searching his, and his alone;
Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
Who still till now had gazed on him unseen:
At length encountering meets the mutual gaze
Of keen enquiry, and of mute amaze; 410
On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
As if distrusting that the stranger threw;
Along the stranger's aspect, fixed and stern,
Flashed more than thence the vulgar eye could learn.

XXII.

“‘Tis he!” the stranger cried, and those that heard
Re-echoed fast and far the whispered word.
“‘Tis he!” — “‘Tis who?” they question far and near,
Till louder accents rung on Lara's ear;
So widely spread, few bosoms well could brook
The general marvel, or that single look: 420
But Lara stirred not, changed not, the surprise
That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
Seemed now subsided — neither sunk nor raised
Glanced his eye round, though still the stranger gazed;
And drawing nigh, exclaimed, with haughty sneer,
“‘Tis he! — how came he thence? — what doth he here?”

XXIII.

It were too much for Lara to pass by
Such questions, so repeated fierce and high;
With look collected, but with accent cold,

More mildly firm than petulantly bold, 430
He turned, and met the inquisitorial tone —
“My name is Lara — when thine own is known,
Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
The unlooked for courtesy of such a knight.
‘Tis Lara! — further wouldst thou mark or ask?
I shun no question, and I wear no mask.”

“Thou *shunn*’st no question! Ponder — is there none
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun?
And deem’st thou me unknown too? Gaze again!
At least thy memory was not given in vain. 440
Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt —
Eternity forbids thee to forget.”
With slow and searching glance upon his face
Grew Lara’s eyes, but nothing there could trace
They knew, or chose to know — with dubious look
He deigned no answer, but his head he shook,
And half contemptuous turned to pass away;
But the stern stranger motioned him to stay.

“A word! — I charge thee stay, and answer here
To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy peer, 450
But as thou wast and art — nay, frown not, Lord,
If false, ‘tis easy to disprove the word —
But as thou wast and art, on thee looks down,
Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy frown.
Art thou not he? whose deeds — — “
“Whate’er I be,
Words wild as these, accusers like to thee,
I list no further; those with whom they weigh
May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay
The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue can tell,
Which thus begins so courteously and well. 460
Let Otho cherish here his polished guest,
To him my thanks and thoughts shall be expressed.”
And here their wondering host hath interposed —
“Whate’er there be between you undisclosed,
This is no time nor fitting place to mar

The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.
If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast aught to show
Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,
To-morrow, here, or elsewhere, as may best
Beseem your mutual judgment, speak the rest; 470
I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,
Though, like Count Lara, now returned alone
From other lands, almost a stranger grown;
And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
I augur right of courage and of worth,
He will not that untainted line belie,
Nor aught that Knighthood may accord, deny."

"To-morrow be it," Ezzelin replied,
"And here our several worth and truth be tried;
I gage my life, my falchion to attest 480
My words, so may I mingle with the blest!"
What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk;
The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gathered, seemed on him to fall;
But his were silent, his appeared to stray
In far forgetfulness away — away —
Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV.

"To-morrow! — aye, to-morrow!" further word 490
Than those repeated none from Lara heard;
Upon his brow no outward passion spoke;
From his large eye no flashing anger broke;
Yet there was something fixed in that low tone,
Which showed resolve, determined, though unknown.
He seized his cloak — his head he slightly bowed,
And passing Ezzelin, he left the crowd;
And, as he passed him, smiling met the frown
With which that Chieftain's brow would bear him down:
It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling pride 500

That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot hide;
But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.
Could this mean peace? the calmness of the good?
Or guilt grown old in desperate hardihood?
Alas! too like in confidence are each,
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;
From deeds, and deeds alone, may he discern
Truths which it wrings the unpractised heart to learn.

XXV.

And Lara called his page, and went his way — 510
Well could that stripling word or sign obey:
His only follower from those climes afar,
Where the Soul glows beneath a brighter star:
For Lara left the shore from whence he sprung,
In duty patient, and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his faith appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's land,
In such from him he rarely heard command;
But fleet his step, and clear his tones would come, 520
When Lara's lip breathed forth the words of home:
Those accents, as his native mountains dear,
Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends' — kindred's — parents' — wonted voice recall,
Now lost, abjured, for one — his friend, his all:
For him earth now disclosed no other guide;
What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI.

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had sate,
But had not marred, though in his beams he grew, 530
The cheek where oft the unbidden blush shone through;
Yet not such blush as mounts when health would show
All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;

But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care
That for a burning moment fevered there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seemed caught
From high, and lightened with electric thought,
Though its black orb those long low lashes' fringe
Had tempered with a melancholy tinge;
Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there, 540
Or, if 'twere grief, a grief that none should share:
And pleased not him the sports that please his age,
The tricks of Youth, the frolics of the Page;
For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all-forgotten in that watchful trance;
And from his chief withdrawn, he wandered lone,
Brief were his answers, and his questions none;
His walk the wood, his sport some foreign book;
His resting-place the bank that curbs the brook:
He seemed, like him he served, to live apart 550
From all that lures the eye, and fills the heart;
To know no brotherhood, and take from earth
No gift beyond that bitter boon — our birth.

XXVII.

If aught he loved, 'twas Lara; but was shown
His faith in reverence and in deeds alone;
In mute attention; and his care, which guessed
Each wish, fulfilled it ere the tongue expressed.
Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brooked not to be chid;
His zeal, though more than that of servile hands, 560
In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 'twas Lara's less than *his* desire
That thus he served, but surely not for hire.
Slight were the tasks enjoined him by his Lord,
To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or, if he willed it more,
On tomes of other times and tongues to pore;
But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he showed nor deference nor disdain,

But that well-worn reserve which proved he knew 570
No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,
Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seemed, and better days,
Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak
Another sex, when matched with that smooth cheek,
But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than Woman's eye betrays;
A latent fierceness that far more became 580
His fiery climate than his tender frame:
True, in his words it broke not from his breast,
But from his aspect might be more than guessed.
Kaled his name, though rumour said he bore
Another ere he left his mountain-shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however nigh,
That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar — or, if roused again,
Start to the sound, as but remembered then;
Unless 'twas Lara's wonted voice that spake, 590
For then — ear — eyes — and heart would all awake.

XXVIII.

He had looked down upon the festive hall,
And mark'd that sudden strife so marked of all:
And when the crowd around and near him told
Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,
Their marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-drops threw 600
The sickening iciness of that cold dew,
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which Reflection shrinks.
Yes — there be things which we must dream and dare,
And execute ere thought be half aware:

Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast
That sidelong smile upon the knight he past;
When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell, 610
As if on something recognised right well:
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore:
Forward he sprung — a moment, both were gone,
And all within that hall seemed left alone;
Each had so fixed his eye on Lara's mien,
All had so mixed their feelings with that scene,
That when his long dark shadow through the porch
No more relieves the glare of yon high torch,
Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms seem 620
To bound as doubting from too black a dream,
Such as we know is false, yet dread in sooth,
Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone — but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remained not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho, and retired.

XXIX.

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest;
The courteous host, and all-approving guest,
Again to that accustomed couch must creep 630
Where Joy subsides, and Sorrow sighs to sleep,
And Man, o'erlaboured with his Being's strife,
Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life:
There lie Love's feverish hope, and Cunning's guile,
Hate's working brain, and lulled Ambition's wile;
O'er each vain eye Oblivion's pinions wave,
And quenched Existence crouches in a grave.
What better name may Slumber's bed become?
Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where Weakness — Strength — Vice — Virtue — sunk supine, 640
Alike in naked helplessness recline;

Glad for a while to heave unconscious breath,
Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of Death,
And shun — though Day but dawn on ills increased —
That sleep, — the loveliest, since it dreams the least.

CANTO THE SECOND

I.

Night wanes — the vapours round the mountains curled
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world,
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth, 650
The Sun is in the heavens, and Life on earth;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam,
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal Man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, “They are thine!”
Gaze on, while yet thy gladdened eye may see:
A morrow comes when they are not for thee:
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall, 660
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all;
But creeping things shall revel in their spoil,
And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil.

II.

‘Tis morn — ‘tis noon — assembled in the hall,
The gathered Chieftains come to Otho’s call;
‘Tis now the promised hour, that must proclaim
The life or death of Lara’s future fame;
And Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatsoe’er the tale, it must be told.
His faith was pledged, and Lara’s promise given, 670
To meet it in the eye of Man and Heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be divulged,
Methinks the accuser’s rest is long indulged.

III.

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air;
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow's o'er-cast.
"I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
If yet he be on earth, expect him here;
The roof that held him in the valley stands 680
Between my own and noble Lara's lands;
My halls from such a guest had honour gained,
Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdained,
But that some previous proof forbade his stay,
And urged him to prepare against to-day;
The word I pledged for his I pledge again,
Or will myself redeem his knighthood's stain."
He ceased — and Lara answered, "I am here
To lend at thy demand a listening ear
To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue, 690
Whose words already might my heart have wrung,
But that I deemed him scarcely less than mad,
Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
I know him not — but me it seems he knew
In lands where — but I must not trifle too:
Produce this babbler — or redeem the pledge;
Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's edge."

Proud Otho on the instant, reddening, threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew.
"The last alternative befits me best, 700
And thus I answer for mine absent guest."

With cheek unchanging from its sallow gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke
Its grasp well-used to deal the sabre-stroke;
With eye, though calm, determined not to spare,
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.
In vain the circling Chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed;
And from his lip those words of insult fell — 710

His sword is good who can maintain them well.

IV.

Short was the conflict; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash:
He bled, and fell; but not with deadly wound,
Stretched by a dextrous sleight along the ground.
“Demand thy life!” He answered not: and then
From that red floor he ne’er had risen again,
For Lara’s brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue;
And fiercer shook his angry falchion now 720
Than when his foe’s was levelled at his brow;
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleavened hatred of his heart;
So little sparing to the foe he felled,
That when the approaching crowd his arm withheld,
He almost turned the thirsty point on those
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose;
But to a moment’s thought that purpose bent;
Yet looked he on him still with eye intent,
As if he loathed the ineffectual strife 730
That left a foe, howe’er o’erthrown, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent its victim onward to his grave.

V.

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the Leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and speech;
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed, and heedless of them all,
The cause and conqueror in this sudden fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away;
He backed his steed, his homeward path he took, 740
Nor cast on Otho’s towers a single look.

VI.

But where was he? that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light.
Where was this Ezzelin? who came and went,
To leave no other trace of his intent.
He left the dome of Otho long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast inquiry, which unfolded nought, 750
Except the absence of the Chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarmed, his murmuring squires distressed:
Their search extends along, around the path,
In dread to meet the marks of prowlers' wrath:
But none are there, and not a brake hath borne
Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle torn;
Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the grass,
Which still retains a mark where Murder was;
Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale, 760
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,
When agonised hands that cease to guard,
Wound in that pang the smoothness of the sward.
Some such had been, if here a life was reft,
But these were not; and doubting Hope is left;
And strange Suspicion, whispering Lara's name,
Now daily mutters o'er his blackened fame;
Then sudden silent when his form appeared,
Awaits the absence of the thing it feared
Again its wonted wondering to renew, 770
And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII.

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are healed,
But not his pride; and hate no more concealed:
He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him woe,

And from his country's justice now demands
Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.
Who else than Lara could have cause to fear
His presence? who had made him disappear,
If not the man on whom his menaced charge 780
Had sate too deeply were he left at large?
The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd;
The seeming friendliness of him who strove
To win no confidence, and wake no love;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul betrayed,
The skill with which he wielded his keen blade;
Where had his arm unwarlike caught that art?
Where had that fierceness grown upon his heart?
For it was not the blind capricious rage 790
A word can kindle and a word assuage;
But the deep working of a soul unmixed
With aught of pity where its wrath had fixed;
Such as long power and overgorged success
Concentrates into all that's merciless:
These, linked with that desire which ever sways
Mankind, the rather to condemn than praise,
'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a storm,
Such as himself might fear, and foes would form,
And he must answer for the absent head 800
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

VIII.

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who worked his wantonness in form of law;
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin
New havoc, such as civil discord blends,

Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or friends; 810
Fixed in his feudal fortress each was lord,
In word and deed obeyed, in soul abhorred.
Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish hands;
But that long absence from his native clime
Had left him stainless of Oppression's crime,
And now, diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away.
The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was grown; 820
They deemed him now unhappy, though at first
Their evil judgment augured of the worst,
And each long restless night, and silent mood,
Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude:
And though his lonely habits threw of late
Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his gate;
For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed withdrew,
For them, at least, his soul compassion knew.
Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,
The humble passed not his unheeding eye; 830
Much he would speak not, but beneath his roof
They found asylum oft, and ne'er reproof.
And they who watched might mark that, day by day,
Some new retainers gathered to his sway;
But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
He played the courteous lord and bounteous host:
Perchance his strife with Otho made him dread
Some snare prepared for his obnoxious head;
Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
With these, the people, than his fellow thanes. 840
If this were policy, so far 'twas sound,
The million judged but of him as they found;
From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
They but required a shelter, and 'twas given.
By him no peasant mourned his rifled cot,
And scarce the Serf could murmur o'er his lot;
With him old Avarice found its hoard secure,
With him contempt forbore to mock the poor;

Youth present cheer and promised recompense
Detained, till all too late to part from thence: 850
To Hate he offered, with the coming change,
The deep reversion of delayed revenge;
To Love, long baffled by the unequal match,
The well-won charms success was sure to snatch.
All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
That slavery nothing which was still a name.
The moment came, the hour when Otho thought
Secure at last the vengeance which he sought:
His summons found the destined criminal
Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall; 860
Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
Defying earth, and confident of heaven.
That morning he had freed the soil-bound slaves,
Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves!
Such is their cry — some watchword for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the right;
Religion — Freedom — Vengeance — what you will,
A word's enough to raise Mankind to kill;
Some factious phrase by cunning caught and spread,
That Guilt may reign-and wolves and worms be fed! 870

IX.

Throughout that clime the feudal Chiefs had gained
Such sway, their infant monarch hardly reigned;
Now was the hour for Faction's rebel growth,
The Serfs contemned the one, and hated both:
They waited but a leader, and they found
One to their cause inseparably bound;
By circumstance compelled to plunge again,
In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
Whom Birth and Nature meant not for his foes, 880
Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst:
Some reason urged, whate'er it was, to shun
Inquiry into deeds at distance done;

By mingling with his own the cause of all,
E'en if he failed, he still delayed his fall.
The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
The storm that once had spent itself and slept,
Roused by events that seemed foredoomed to urge
His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge, 890
Burst forth, and made him all he once had been,
And is again; he only changed the scene.
Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
But not less fitted for the desperate game:
He deemed himself marked out for others' hate,
And mocked at Ruin so they shared his fate.
And cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
He raised the humble but to bend the proud.
He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
But Man and Destiny beset him there: 900
Inured to hunters, he was found at bay;
And they must kill, they cannot snare the prey.
Stern, unambitious, silent, he had been
Henceforth a calm spectator of Life's scene;
But dragged again upon the arena, stood
A leader not unequal to the feud;
In voice — mien — gesture — savage nature spoke,
And from his eye the gladiator broke.

X.

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,
The feast of vultures, and the waste of life? 910
The varying fortune of each separate field,
The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that yield?
The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
In this the struggle was the same with all;
Save that distempered passions lent their force
In bitterness that banished all remorse.
None sued, for Mercy knew her cry was vain,
The captive died upon the battle-plain:
In either cause, one rage alone possessed
The empire of the alternate victor's breast; 920

And they that smote for freedom or for sway,
Deemed few were slain, while more remained to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And Desolation reaped the famished land;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was spread,
And Carnage smiled upon her daily dead.

XI.

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung:
But that vain victory hath ruined all;
They form no longer to their leader's call: 930
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty, and the thirst of hate,
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate:
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew;
In vain their stubborn ardour he would tame,
The hand that kindles cannot quench the flame;
The wary foe alone hath turned their mood,
And shown their rashness to that erring brood: 940
The feigned retreat, the nightly ambuscade,
The daily harass, and the fight delayed,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's art,
And palls the patience of his baffled art,
Of these they had not deemed: the battle-day
They could encounter as a veteran may;
But more preferred the fury of the strife,
And present death, to hourly suffering life: 950
And Famine wrings, and Fever sweeps away
His numbers melting fast from their array;
Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent;
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:

Desperate, though few, the last and best remained
To mourn the discipline they late disdained.
One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native war: 960
And bear within them to the neighbouring state
An exile's sorrows, or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their father-land to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII.

It is resolved — they march — consenting Night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry — Is yon the bank?
Away! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank. 970
Return or fly! — What glitters in the rear?
'Tis Otho's banner — the pursuer's spear!
Are those the shepherds' fires upon the height?
Alas! they blaze too widely for the flight:
Cut off from hope, and compassed in the toil,
Less blood perchance hath bought a richer spoil!

XIII.

A moment's pause — 'tis but to breathe their band,
Or shall they onward press, or here withstand?
It matters little — if they charge the foes
Who by their border-stream their march oppose, 980
Some few, perchance, may break and pass the line,
However linked to baffle such design.
“The charge be ours! to wait for their assault
Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt.”
Forth flies each sabre, reined is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip the deed:
In the next tone of Lara's gathering breath
How many shall but hear the voice of Death!

XIV.

His blade is bared, — in him there is an air
As deep, but far too tranquil for despair; 990
A something of indifference more than then
Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men —
He turned his eye on Kaled, ever near,
And still too faithful to betray one fear;
Perchance 'twas but the moon's dim twilight threw
Along his aspect an unwonted hue
Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint expressed
The truth, and not the terror of his breast.
This Lara marked, and laid his hand on his:
It trembled not in such an hour as this; 1000
His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,
His eye alone proclaimed, "We will not part!
Thy band may perish, or thy friends may flee,
Farewell to Life — but not Adieu to thee!"

The word hath passed his lips, and onward driven,
Pours the linked band through ranks asunder riven:
Well has each steed obeyed the arméd heel,
And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel;
Outnumbered, not outbraved, they still oppose
Despair to daring, and a front to foes; 1010
And blood is mingled with the dashing stream,
Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV.

Commanding — aiding — animating all,
Where foe appeared to press, or friend to fall,
Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes his steel,
Inspiring hope, himself had ceased to feel.
None fled, for well they knew that flight were vain;
But those that waver turn to smite again,
While yet they find the firmest of the foe
Recoil before their leader's look and blow: 1020

Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
He foils their ranks, or re-unites his own;
Himself he spared not — once they seemed to fly —
Now was the time, he waved his hand on high,
And shook — Why sudden droops that pluméd crest?
The shaft is sped — the arrow's in his breast!
That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
And Death has stricken down yon arm of pride.
The word of triumph fainted from his tongue;
That hand, so raised, how droopingly it hung! 1030
But yet the sword instinctively retains,
Though from its fellow shrink the falling reins;
These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow,
Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
Beguiles his charger from the combat's rage:
Meantime his followers charge, and charge again;
Too mixed the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI.

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
The cloven cuirass, and the helmless head; 1040
The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
And that last gasp hath burst his bloody girth;
And near, yet quivering with what life remained,
The heel that urged him and the hand that reined;
And some too near that rolling torrent lie,
Whose waters mock the lip of those that die;
That panting thirst which scorches in the breath
Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
One drop — the last — to cool it for the grave; 1050
With feeble and convulsive effort swept,
Their limbs along the crimsoned turf have crept;
The faint remains of life such struggles waste,
But yet they reach the stream, and bend to taste:

They feel its freshness, and almost partake —
Why pause? No further thirst have they to slake —
It is unquenched, and yet they feel it not;
It was an agony — but now forgot!

XVII.

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
Where but for him that strife had never been, 1060
A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
‘Twas Lara bleeding fast from life away.
His follower once, and now his only guide,
Kneels Kaled watchful o’er his welling side,
And with his scarf would staunch the tides that rush,
With each convulsion, in a blacker gush;
And then, as his faint breathing waxes low,
In feebler, not less fatal tricklings flow:
He scarce can speak, but motions him ‘tis vain,
And merely adds another throb to pain. 1070
He clasps the hand that pang which would assuage,
And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark page,
Who nothing fears — nor feels — nor heeds — nor sees —
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him.

XVIII.

The foe arrives, who long had searched the field,
Their triumph nought till Lara too should yield:
They would remove him, but they see ‘twere vain,
And he regards them with a calm disdain, 1080
That rose to reconcile him with his fate,
And that escape to death from living hate:
And Otho comes, and leaping from his steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him bleed,
And questions of his state; he answers not,
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled: — each remaining word

They understood not, if distinctly heard;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance wildly clung. 1090
They spake of other scenes, but what — is known
To Kaled, whom their meaning reached alone;
And he replied, though faintly, to their sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement round:
They seemed even then — that twain — unto the last
To half forget the present in the past;
To share between themselves some separate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should penetrate.

XIX.

Their words though faint were many — from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge alone; 1100
From this, you might have deemed young Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and breath,
So sad — so deep — and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips spoke;
But Lara's voice, though low, at first was clear
And calm, till murmuring Death gasped hoarsely near;
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant — dark — and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast; 1110
And once, as Kaled's answering accents ceased,
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East:
Whether (as then the breaking Sun from high
Rolled back the clouds) the morrow caught his eye,
Or that 'twas chance — or some remembered scene,
That raised his arm to point where such had been,
Scarce Kaled seemed to know, but turned away,
As if his heart abhorred that coming day,
And shrunk his glance before that morning light,
To look on Lara's brow — where all grew night. 1120
Yet sense seemed left, though better were its loss;
For when one near displayed the absolving Cross,
And proffered to his touch the holy bead,

Of which his parting soul might own the need,
He looked upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled — Heaven pardon! if 'twere with disdain:
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor withdrew
From Lara's face his fixed despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred gift, 1130
As if such but disturbed the expiring man,
Nor seemed to know his life but *then* began —
That Life of Immortality, secure
To none, save them whose faith in Christ is sure.

XX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretched fluttering, and his head drooped o'er
The weak yet still untiring knee that bore;
He pressed the hand he held upon his heart —
It beats no more, but Kaled will not part 1140
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in vain,
For that faint throb which answers not again.
"It beats!" — Away, thou dreamer! he is gone —
It once *was* Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI.

He gazed, as if not yet had passed away
The haughty spirit of that humbled clay;
And those around have roused him from his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixed glance;
And when, in raising him from where he bore
Within his arms the form that felt no more, 1150
He saw the head his breast would still sustain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,
But strove to stand and gaze, but reeled and fell,
Scarce breathing more than that he loved so well.

Than that *he* loved! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of *man* such trusty love may breathe!
That trying moment hath at once revealed
The secret long and yet but half concealed; 1160
In baring to revive that lifeless breast,
Its grief seemed ended, but the sex confessed;
And life returned, and Kaled felt no shame —
What now to her was Womanhood or Fame?

XXII.

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave was dug as deep;
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor blessed nor marble decked the mound,
And he was mourned by one whose quiet grief,
Less loud, outlasts a people's for their Chief. 1170
Vain was all question asked her of the past,
And vain e'en menace — silent to the last;
She told nor whence, nor why she left behind
Her all for one who seemed but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool! — be still —
Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow. 1180
They were not common links, that formed the chain
That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain;
But that wild tale she brooked not to unfold,
And sealed is now each lip that could have told.

XXIII.

They laid him in the earth, and on his breast,
Besides the wound that sent his soul to rest,
They found the scattered dints of many a scar,
Which were not planted there in recent war;
Where'er had passed his summer years of life,

It seems they vanished in a land of strife; 1190
But all unknown his Glory or his Guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was spilt,
And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the past,
Returned no more — that night appeared his last.

XXIV.

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A Serf that crossed the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to morn,
And nearly veiled in mist her waning horn;
A Serf, that rose betimes to thread the wood,
And hew the bough that bought his children's food, 1200
Passed by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain:
He heard a tramp — a horse and horseman broke
From out the wood — before him was a cloak
Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle-bow,
Bent was his head, and hidden was his brow.
Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be crime,
Himself unheeded watched the stranger's course,
Who reached the river, bounded from his horse, 1210
And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dashed it from the shore,
Then paused — and looked — and turned — and seemed to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch,
And follow with his step the stream that flowed,
As if even yet too much its surface showed;
At once he started — stooped — around him strown
The winter floods had scattered heaps of stone:
Of these the heaviest thence he gathered there,
And slung them with a more than common care. 1220
Meantime the Serf had crept to where unseen
Himself might safely mark what this might mean;
He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glittered starlike on the vest;
But ere he well could mark the buoyant trunk,

A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk:
It rose again, but indistinct to view,
And left the waters of a purple hue,
Then deeply disappeared: the horseman gazed
Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised; 1230
Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
And instant spurred him into panting speed.
His face was masked — the features of the dead,
If dead it were, escaped the observer's dread;
But if in sooth a Star its bosom bore,
Such is the badge that Knighthood ever wore,
And such 'tis known Sir Ezzelin had worn
Upon the night that led to such a morn.
If thus he perished, Heaven receive his soul!
His undiscovered limbs to ocean roll; 1240
And charity upon the hope would dwell
It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV.

And Kaled — Lara — Ezzelin, are gone,
Alike without their monumental stone!
The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
From lingering where her Chieftain's blood had been:
Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
Her tears were few, her wailing never loud;
But furious would you tear her from the spot
Where yet she scarce believed that he was not, 1250
Her eye shot forth with all the living fire
That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire;
But left to waste her weary moments there,
She talked all idly unto shapes of air,
Such as the busy brain of Sorrow paints,
And woos to listen to her fond complaints:
And she would sit beneath the very tree
Where lay his drooping head upon her knee;
And in that posture where she saw him fall,
His words, his looks, his dying grasp recall; 1260
And she had shorn, but saved her raven hair,

And oft would snatch it from her bosom there,
And fold, and press it gently to the ground,
As if she staunched anew some phantom's wound.
Herself would question, and for him reply;
Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
From some imagined Spectre in pursuit;
Then seat her down upon some linden's root,
And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
Or trace strange characters along the sand — 1270
This could not last — she lies by him she loved;
Her tale untold — her truth too dearly proved.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

INTRODUCTION

In a note to the “Advertisement” to the *Siege of Corinth* (*vide post*,), Byron puts it on record that during the years 1809-10 he had crossed the Isthmus of Corinth eight times, and in a letter to his mother, dated Patras, July 30, 1810, he alludes to a recent visit to the town of Corinth, in company with his friend Lord Sligo. (See, too, his letter to Coleridge, dated October 27, 1815, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 228.) It is probable that he revisited Corinth more than once in the autumn of 1810; and we may infer that, just as the place and its surroundings — the temple with its “two or three columns” (line 497), and the view across the bay from Acro-Corinth — are sketched from memory, so the story of the siege which took place in 1715 is based upon tales and legends which were preserved and repeated by the grandchildren of the besieged, and were taken down from their lips. There is point and meaning in the apparently insignificant line (stanza xxiv. line 765), “We have heard the hearers say” (see *variant* i. p. 483), which is slipped into the description of the final catastrophe. It bears witness to the fact that the *Siege of Corinth* is not a poetical expansion of a chapter in history, but a heightened reminiscence of local tradition.

History has, indeed, very little to say on the subject. The anonymous *Compleat History of the Turks* (London, 1719), which Byron quotes as an authority, is meagre and inaccurate. Hammer-Purgstall (*Histoire de l’Empire Ottoman*, 1839, xiii. 269), who gives as his authorities Girolamo Ferrari and Raschid, dismisses the siege in a few lines; and it was not till the publication of Finlay’s *History of Greece* (vol. v., a.d. 1453-1821), in 1856, that the facts were known or reported. Finlay’s newly discovered authority was a then unpublished MS. of a journal kept by Benjamin Brue, a connection of Voltaire’s, who accompanied the Grand Vizier, Ali Cumurgi, as his interpreter, on the expedition into the Morea. According to Brue (*Journal de la Campagne ... en 1715 ...* Paris, 1870, p. 18), the siege began on June 28, 1715. A peremptory demand on the part of the Grand Vizier to surrender at discretion was answered by the Venetian proveditor-general, Giacomo Minetto, with calm but assured defiance (“Your menaces are useless, for we are prepared to resist all your attacks, and, with confidence in the assistance of God, we will preserve this fortress to the most serene Republic. God is with us”). Nevertheless, the Turks made good their

threat, and on the 2nd of July the fortress capitulated. On the following day at noon, whilst a party of Janissaries, contrary to order, were looting and pillaging in all directions, the fortress was seen to be enveloped in smoke. How or why the explosion happened was never discovered, but the result was that some of the pillaging Janissaries perished, and that others, to avenge their death, which they attributed to Venetian treachery, put the garrison to the sword. It was believed at the time that Minetto was among the slain; but, as Brue afterwards discovered, he was secretly conveyed to Smyrna, and ultimately ransomed by the Dutch Consul.

The late Professor Kölbing (*Siege of Corinth*, 1893, p. xxvii.), in commenting on the sources of the poem, suggests, under reserve, that Byron may have derived the incident of Minetto's self-immolation from an historic source — the siege of Zsigetvar, in 1566, when a multitude of Turks perished from the explosion of a powder magazine which had been fired at the cost of his own life by the Hungarian commander Zrini.

It is, at least, equally probable that local patriotism was, in the first instance, responsible for the poetic colouring, and that Byron supplemented the meagre and uninteresting historic details which were at his disposal by "intimate knowledge" of the Corinthian version of the siege. (See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Hon. Lord Byron*, London, 1822, p. 222; and *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron*, by George Clinton, London, 1825, p. 284.) It has been generally held that the *Siege of Corinth* was written in the second half of 1815 (Kölbing's *Siege of Corinth*, p. vii.). "It appears," says John Wright (*Works*, 1832, x. 100), "by the original MS., to have been begun in July, 1815;" and Moore (*Life*, p. 307), who probably relied on the same authority, speaks of "both the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina* having been produced but a short time before the Separation" (i.e. spring, 1816). Some words which Medwin (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 55) puts into Byron's mouth point to the same conclusion. Byron's own testimony, which is completely borne out by the MS. itself (dated J^y [i.e. January, not July] 31, 1815), is in direct conflict with these statements. In a note to stanza xix. lines 521-532 (*vide post*, pp. -473) he affirms that it "was not till after these lines were written" that he heard "that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem [*Christabel*] recited;" and in a letter to S. T. Coleridge, dated October 27, 1815 (*Letters*, 1899, iii. 228), he is careful to explain that "the enclosed extract from an unpublished poem (i.e. stanza xix. lines 521-532) ... was written before (not seeing your *Christabelle* [sic], for that

you know I never did till this day), but before I heard Mr. S[cott] repeat it, which he did in June last, and this thing was begun in January, and more than half written before the Summer.” The question of plagiarism will be discussed in an addendum to Byron’s note on the lines in question; but, subject to the correction that it was, probably, at the end of May (see Lockhart’s *Memoir of the Life of Sir W. Scott*, 1871, pp. 311-313), not in June, that Scott recited *Christabel* for Byron’s benefit, the date of the composition of the poem must be determined by the evidence of the author himself.

The copy of the MS. of the *Siege of Corinth* was sent to Murray at the beginning (probably on the 2nd, the date of the copy) of November, and was placed in Gifford’s hands about the same time (see letter to Murray, November 4, 1815, *Letters*, 1899, iii. 245; and Murray’s undated letter on Gifford’s “great delight” in the poem, and his “three critical remarks,” *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 356). As with *Lara*, Byron began by insisting that the *Siege* should not be published separately, but slipped into a fourth volume of the collected works, and once again (possibly when he had at last made up his mind to accept a thousand guineas for his own requirements, and not for other beneficiaries — Godwin, Coleridge, or Maturin) yielded to his publisher’s wishes and representations. At any rate, the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, which, says Moore, “during the month of January and part of February were in the hands of the printers” (*Life*, p. 300), were published in a single volume on February 7, 1816. The greater reviews were silent, but notices appeared in numerous periodicals; e.g. the *Monthly Review*, February, 1816, vol. lxxix. p. 196; the *Eclectic Review*, March, 1816, N.S. vol. v. p. 269; the *European*, May, 1816, vol. lxxix. p. 427; the *Literary Panorama*, June, 1816, N.S. vol. iv. p. 418; etc. Many of these reviews took occasion to pick out and hold up to ridicule the illogical sentences, the grammatical solecisms, and general imperfections of *technique* which marked and disfigured the *Siege of Corinth*. A passage in a letter which John Murray wrote to his brother-publisher, William Blackwood (*Annals of a Publishing House*, 1897, i. 53), refers to these cavillings, and suggests both an apology and a retaliation — “Many who by ‘numbers judge a poet’s song’ are so stupid as not to see the powerful effect of the poems, which is the great object of poetry, because they can pick out fifty careless or even bad lines. The words may be carelessly put together; but this is secondary. Many can write polished lines who will never reach the name of poet. You see it is all poetically conceived in Lord B.’s mind.”

In such wise did Murray bear testimony to Byron's "splendid and imperishable excellence, which covers all his offences and outweighs all his defects — the excellence of sincerity and strength."

TO
JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS
FRIEND.

January 22nd, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

“The grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country, thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out such a place against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley: but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Signior or Antonio Bembo, Proveditor Extraordinary, were made prisoners of war.” — *A Compleat History of the Turks* [London, 1719], iii. 151.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH

In the year since Jesus died for men,
Eighteen hundred years and ten,
We were a gallant company,
Riding o'er land, and sailing o'er sea.
Oh! but we went merrily!
We forded the river, and clomb the high hill,
Never our steeds for a day stood still;
Whether we lay in the cave or the shed,
Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed;
Whether we couched in our rough capote, 10
On the rougher plank of our gliding boat,
Or stretched on the beach, or our saddles spread,
As a pillow beneath the resting head,
Fresh we woke upon the morrow:
All our thoughts and words had scope,
We had health, and we had hope,
Toil and travel, but no sorrow.
We were of all tongues and creeds; —
Some were those who counted beads,
Some of mosque, and some of church, 20
And some, or I mis-say, of neither;
Yet through the wide world might ye search,
Nor find a motlier crew nor blither.

But some are dead, and some are gone,
And some are scattered and alone,
And some are rebels on the hills
That look along Epirus' valleys,
Where Freedom still at moments rallies,
And pays in blood Oppression's ills;
And some are in a far countree, 30
And some all restlessly at home;
But never more, oh! never, we
Shall meet to revel and to roam.
But those hardy days flew cheerily!
And when they now fall drearily,

My thoughts, like swallows, skim the main,
And bear my spirit back again
Over the earth, and through the air,
A wild bird and a wanderer.
'Tis this that ever wakes my strain, 40
And oft, too oft, implores again
The few who may endure my lay,
To follow me so far away.
Stranger, wilt thou follow now,
And sit with me on Acro-Corinth's brow?

I.

Many a vanished year and age,
And Tempest's breath, and Battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands,
A fortress formed to Freedom's hands.
The Whirlwind's wrath, the Earthquake's shock, 50
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
The landmark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side,
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 60
Arise from out the Earth which drank
The stream of Slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine Ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain,
Who perished there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies
Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis,
Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 70

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
 The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
 And downward to the Isthmian plain,
 From shore to shore of either main,
 The tent is pitched, the Crescent shines
 Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
 And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
 Beneath each bearded Pacha's glance;
 And far and wide as eye can reach
 The turbaned cohorts throng the beach; 80
 And there the Arab's camel kneels,
 And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
 The Turcoman hath left his herd,
 The sabre round his loins to gird;
 And there the volleying thunders pour,
 Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
 The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
 Wings the far hissing globe of death;
 Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
 Which crumbles with the ponderous ball; 90
 And from that wall the foe replies,
 O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
 With fares that answer fast and well
 The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall
 Of those who wish and work its fall,
 With deeper skill in War's black art,
 Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
 As any Chief that ever stood
 Triumphant in the fields of blood; 100
 From post to post, and deed to deed,
 Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
 Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
 And make the foremost Moslem quail;
 Or where the battery, guarded well,

Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's Sultan there can boast, 110
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade; —
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV.

From Venice — once a race of worth
His gentle Sires — he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow. 120
Through many a change had Corinth passed
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast — “the Free;” 130
And in the palace of St. Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the “Lion's mouth” had placed
A charge against him uneffaced:
He fled in time, and saved his life,
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumphed o'er the Cross,
‘Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die. 140

Coumourgi — he whose closing scene
 Adorned the triumph of Eugene,
 When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
 The last and mightiest of the slain,
 He sank, regretting not to die,
 But cursed the Christian's victory —
 Coumourgi — can his glory cease,
 That latest conqueror of Greece,
 Till Christian hands to Greece restore
 The freedom Venice gave of yore? 150
 A hundred years have rolled away
 Since he refixed the Moslem's sway;
 And now he led the Mussulman,
 And gave the guidance of the van
 To Alp, who well repaid the trust
 By cities levelled with the dust;
 And proved, by many a deed of death,
 How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
 Against them poured the ceaseless shot, 160
 With unabating fury sent
 From battery to battlement;
 And thunder-like the pealing din
 Rose from each heated culverin;
 And here and there some crackling dome
 Was fired before the exploding bomb;
 And as the fabric sank beneath
 The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
 In red and wreathing columns flashed
 The flame, as loud the ruin crashed, 170
 Or into countless meteors driven,
 Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
 Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
 Impervious to the hidden sun,
 With volumed smoke that slowly grew

To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach: 180
Within these walls a Maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable Sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
Gayest in Gondola or Hall,
He glittered through the Carnival; 190
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters played
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca's hand remained
Still by the Church's bonds unchained:
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail, 200
And pensive waxed the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
Which conquered hearts they ceased to prize:
With listless look she seems to gaze:

With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance 210
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the State to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side,
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Euboea's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace 220
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece:
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorned the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn; 230
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are ranked — the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,

And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise, 240
Their stepping-stone — the last who dies!

XI.

'Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining
And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away, 250
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillowed on the waves;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke, 260
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
And echo answered from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone Spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet, 270
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.

It seemed to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall:
It struck even the besieger's ear
With something ominous and drear,
An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed 280
Of that strange sense its silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er;
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obeyed:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all Revenge and Love can pay, 290
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the Crescent o'er the Cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be 300
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone — a renegade
Against the country he betrayed;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand:

They followed him, for he was brave, 310
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouched to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earned beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how Pride can stoop, 320
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how Hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of Revenge can feel.
He ruled them — man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first:
So lions o'er the jackals sway;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar, yelling, press, 330
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII.

His head grows fevered, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose;
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight 340
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.

He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
What pillowed them? and why should he 350
More wakeful than the humblest be,
Since more their peril, worse their toil?
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands passed
A night of sleep, perchance their last,
In sickly vigil wandered on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm, 360
And bathed his brow with airy balm:
Behind, the camp — before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone,
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time:
Tyrant and slave are swept away, 370
Less formed to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement;
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And lingered on the spot, where long 380
Her prophet spirit spake in song.

Oh! still her step at moments falters
O'er withered fields, and ruined altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token:
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remembered rays,
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times 390
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wandered,
And o'er the past and present pondered,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled,
He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword,
A traitor in a turbaned horde;
And led them to the lawless siege, 400
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy numbered,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing;
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and grey, 410
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapped the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is Glory's still and theirs!

'Tis still a watch-word to the earth:
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread, 420
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head:
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or Freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And wooed the freshness Night diffused.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow, 430
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there;
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wandered on along the beach, 440
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts waxed cold?
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flanked the seaward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell 450
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below

Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their Carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull, 460
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare. 470
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw:
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight; 480
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which Death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!

But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead, 490
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashioned by long forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before! 500
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have passed away,
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And passed his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude; 510
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and oppressed;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,

As he heard the night-wind sigh. 520
Was it the wind through some hollow stone,
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He looked on the long grass — it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound conveyed?
He looked to the banners — each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak? 530
He turned to the left — is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an arméd foe were near.
“God of my fathers! what is here?
Who art thou? and wherefore sent
So near a hostile armament?”
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deemed no more divine:
He had resumed it in that hour, 540
But Conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw; he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellowed with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The Ocean's calm within their view, 550
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,

Nought concealed her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm showed white and bare:
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high; 560
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

“I come from my rest to him I love best,
That I may be happy, and he may be blessed.
I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall;
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
‘Tis said the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity;
And the Power on high, that can shield the good
Thus from the tyrant of the wood, 570
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
From the hands of the leaguering Infidel.
I come — and if I come in vain,
Never, oh never, we meet again!
Thou hast done a fearful deed
In falling away from thy fathers’ creed:
But dash that turban to earth, and sign
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
Wring the black drop from thy heart,
And to-morrow unites us no more to part.” 580

“And where should our bridal couch be spread?
In the midst of the dying and the dead?
For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.
None, save thou and thine, I’ve sworn,
Shall be left upon the morn:
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow forgot.
There thou yet shall be my bride,

When once again I've quelled the pride 590
Of Venice; and her hated race
Have felt the arm they would debase
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
Whom Vice and Envy made my foes."

Upon his hand she laid her own —
Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fixed him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not loose him from its hold; 600
But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue,
So deeply changed from what he knew:
Fair but faint — without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play 610
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed,
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream;
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare, 620
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;
Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

“If not for love of me be given
Thus much, then, for the love of Heaven, —
Again I say — that turban tear 630
From off thy faithless brow, and swear
Thine injured country’s sons to spare,
Or thou art lost; and never shalt see —
Not earth — that’s past — but Heaven or me.
If this thou dost accord, albeit
A heavy doom’ tis thine to meet,
That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
And Mercy’s gate may receive thee within:
But pause one moment more, and take
The curse of Him thou didst forsake; 640
And look once more to Heaven, and see
Its love for ever shut from thee.
There is a light cloud by the moon —
‘Tis passing, and will pass full soon —
If, by the time its vapoury sail
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
Thy heart within thee is not changed,
Then God and man are both avenged;
Dark will thy doom be, darker still
Thine immortality of ill.” 650

Alp looked to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turned aside,
By deep interminable pride.
This first false passion of his breast
Rolled like a torrent o’er the rest.
He sue for mercy! *He* dismayed
By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wronged by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave! 660
No — though that cloud were thunder’s worst,
And charged to crush him — let it burst!

He looked upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply;

He watched it passing; it is flown:
Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake — “Whate’er my fate,
I am no changeling — ‘tis too late:
The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
Then rise again; the tree must shiver. 670
What Venice made me, I must be,
Her foe in all, save love to thee:
But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!”
He turned, but she is gone!
Nothing is there but the column stone.
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
He saw not — he knew not — but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away 680
The Morning from her mantle grey,
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners, that flit as they’re borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude’s hum,
And the clash, and the shout, “They come! they come!”
The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman, 690
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
Agéd or young, in the Christian shape;
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit; 700

The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The Khan and the Pachas are all at their post;
The Vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one — 710
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.
God and the prophet — Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
“There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale;
And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
He who first downs with the red cross may crave
His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!”
Thus uttered Coumourgi, the dauntless Vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear, 720
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire: —
Silence — hark to the signal — fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent; 730
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strewed the earth like broken glass,
Shivered by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more:
Even as they fell, in files they lay,
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,

When his work is done on the levelled plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,
From the cliffs invading dash ⁷⁴⁰
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renewed
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heaped by the host of the Infidel, ⁷⁵⁰
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save Death, was mute;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice, ⁷⁶⁰
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,)
Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,

And all but the after carnage done. 770
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plundered dome:
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again —
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 780
There stood an old man — his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay;
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore, 790
Each and all had been ta'en before:
Though agéd, he was so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him,
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumbered his thin hairs of silver grey.
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipped
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score. 800
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.

If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 810
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore;
What of them is left, to tell
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand; 820
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare —
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show,
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear, —
Alp is but known by the white arm bare; 830
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!
There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far;
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar; 840
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levelled foe,

Though faint beneath the mutual wound,
Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect.
And Alp's career a moment checked.
"Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
For thine own, thy daughter's sake." 850

"Never, Renegado, never!
Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."

"Francesca! — Oh, my promised bride!
Must she too perish by thy pride!"

"She is safe." — "Where? where?" — "In Heaven;
From whence thy traitor soul is driven —
Far from thee, and undefiled."
Grimly then Minotti smiled,
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow. 860

"Oh God! when died she?" — "Yesternight —
Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:
None of my pure race shall be
Slaves to Mahomet and thee —
Come on!" — That challenge is in vain —
Alp's already with the slain!
While Minotti's words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion's point had found,
Had the time allowed to wound, 870
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground;
Ere an eye could view the wound

That crashed through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise, 880
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turned him on his back; his breast
And brow were stained with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob; 890
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unaneled he passed away,
Without a hope from Mercy's aid, —
To the last a Renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing, 900
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;
With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable, 910

Whence issued late the fated ball
That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track;
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane;
There they yet may breathe awhile, 920
Sheltered by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time! the turbaned host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat;
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly;
They perforce must do or die. 930
They die; but ere their eyes could close,
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still;
And faint the weary Christians wax
Before the still renewed attacks:
And now the Othmans gain the gate;
Still resists its iron weight,
And still, all deadly aimed and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot; 940
From every shattered window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower:
But the portal wavering grows and weak —
The iron yields, the hinges creak —
It bends — it falls — and all is o'er;
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone:
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above, 950
With eyes of light and looks of love;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there, we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,
Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To Heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles:
Minotti lifted his agéd eye, 960
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contained the dead of ages gone;
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carvéd crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse, 970
Were smeared, and slippery — stained, and strown
With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown:
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a confined row;
You might see them piled in sable state,
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had entered their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead: 980

Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late formed train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force.

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 990
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels Saints had blessed.
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 1000
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray.
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil — the richest, and the last. 1010

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached
When old Minotti's hand

Touched with the torch the train —
‘Tis fired!
Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,
In one wild roar expired! 1020
The shattered town — the walls thrown down —
The waves a moment backward bent —
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an Earthquake passed —
The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast —
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o’er
On that too long afflicted shore:
Up to the sky like rockets go 1030
All that mingled there below:
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strewed the plain:
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scattered o’er the isthmus lay; 1040
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child,
Little deemed she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace 1050
More of human form or face
Save a scattered scalp or bone:

And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dented in the clay,
All blackened there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
The deadly earth-shock disappeared:
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead; 1060
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke —
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,
Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill
Where Echo rolled in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry,
Bayed from afar complainingly, 1070
With a mixed and mournful sound,
Like crying babe, and beaten hound:
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun,
The clouds beneath him seemed so dun;
Their smoke assailed his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek —
Thus was Corinth lost and won!

PARISINA

INTRODUCTION

Parisina, which had been begun before the *Siege of Corinth*, was transcribed by Lady Byron, and sent to the publisher at the beginning of December, 1815. Murray confessed that he had been alarmed by some hints which Byron had dropped as to the plot of the narrative, but was reassured when he traced “the delicate hand that transcribed it.” He could not say enough of this “Pearl” of great price. “It is very interesting, pathetic, beautiful — do you know I would almost say moral” (*Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 353). Ward, to whom the MS. of *Parisina* was shown, and Isaac D’Israeli, who heard it read aloud by Murray, were enthusiastic as to its merits; and Gifford, who had mingled censure with praise in his critical appreciation of the *Siege*, declared that the author “had never surpassed *Parisina*.”

The last and shortest of the six narrative poems composed and published in the four years (the first years of manhood and of fame, the only years of manhood passed at home in England) which elapsed between the appearance of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* and the third, *Parisina* has, perhaps, never yet received its due. At the time of its appearance it shared the odium which was provoked by the publication of *Fare Thee Well* and *A Sketch*, and before there was time to reconsider the new volume on its own merits, the new canto of *Childe Harold*, followed almost immediately by the *Prisoner of Chillon* and its brilliant and noticeable companion poems, usurped the attention of friend and foe. Contemporary critics (with the exception of the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*) fell foul of the subject-matter of the poem — the guilty passion of a bastard son for his father’s wife. “It was too disgusting to be rendered pleasing by any display of genius” (*European Magazine*); “The story of *Parisina* includes adultery not to be named” (*Literary Panorama*); while the *Eclectic*, on grounds of taste rather than of morals, gave judgment that “the subject of the tale was purely unpleasing” — “the impression left simply painful.”

Byron, no doubt, for better or worse, was in advance of his age, in the pursuit of art for art’s sake, and in his indifference, not to morality — the *dénouement* of the story is severely moral — but to the moral edification of his readers. The tale was chosen because it is a tale of love and guilt and woe, and the poet, unconcerned with any other issue, sets the tale to an enchanting melody. It does not occur to him to condone or to reprobate the loves of Hugo and Parisina, and

in detailing the issue leaves the actors to their fate. It was this aloofness from ethical considerations which perturbed and irritated the “canters,” as Byron called them — the children and champions of the anti-revolution. The modern reader, without being attracted or repelled by the *motif* of the story, will take pleasure in the sustained energy and sure beauty of the poetic strain. Byron may have gone to the “nakedness of history” for his facts, but he clothed them in singing robes of a delicate and shining texture.

TO
SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, ESQ.
the following poem
Is Inscribed,
by one who has long admired his talents
and valued his friendship.

January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's "Antiquities of the House of Brunswick." I am aware, that in modern times, the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the Continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of Azo is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical. — [B.]

"Under the reign of Nicholas III. [A.D. 1425] Ferrara was polluted with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of a maid, and his own observation, the Marquis of Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Parisina, and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by the sentence of a father and husband, who published his shame, and survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if they were guilty: if they were innocent, he was still more unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the last act of the justice of a parent." — Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iii. p. 470. — [Ed. 1837, p. 830.]

PARISINA

I.

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue, 10
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

II.

But it is not to list to the waterfall
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the Lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower; 20
She listens — but not for the nightingale —
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale, and her heart beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves:
A moment more — and they shall meet —
'Tis past — her Lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide? 30
Its living things — its earth and sky —
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had passed away,
They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway: 40
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused, or feared in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments last?
But yet — they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past: 50
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh — the long embrace —
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar —
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting-place. 60
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V.

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed,
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fevered in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams, 70
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her Lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes,
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep. 80

VI.

He clasped her sleeping to his heart,
And listened to each broken word:
He hears — Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may — a deeper doom
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before.
And well he may — his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doomed to cease. 90
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,
Which rolls the plank upon the shore,
And dashes on the pointed rock
The wretch who sinks to rise no more, —
So came upon his soul the shock.

And whose that name? — 'tis Hugo's, — his —
In sooth he had not deemed of this! — 100
'Tis Hugo's, — he, the child of one
He loved — his own all-evil son —
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betrayed Bianca's truth,
The maid whose folly could confide
In him who made her not his bride.

VII.

He plucked his poniard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare;
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair — 110
At least, not smiling — sleeping — there —
Nay, more: — he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again;
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleamed on the dew-drops big and damp.
She spake no more — but still she slumbered —
While, in his thought, her days are numbered.

VIII.

And with the morn he sought and found, 120
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he feared to know,
Their present guilt — his future woe;
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer
The guilt — the shame — the doom — to her:
Concealment is no more — they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell:
And Azo's tortured heart and ear 130
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX.

He was not one who brooked delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The Chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgement sate;
His nobles and his guards are there, —
Before him is the sinful pair;
Both young, — and *one* how passing fair!
With swordless belt, and fettered hand,
Oh, Christ! that thus a son should stand 140
Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!
And yet he seems not overcome,
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X.

And still, — and pale — and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;
How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room, 150
Where high-born men were proud to wait —
Where Beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice — her lovely mien —
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its Queen:
Then, — had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.
Now, — what is she? and what are they? 160
Can she command, or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear,

Her knights, her dames, her court — is there:
And he — the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couched before her glance,
Who — were his arm a moment free —
Had died or gained her liberty; 170
The minion of his father's bride, —
He, too, is fettered by her side;
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him:
Those lids — o'er which the violet vein
Wandering, leaves a tender stain,
Shining through the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite —
Now seemed with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade, the orbs below; 180
Which glance so heavily, and fill,
As tear on tear grows gathering still XI.

And he for her had also wept,
But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept;
Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avowed,
He would not shrink before the crowd;
But yet he dared not look on her;
Remembrance of the hours that were — 190
His guilt — his love — his present state —
His father's wrath, all good men's hate —
His earthly, his eternal fate —
And hers, — oh, hers! he dared not throw
One look upon that death-like brow!
Else had his rising heart betrayed
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII.

And Azo spake: — “But yesterday
I gloried in a wife and son;
That dream this morning passed away; 200

Ere day declines, I shall have none.
My life must linger on alone;
Well, — let that pass, — there breathes not one
Who would not do as I have done:
Those ties are broken — not by me;
Let that too pass; — the doom's prepared!
Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
And then — thy crime's reward!
Away! address thy prayers to Heaven.
Before its evening stars are met, ²¹⁰
Learn if thou there canst be forgiven:
Its mercy may absolve thee yet.
But here, upon the earth beneath,
There is no spot where thou and I
Together for an hour could breathe:
Farewell! I will not see thee die —
But thou, frail thing! shall view his head —
Away! I cannot speak the rest:
Go! woman of the wanton breast;
Not I, but thou his blood dost shed: ²²⁰
Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,
And joy thee in the life I give.”

XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face —
For on his brow the swelling vein
Throbbled as if back upon his brain
The hot blood ebbd and flowed again;
And therefore bowed he for a space,
And passed his shaking hand along
His eye, to veil it from the throng;
While Hugo raised his chainéd hands, ²³⁰
And for a brief delay demands
His father's ear: the silent sire
Forbids not what his words require.
“It is not that I dread the death —
For thou hast seen me by thy side
All redly through the battle ride,

And that — not once a useless brand —
Thy slaves have wrested from my hand
Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,
Than e'er can stain the axe of mine: 240
Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,
A gift for which I thank thee not;
Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,
Her slighted love and ruined name,
Her offspring's heritage of shame;
But she is in the grave, where he,
Her son — thy rival — soon shall be.
Her broken heart — my severed head —
Shall witness for thee from the dead
How trusty and how tender were 250
Thy youthful love — paternal care.
'Tis true that I have done thee wrong —
But wrong for wrong: — this, — deemed thy bride,
The other victim of thy pride, —
Thou know'st for me was destined long;
Thou saw'st, and coveted'st her charms;
And with thy very crime — my birth, —
Thou taunted'st me — as little worth;
A match ignoble for her arms;
Because, forsooth, I could not claim 260
The lawful heirship of thy name,
Nor sit on Este's lineal throne;
Yet, were a few short summers mine,
My name should more than Este's shine
With honours all my own.
I had a sword — and have a breast
That should have won as haught a crest
As ever waved along the line
Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
Not always knightly spurs are worn 270
The brightest by the better born;
And mine have lanced my courser's flank
Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
When charging to the cheering cry
Of 'Este and of Victory!'

I will not plead the cause of crime,
Nor sue thee to redeem from time
A few brief hours or days that must
At length roll o'er my reckless dust; —
Such maddening moments as my past, 280
They could not, and they did not, last; —
Albeit my birth and name be base,
And thy nobility of race
Disdained to deck a thing like me —
Yet in my lineaments they trace
Some features of my father's face,
And in my spirit — all of thee.
From thee this tamelessness of heart —
From thee — nay, wherefore dost thou start? — -
From thee in all their vigour came 290
My arm of strength, my soul of flame —
Thou didst not give me life alone,
But all that made me more thine own.
See what thy guilty love hath done!
Repaid thee with too like a son!
I am no bastard in my soul,
For that, like thine, abhorred control;
And for my breath, that hasty boon
Thou gav'st and wilt resume so soon,
I valued it no more than thou, 300
When rose thy casque above thy brow,
And we, all side by side, have striven,
And o'er the dead our coursers driven:
The past is nothing — and at last
The future can but be the past;
Yet would I that I then had died:
For though thou work'dst my mother's ill,
And made thy own my destined bride,
I feel thou art my father still:
And harsh as sounds thy hard decree, 310
'Tis not unjust, although from thee.
Begot in sin, to die in shame,
My life begun and ends the same:
As erred the sire, so erred the son,

And thou must punish both in one.
My crime seems worst to human view,
But God must judge between us too!”

XIV.

He ceased — and stood with folded arms,
On which the circling fetters sounded;
And not an ear but felt as wounded, ³²⁰
Of all the chiefs that there were ranked,
When those dull chains in meeting clanked:
Till Parisina’s fatal charms
Again attracted every eye —
Would she thus hear him doomed to die!
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo’s ill:
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turned to either side —
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close, ³³⁰
Or shade the glance o’er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew —
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood;
But every now and then a tear
So large and slowly gathered slid
From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,
It was a thing to see, not hear!
And those who saw, it did surprise, ³⁴⁰
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought — the imperfect note
Was choked within her swelling throat,
Yet seemed in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone.
It ceased — again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone
Or statue from its base o’erthrown,
More like a thing that ne’er had life, — ³⁵⁰

A monument of Azo's wife, —
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear
That guilt's detection and despair.
But yet she lived — and all too soon
Recovered from that death-like swoon —
But scarce to reason — every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;
And each frail fibre of her brain 360
(As bowstrings, when relaxed by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide —
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track,
Like lightning on the desert path,
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She feared — she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill;
That there was sin and shame she knew, 370
That some one was to die — but who?
She had forgotten: — did she breathe?
Could this be still the earth beneath,
The sky above, and men around;
Or were they fiends who now so frowned
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy?
All was confused and undefined
To her all-jarred and wandering mind;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears: 380
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream;
For so it seemed on her to break:
Oh! vainly must she strive to wake!

XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,

But mournfully and slow;
In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.
Heavily to the heart they go! 390
Hark! the hymn is singing —
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!
For a departed being's soul
The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll:
He is near his mortal goal;
Kneeling at the Friar's knee,
Sad to hear, and piteous to see —
Kneeling on the bare cold ground.
With the block before and the guards around; 400
And the headsman with his bare arm ready,
That the blow may be both swift and steady,
Feels if the axe be sharp and true
Since he set its edge anew:
While the crowd in a speechless circle gather
To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father!

XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet
Before the summer sun shall set,
Which rose upon that heavy day,
And mock'd it with his steadiest ray; 410
And his evening beams are shed
Full on Hugo's fated head,
As his last confession pouring
To the monk, his doom deploring
In penitential holiness,
He bends to hear his accents bless
With absolution such as may
Wipe our mortal stains away.
That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen, 420
And the rings of chestnut hair
Curled half down his neck so bare;

But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter — —
Oh! that parting hour was bitter!
Even the stern stood chilled with awe:
Dark the crime, and just the law —
Yet they shuddered as they saw.

XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over 430
Of that false son, and daring lover!
His beads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted;
His mantling cloak before was stripped,
His bright brown locks must now be clipped;
'Tis done — all closely are they shorn;
The vest which till this moment worn —
The scarf which Parisina gave —
Must not adorn him to the grave.
Even that must now be thrown aside, 440
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied;
But no — that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renewed,
When headsman's hands prepared to bind
Those eyes which would not brook such blind,
As if they dared not look on death.
"No — yours my forfeit blood and breath;
These hands are chained, but let me die 450
At least with an unshackled eye —
Strike:" — and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bowed his head;
These the last accents Hugo spoke:
"Strike" — and flashing fell the stroke —
Rolled the head — and, gushing, sunk
Back the stained and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein

Slaked with its ensanguined rain;
His eyes and lips a moment quiver, 460
Convulsed and quick — then fix for ever.

He died, as erring man should die,
Without display, without parade;
Meekly had he bowed and prayed,
As not disdaining priestly aid,
Nor desperate of all hope on high.
And while before the Prior kneeling,
His heart was weaned from earthly feeling;
His wrathful Sire — his Paramour —
What were they in such an hour? 470
No more reproach, — no more despair, —
No thought but Heaven, — no word but prayer —
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headsman's stroke,
He claimed to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around.

XVIII.

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran, 480
As down the deadly blow descended
On him whose life and love thus ended;
And, with a hushing sound compressed,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
Beyond the blow that to the block
Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one: — what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill, so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child, 490
Done to death by sudden blow,
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.

Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turned thereon;
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek — and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it past, 500
In mercy wished it were the last.

XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen:
Her name — as if she ne'er had been —
Was banished from each lip and ear,
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb — no memory had they; 510
Theirs was unconsecrated clay —
At least the Knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode,
And won to heaven her dreary road,
By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel: 520
Or if, upon the moment smote,
She died by tortures less remote,
Like him she saw upon the block
With heart that shared the headsman's shock,
In quickened brokenness that came,
In pity o'er her shattered frame,
None knew — and none can ever know:
But whatsoe'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX.

And Azo found another bride, 530
And goodly sons grew by his side;
But none so lovely and so brave
As him who withered in the grave;
Or if they were — on his cold eye
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smothered sigh.
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought; 540
Those furrows which the burning share
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remained below
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunned itself — and yet
That would not yield, nor could forget, 550
Which, when it least appeared to melt,
Intensely thought — intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows, and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his sealed-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish; 560
When struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried — those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure,

Unseen — unwept — but uncongealed,
And cherished most where least revealed.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft, 570
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share;
With all the consciousness that he
Had only passed a just decree;
That they had wrought their doom of ill;
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopped with care, a strength may give, 580
By which the rest shall bloom and live
All greenly fresh and wildly free:
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,
And never more a leaf reveals.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

INTRODUCTION

The *Prisoner of Chillon*, says Moore (*Life*, p. 320), was written at Ouchy, near Lausanne, where Byron and Shelley “were detained two days in a small inn [Hôtel de l’Ancre, now d’Angleterre] by the weather.” Byron’s letter to Murray, dated June 27 (but? 28), 1816, does not precisely tally with Shelley’s journal contained in a letter to Peacock, July 12, 1816 (*Prose Works of P. B. Shelley*, 1880, ii. 171, *sq.*); but, if Shelley’s first date, June 23, is correct, it follows that the two poets visited the Castle of Chillon on Wednesday, June 26, reached Ouchy on Thursday, June 27, and began their homeward voyage on Saturday, June 29 (Shelley misdates it June 30). On this reckoning the *Prisoner of Chillon* was begun and finished between Thursday, June 27, and Saturday, June 29, 1816. Whenever or wherever begun, it was completed by July 10 (see *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 364), and was ready for transmission to England by July 25. The MS., in Claire’s handwriting, was placed in Murray’s hands on October 11, and the poem, with seven others, was published December 5, 1816.

In a final note to the *Prisoner of Chillon* (First Edition, 1816, p. 59), Byron confesses that when “the foregoing poem was composed he knew too little of the history of Bonnivard to do justice to his courage and virtues,” and appends as a note to the “Sonnet on Chillon,” “some account of his life ... furnished by the kindness of a citizen of that Republic,” *i.e.* Geneva. The note, which is now entitled “Advertisement,” is taken bodily from the pages of a work published in 1786 by the Swiss naturalist, Jean Senebier, who died in 1809. It was not Byron’s way to invent imaginary authorities, but rather to give his references with some pride and particularity, and it is possible that this unacknowledged and hitherto unverified “account” was supplied by some literary acquaintance, who failed to explain that his information was common property. Be that as it may, Senebier’s prose is in some respects as unhistorical as Byron’s verse, and stands in need of some corrections and additions.

François Bonivard (there is no contemporary authority for “Bonnivard”) was born in 1493. In early youth (1510) he became by inheritance Prior of St. Victor, a monastery outside the walls of Geneva, and on reaching manhood (1514) he accepted the office and the benefice, “la dignité ecclésiastique de Prieur et de la Seigneurie temporelle de St. Victor.” A lover of independence, a child of the later Renaissance, in a word, a Genevese, he threw in his lot with a band of

ardent reformers and patriots, who were conspiring to shake off the yoke of Duke Charles III. of Savoy, and convert the city into a republic. Here is his own testimony: “Dès que j’eus commencé de lire l’histoire des nations, je me sentis entraîné par un goût prononcé pour les Républiques dont j’épousai toujours les intérêts.” Hence, in a great measure, the unrelenting enmity of the duke, who not only ousted him from his priory, but caused him to be shut up for two years at Grolée, Gex, and Belley, and again, after he had been liberated on a second occasion, ordered him, a safe conduct notwithstanding, to be seized and confined in the Castle of Chillon. Here he remained from 1530 to February 1, 1536, when he was released by the Bernese.

For the first two years he was lodged in a room near the governor’s quarters, and was fairly comfortable; but a day came when the duke paid a visit to Chillon; and “then,” he writes, “the captain thrust me into a cell lower than the lake, where I lived four years. I know not whether he did it by the duke’s orders or of his own accord; but sure it is that I had so much leisure for walking, that I wore in the rock which was the pavement a track or little path, as it had been made with a hammer” (*Chroniques des Liges* de Stumpf, addition de Bonivard).

After he had been liberated, “par la grace de Dieu donnée a Mess^{rs} de Berne,” he returned to Geneva, and was made a member of the Council of the State, and awarded a house and a pension of two hundred crowns a year. A long life was before him, which he proceeded to spend in characteristic fashion, finely and honourably as scholar, author, and reformer, but with little self-regard or self-respect as a private citizen. He was married no less than four times, and not one of these alliances was altogether satisfactory or creditable. Determined “to warm both hands before the fire of life,” he was prone to ignore the prejudices and even the decencies of his fellow-citizens, now incurring their displeasure, and now again, as one who had greatly testified for truth and freedom, being taken back into favour and forgiven. There was a deal of human nature in Bonivard, with the result that, at times, conduct fell short of pretension and principle. Estimates of his character differ widely. From the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy, “C’était un fort mauvais sujet et un plus mauvais prêtre;” and even his captivity, infamous as it was, “ne peut rendre Bonivard intéressant” (*Notices Généalogiques sur les Familles Genevoises*, par J. A. Galiffe, 1836, iii. 67, sq.); whilst an advocate and champion, the author of the *Preface* to *Les Chroniques de Genève* par François de Bonivard, 1831, tom. i. pt. i. p. xli., avows that “aucun homme n’a fait preuve d’un plus beau caractère, d’un plus parfait désintéressement que l’illustre Prieur de St. Victor.” Like other great men, he

may have been guilty of “quelques égaremens du coeur, quelques concessions passagères aux dévices des sens,” but “Peu importe à la postérité les irrégularités de leur vie privée” (p. xlvihi.).

But whatever may be the final verdict with regard to the morals, there can be no question as to the intellectual powers of the “Prisoner of Chillon.” The publication of various MS. tracts, *e.g. Advis et Devis de l’ancienne et nouvelle Police de Genève*, 1865; *Advis et Devis des Lengnes*, etc., 1865, which were edited by the late J. J. Chaponnière, and, after his death, by M. Gustave Revilliod, has placed his reputation as historian, satirist, philosopher, beyond doubt or cavil. One quotation must suffice. He is contrasting the Protestants with the Catholics (*Advis et Devis de la Source de Lidolatrie*, Geneva, 1856, p. 159): “Et nous disons que les prebstres rongent les mortz et est vray; mais nous faisons bien pys, car nous rongeons les vifz. Quel profit revient aux paveures du dommage des prebstres? Nous nous ventons toutes les deux parties de prescher Christ cruciffie et disons vray, car nous le laissons cruciffie et nud en l’arbre de la croix, et jouons a beaux dez au pied dicelle croix, pour scavoir qui haura sa robe.”

For Bonivard’s account of his second imprisonment, see *Les Chroniques de Genève*, tom. ii. part ii. pp. 571-577; see, too, *Notice sur François Bonivard*, ...par Le Docteur J. J. Chaponnière, Mémoires et Documents Publiés, par La Société d’Histoire, etc., de Genève, 1845, iv. 137-245; *Chillon Etude Historique*, par L. Vulliemin, Lausanne, 1851; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Seconde Période, vol. 82, Août, 1869, pp. 682-709; “True Story of the Prisoner of Chillon,” *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1900, No. 279, pp. 821-829, by A. van Amstel (Johannes Christiaan Neuman).

The Prisoner of Chillon was reviewed (together with the Third Canto of *Childe Harold*) by Sir Walter Scott (*Quarterly Review*, No. xxxi., October, 1816), and by Jeffrey (*Edinburgh Review*, No. liv., December, 1816).

With the exception of the *Eclectic* (March, 1817, N.S., vol. vii. pp. 298-304), the lesser reviews were unfavourable. For instance, the *Critical Review* (December, 1816, Series V. vol. iv. pp. 567-581) detected the direct but unacknowledged influence of Wordsworth on thought and style; and the *Portfolio* (No. vi. pp. 121-128), in an elaborate skit, entitled “Literary Frauds,” assumed, and affected to prove, that the entire poem was a forgery, and belonged to the same category as *The Right Honourable Lord Byron’s Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, etc.

For extracts from these and other reviews, see Kölbing, *Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems*, Weimar, 1896, excursus i. pp. 3-55.

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art:
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

ADVERTISEMENT

When this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. With some account of his life I have been furnished, by the kindness of a citizen of that republic, which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom: —

“François De Bonnivard, fils de Louis De Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel et Seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496. Il fit ses études à Turin: en 1510 Jean Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui résigna le Prieuré de St. Victor, qui aboutissoit aux murs de Genève, et qui formait un bénéfice considérable....

“Ce grand homme — (Bonnivard mérite ce litre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son coeur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils, le courage de ses démarches, l’étendue de ses connaissances, et la vivacité de son esprit), — ce grand homme, qui excitera l’admiration de tous ceux qu’une vertu héroïque peut encore émouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les coeurs des Genevois qui aiment Genève. Bonnivard en fut toujours un des plus fermes appuis: pour assurer la liberté de notre République, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne; il oublia son repos; il méprisa ses richesses; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d’une patrie qu’il honora de son choix: dès ce moment il la chérit comme le plus zélé de ses citoyens; il la servit avec l’intrépidité d’un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d’un philosophe et la chaleur d’un patriote.

“Il dit dans le commencement de son Histoire de Genève, que, *dès qu’il eut commencé de lire l’histoire des nations, il se sentit entraîné par son goût pour les Républiques, dont il épousa toujours les intérêts*: c’est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Genève pour sa patrie....

“Bonnivard, encore jeune, s’annonça hautement comme le défenseur de Genève contre le Duc de Savoye et l’Evêque....

“En 1519, Bonnivard devient le martyr de sa patrie: Le Duc de Savoye étant entré dans Genève avec cinq cent hommes, Bonnivard craint le ressentiment du Duc; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l’accompagnaient, et conduit par ordre du Prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnivard était malheureux dans ses voyages: comme ses malheurs n’avaient point ralenti son zèle pour Genève, il était toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçaient, et par conséquent il devait être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent, et qui le mirent encore entre les mains

du Duc de Savoye: ce Prince le fit enfermer dans le Château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusques en 1536; il fut alors delivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays-de-Vaud.

“Bonnivard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Genève libre et réformée: la République s’empressa de lui témoigner sa reconnaissance, et de le dédommager des maux qu’il avoit soufferts; elle le reçut Bourgeois de la ville au mois de Juin, 1536; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le Vicaire-Général, et elle lui assigna une pension de deux cent écus d’or tant qu’il séjournerait à Genève. Il fut admis dans le Conseil des Deux-Cent en 1537.

“Bonnivard n’a pas fini d’être utile: après avoir travaillé à rendre Genève libre, il réussit à la rendre tolérante. Bonnivard engagea le Conseil à accorder [aux ecclésiastiques et aux paysans] un tems suffisant pour examiner les propositions qu’on leur faisait; il réussit par sa douceur: on prêche toujours le Christianisme avec succès quand on le prêche avec charité....

“Bonnivard fut savant: ses manuscrits, qui sont dans la bibliothèque publique, prouvent qu’il avait bien lu les auteurs classiques Latins, et qu’il avait approfondi la théologie et l’histoire. Ce grand homme aimait les sciences, et il croyait qu’elles pouvaient faire la gloire de Genève; aussi il ne négligea rien pour les fixer dans cette ville naissante; en 1551 il donna sa bibliothèque au public; elle fut le commencement de notre bibliothèque publique; et ces livres sont en partie les rares et belles éditions du quinzième siècle qu’on voit dans notre collection. Enfin, pendant la même année, ce bon patriote institua la République son héritière, à condition qu’elle emploierait ses biens à entretenir le collège dont on projetait la fondation.

“Il parait que Bonnivard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l’assurer, parcequ’il y a une lacune dans le Nécrologe depuis le mois de Juillet, 1570, jusques en 1571.” — [*Histoire Littéraire de Genève*, par Jean Senebier (1741-1809), 1786, i. 131-137.]

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I.

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred — forbidden fare; 10
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling place;
We were seven — who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage; 20
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied; —
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,

And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III.

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together — yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy — but to me

They never sounded like our own.

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
I ought to do — and did my best —
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —
For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day —
(When day was beautiful to me 80
As to young eagles, being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhorred to view below.

V.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine: 100

But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent ¹¹⁰
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high ¹²⁰
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rocked,
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare, ¹³⁰
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,

Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer —
They coldly laughed — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above 160
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such Murder's fitting monument!

VIII.

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought

To hoard my life, that his might be 170
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmixed with such — but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur — not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost 200
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting Nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear;
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;

I called, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
And rushed to him: — I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, *I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe: 220
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well — I never knew —
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night — it was not day; 240
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness — without a place;

There were no stars — no earth — no time —
No check — no change — no good — no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! 250

X.

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track; 260
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me! 270
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280

But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingéd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For — Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile —
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew, ²⁹⁰
For he would never thus have flown —
And left me twice so doubly lone, —
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
Lone — as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate, ³⁰⁰
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was: — my broken chain
With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one, ³¹⁰
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,

And my crushed heart felt blind and sick.

XII.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all, ³²⁰
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child — no sire — no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, ³³⁰
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them — and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down; ³⁴⁰
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,

Of gentle breath and hue. 350
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days —
I kept no count, I took no note —
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free; 370
I asked not why, and recked not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home: 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,

And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends ³⁹⁰
To make us what we are: — even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

MAZEPPA INTRODUCTION

Mazeppa, a legend of the Russian Ukraine, or frontier region, is based on the passage in Voltaire's *Charles XII.* prefixed as the "Advertisement" to the poem. Voltaire seems to have known very little about the man or his history, and Byron, though he draws largely on his imagination, was content to take his substratum of fact from Voltaire. The "true story of Mazeppa" is worth re-telling for its own sake, and lends a fresh interest and vitality to the legend. Ivan Stepanovitch Mazeppa (or Mazepa), born about the year 1645, was of Cossack origin, but appears to have belonged, by descent or creation, to the lesser nobility of the semi-Polish Volhynia. He began life (1660) as a page of honour in the Court of King John Casimir V. of Poland, where he studied Latin, and acquired the tongue and pen of eloquent statesmanship. Banished from the court on account of a quarrel, he withdrew to his mother's estate in Volhynia, and there, to beguile the time, made love to the wife of a neighbouring, the *pane* or Lord Falbowski. The intrigue was discovered, and to avenge his wrongs the outraged husband caused Mazeppa to be stripped to the skin, and bound to his own steed. The horse, lashed into madness, and terror-stricken by the discharge of a pistol, started off at a gallop, and rushing "thorough bush, thorough briar," carried his torn and bleeding rider into the courtyard of his own mansion!

With regard to the sequel or issue of this episode, history is silent, but when the curtain rises again (A.D. 1674) Mazeppa is discovered in the character of writer-general or foreign secretary to Peter Doroshénko, hetman or president of the Western Ukraine, on the hither side of the Dniéper. From the service of Doroshénko, who came to an untimely end, he passed by a series of accidents into the employ of his rival, Samoïlovitch, hetman of the Eastern Ukraine, and, as his secretary or envoy, continued to attract the notice and to conciliate the good will of the (regent) Tzarina Sophia and her eminent *boyard*, Prince Basil Golitsyn. A time came (1687) when it served the interests of Russia to degrade Samoïlovitch, and raise Mazeppa to the post of hetman, and thenceforward, for twenty years and more, he held something like a regal sway over the whole of the Ukraine (a fertile "no-man's land," watered by the Dniéper and its tributaries), openly the loyal and zealous ally of his neighbour and suzerain, Peter the Great.

How far this allegiance was genuine, or whether a secret preference for Poland, the land of his adoption, or a long-concealed impatience of Muscovite suzerainty would in any case have urged him to revolt, must remain doubtful,

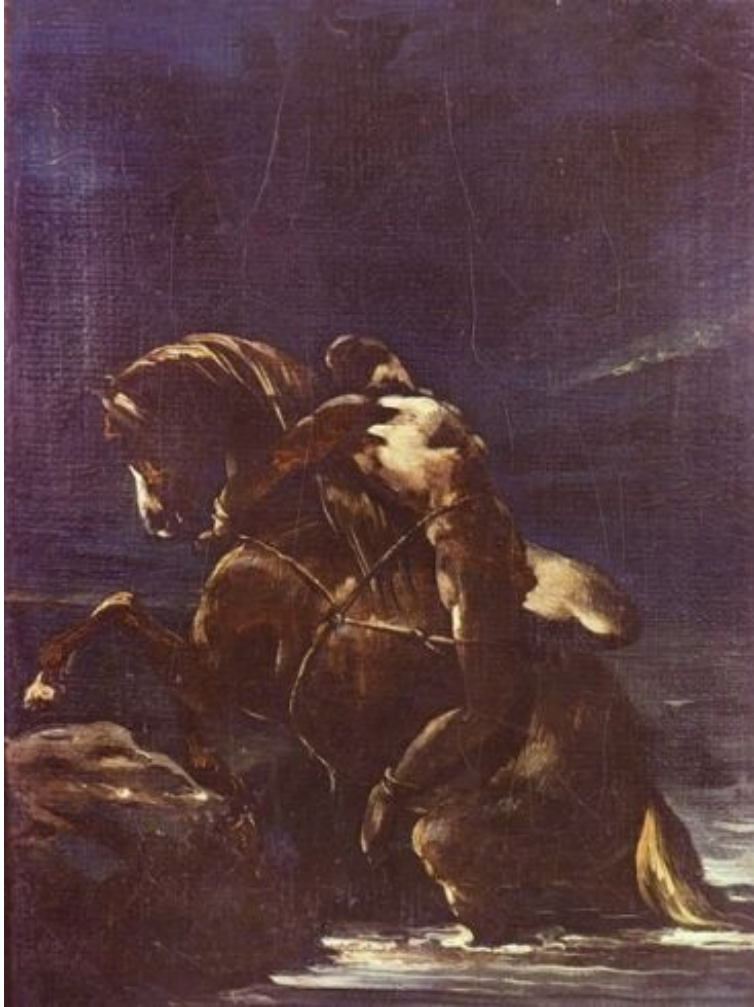
but it is certain that the immediate cause of a final reversal of the allegiance and a break with the Tsar was a second and still more fateful *affaire du coeur*. The hetman was upwards of sixty years of age, but, even so, he fell in love with his god-daughter, Matréná, who, in spite of difference of age and ecclesiastical kinship, not only returned his love, but, to escape the upbraidings and persecution of her mother, took refuge under his roof. Mazeppa sent the girl back to her home, but, as his love-letters testify, continued to woo her with the tenderest and most passionate solicitings; and, although she finally yielded to *force majeure* and married another suitor, her parents nursed their revenge, and endeavoured to embroil the hetman with the Tsar. For a time their machinations failed, and Matréná's father, Kotchúbey, together with his friend Iskra, were executed with the Tsar's assent and approbation. Before long, however, Mazeppa, who had been for some time past in secret correspondence with the Swedes, signalized his defection from Peter by offering his services first to Stanislaus of Poland, and afterwards to Charles XII. of Sweden, who was meditating the invasion of Russia.

"Pultowa's day," July 8, 1709, was the last of Mazeppa's power and influence, and in the following year (March 31, 1710), "he died of old age, perhaps of a broken heart," at Várnitza, a village near Bender, on the Dniester, whither he had accompanied the vanquished and fugitive Charles.

Such was Mazeppa, a man destined to pass through the crowded scenes of history, and to take his stand among the greater heroes of romance. His deeds of daring, his intrigues and his treachery, have been and still are sung by the wandering minstrels of the Ukraine. His story has passed into literature. His ride forms the subject of an *Orientale* (1829) by Victor Hugo, who treats Byron's theme symbolically; and the romance of his old age, his love for his god-daughter Matréná, with its tragical issue, the judicial murder of Kotchúbey and Iskra, are celebrated by the "Russian Byron" Pushkin, in his poem *Poltava*. He forms the subject of a novel, *Iwan Wизигин*, by Bulgarin, 1830, and of tragedies by I. Slowacki, 1840, and Rudolph von Gottschall. From literature Mazeppa has passed into art in the "symphonic poem" of Franz Lizt (1857); and, yet again, *pour comble de gloire*, *Mazeppa*, or *The Wild Horse of Tartary*, is the title of a "romantic drama," first played at the Royal Amphitheatre, Westminster Bridge, on Easter Monday, 1831; and revived at Astley's Theatre, when Adah Isaacs Menken appeared as "Mazeppa," October 3, 1864. (*Peter the Great*, by Eugene Schuyler, 1884, ii. 115, *seq.*; *Le Fils de Pierre Le Grand, Mazeppa, etc.*, by Viscount E. Melchior de Vogüé", Paris, 1884; *Peter the Great*, by Oscar Browning, 1899, pp. 219-229.) Of the composition of Mazeppa we know

nothing, except that on September 24, 1818, “it was still to finish” (*Letters*, 1900, iv. 264). It was published together with an *Ode* (*Venice: An Ode*) and *A Fragment* (see *Letters*, 1899, iii. Appendix IV. pp. 446-453), June 28, 1819.

Notices of *Mazeppa* appeared in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, July, 1819, vol. v. p. 429 (for *John Gilpin* and *Mazeppa*, by William Maginn, *vide ibid.*, pp. 434-439); the *Monthly Review*, July, 1819, vol. 89, pp. 309-321; and the *Eclectic Review*, August, 1819, vol. xii. pp. 147-156.



'Mazeppa' by Théodore Géricault, 1820

ADVERTISEMENT

“Celui qui remplissait alors cette place était un gentilhomme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat de Podolie: il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une intrigue qu’il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d’un gentilhomme Polonais ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état. Le cheval, qui était du pays de l’Ukraine, y retourna, et y porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelques paysans le secoururent: il resta longtems parmi eux, et se signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande considération parmi les Cosaques: sa réputation s’augmentant de jour en jour, obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de l’Ukraine.” — Voltaire, *Hist. de Charles XII.*, 1772, p. 205.

“Le roi, fuyant et poursuivi, eut son cheval tué sous lui; le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout son sang, lui donna le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans la fuite, ce conquérant qui n’avait pu y monter pendant la bataille.” — P. 222.

“Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. Le carrosse, où il était, rompit dans la marche; on le remit à cheval. Pour comble de disgrâce, il s’égara pendant la nuit dans un bois; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer, à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues plus insupportables par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d’un arbre, en danger d’être surpris à tout moment par les vainqueurs, qui le cherchaient de tous côtés.” — P. 224.

MAZEPPA I.

'Twas after dread Pultowa's day,
When Fortune left the royal Swede —
Around a slaughtered army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had passed to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again —
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year, ¹⁰
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one — a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard of the die;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stained with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid:
And not a voice was heard to upbraid ²⁰
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When Truth had nought to dread from Power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own — and died the Russians' slave.
This, too, sinks after many a league
Of well-sustained, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests darkling,
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling —
The beacons of surrounding foes —
A King must lay his limbs at length. ³⁰
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,

In outworn Nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff, his limbs were stark;
The heavy hour was chill and dark;
The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid:
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall, 40
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they.
As once the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs! — alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinned it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed; 50
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade —
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's Hetman, calm and bold;
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubbed down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smoothed his fetlocks and his mane, 60
And slacked his girth, and stripped his rein,
And joyed to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too,
Whate'er was to be done, would do.

Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb, 70
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obeyed his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around, — and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight, —
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good 80
The long day's march had well withstood —
If still the powder filled the pan,
And flints unloosened kept their lock —
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt;
And next the venerable man,
From out his havresack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock;
And to the Monarch and his men
The whole or portion offered then 90
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe; —
And then he said — “Of all our band,
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
In skirmish, march, or forage, none
Can less have said or more have done 100
Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
So fit a pair had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus and thou:
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield

For pricking on o'er flood and field."

Mazeppa answered — "Ill betide
The school wherein I learned to ride!"

Quoth Charles — "Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learned the art so well?" 110

Mazeppa said — "'Twere long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease,
Beyond the swift Borysthenes:
And, Sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop." — "But I request,"
Said Sweden's monarch, "thou wilt tell 120
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies."
"Well, Sire, with such a hope, I'll track
My seventy years of memory back:
I think 'twas in my twentieth spring, —
Aye 'twas, — when Casimir was king —
John Casimir, — I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age: 130
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your Majesty;
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reigned in most unseemly quiet;
Not that he had no cares to vex;
He loved the Muses and the Sex;
And sometimes these so froward are,
They made him wish himself at war; 140
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress — or new book:
And then he gave prodigious fetes —
All Warsaw gathered round his gates

To gaze upon his splendid court,
 And dames, and chiefs, of princely port.
 He was the Polish Solomon,
 So sung his poets, all but one,
 Who, being unpensioned, made a satire,
 And boasted that he could not flatter. 150
 It was a court of jousts and mimes,
 Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
 Even I for once produced some verses,
 And signed my odes 'Despairing Thyrsis.'
 There was a certain Palatine,
 A Count of far and high descent,
 Rich as a salt or silver mine;
 And he was proud, ye may divine,
 As if from Heaven he had been sent;
 He had such wealth in blood and ore 160
 As few could match beneath the throne;
 And he would gaze upon his store,
 And o'er his pedigree would pore,
 Until by some confusion led,
 Which almost looked like want of head,
 He thought their merits were his own.
 His wife was not of this opinion;
 His junior she by thirty years,
 Grew daily tired of his dominion;
 And, after wishes, hopes, and fears, 170
 To Virtue a few farewell tears,
 A restless dream or two — some glances
 At Warsaw's youth — some songs, and dances,
 Awaited but the usual chances,
 Those happy accidents which render
 The coldest dames so very tender,
 To deck her Count with titles given,
 'Tis said, as passports into Heaven;
 But, strange to say, they rarely boast
 Of these, who have deserved them most. 180

“I was a goodly stripling then;
At seventy years I so may say,
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who, in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or of knight’s degree,
Could vie in vanities with me;
For I had strength — youth — gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all is rugged now;
For Time, and Care, and War, have ploughed 190
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavowed
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday;
This change was wrought, too, long ere age
Had ta’en my features for his page:
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength — my courage — or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree, 200
With starless skies my canopy.
But let me on: Theresa’s form —
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut’s bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;
And yet I find no words to tell
The shape of her I loved so well:
She had the Asiatic eye,
Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
Hath mingled with our Polish blood, 210
Dark as above us is the sky;
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
Which seemed to melt to its own beam;
All love, half languor, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high,
As though it were a joy to die.

A brow like a midsummer lake, 220
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within.
A cheek and lip — but why proceed?
I loved her then, I love her still;
And such as I am, love indeed
In fierce extremes — in good and ill.
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past, — 230
As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI.

“We met — we gazed — I saw, and sighed;
She did not speak, and yet replied;
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines —
Involuntary sparks of thought,
Which strike from out the heart o’erwrought,
And form a strange intelligence,
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds, 240
Without their will, young hearts and minds;
Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.
I saw, and sighed — in silence wept,
And still reluctant distance kept,
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion — then, even then,
I longed, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again, 250
The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour. — There is a game,
A frivolous and foolish play,
Wherewith we while away the day;
It is — I have forgot the name —

And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forget:
I recked not if I won or lost,
It was enough for me to be
So near to hear, and oh! to see ²⁶⁰
The being whom I loved the most.
I watched her as a sentinel,
(May ours this dark night watch as well!)
Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Played on for hours, as if her will
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot. ²⁷⁰
Then through my brain the thought did pass,
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
All incoherent as they were;
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listened — 'tis enough —
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice — ²⁸⁰
And one refusal no rebuff.

VII.

"I loved, and was beloved again —
They tell me, Sire, you never knew
Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
I shorten all my joy or pain;
To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
I am — or rather *was* — a Prince, ²⁹⁰
A chief of thousands, and could lead

Them on where each would foremost bleed;
But could not o'er myself evince
The like control — But to resume:
I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth, it is a happy doom,
But yet where happiest ends in pain. —
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery Expectation's dower. 300
My days and nights were nothing — all
Except that hour which doth recall,
In the long lapse from youth to age,
No other like itself: I'd give
The Ukraine back again to live
It o'er once more, and be a page,
The happy page, who was the lord
Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
And had no other gem nor wealth,
Save Nature's gift of Youth and Health. 310
We met in secret — doubly sweet,
Some say, they find it so to meet;
I know not that — I would have given
My life but to have called her mine
In the full view of Earth and Heaven;
For I did oft and long repine
That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII.

“For lovers there are many eyes,
And such there were on us; the Devil
On such occasions should be civil — 320
The Devil! — I'm loth to do him wrong,
It might be some untoward saint,
Who would not be at rest too long,
But to his pious bile gave vent —
But one fair night, some lurking spies
Surprised and seized us both.
The Count was something more than wroth —

I was unarmed; but if in steel,
All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
What 'gainst their numbers could I do? 330
'Twas near his castle, far away
From city or from succour near,
And almost on the break of day;
I did not think to see another,
My moments seemed reduced to few;
And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
And, it may be, a saint or two,
As I resigned me to my fate,
They led me to the castle gate:
Theresa's doom I never knew, 340
Our lot was henceforth separate.
An angry man, ye may opine,
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
And he had reason good to be,
But he was most enraged lest such
An accident should chance to touch
Upon his future pedigree;
Nor less amazed, that such a blot
His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
While he was highest of his line; 350
Because unto himself he seemed
The first of men, nor less he deemed
In others' eyes, and most in mine.
'Sdeath! with a *page* — perchance a king
Had reconciled him to the thing;
But with a stripling of a page —
I felt — but cannot paint his rage.

IX.

“‘Bring forth the horse!’ — the horse was brought!
In truth, he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed, 360
Who looked as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,

With spur and bridle undefiled —
‘Twas but a day he had been caught;
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led:
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong; ³⁷⁰
They loosed him with a sudden lash —
Away! — away! — and on we dash! —
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X.

“Away! — away! — My breath was gone,
I saw not where he hurried on:
‘Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foamed — away! — away!
The last of human sounds which rose,
As I was darted from my foes, ³⁸⁰
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
Which on the wind came roaring after
A moment from that rabble rout:
With sudden wrath I wrenched my head,
And snapped the cord, which to the mane
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And, writhing half my form about,
Howled back my curse; but ‘midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser’s speed,
Perchance they did not hear nor heed: ³⁹⁰
It vexes me — for I would fain
Have paid their insult back again.
I paid it well in after days:
There is not of that castle gate,
Its drawbridge and portcullis’ weight,
Stone — bar — moat — bridge — or barrier left;
Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;

And many a time ye there might pass, ⁴⁰⁰
Nor dream that e'er the fortress was.
I saw its turrets in a blaze,
Their crackling battlements all cleft,
And the hot lead pour down like rain
From off the scorched and blackening roof,
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
They little thought that day of pain,
When launched, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash,
That one day I should come again, ⁴¹⁰
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourteous ride.
They played me then a bitter prank,
When, with the wild horse for my guide,
They bound me to his foaming flank:
At length I played them one as frank —
For Time at last sets all things even —
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven, ⁴²⁰
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI.

“Away! — away! — my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind!
All human dwellings left behind,
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequered with the Northern light.
Town — village — none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent, ⁴³⁰
And bounded by a forest black;
And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man. The year before

A Turkish army had marched o'er;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod:
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by — 440
I could have answered with a sigh —
But fast we fled, — away! — away! —
And I could neither sigh nor pray;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career:
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slackened in his speed;
But no — my bound and slender frame 450
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became:
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright:
I tried my voice, — 'twas faint and low —
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
Meantime my cords were wet with gore, 460
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII.

"We neared the wild wood — 'twas so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side:
'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
And strips the forest in its haste, —
But these were few and far between, 470
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,

Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strorn by those autumnal eyes
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discoloured with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffened gore
Upon the slain when battle's o'er;
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head —
So cold and stark — the raven's beak 480
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart — and well it were,
Or else a different lot were mine —
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarred with cold;
My bonds forbade to loose my hold. 490
We rustled through the leaves like wind, —
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
Where'er we flew they followed on,
Nor left us with the morning sun;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the wood, 500
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wished for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish — if it must be so —
At bay, destroying many a foe!
When first my courser's race begun,
I wished the goal already won;
But now I doubted strength and speed:
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed 510

Had nerved him like the mountain-roe —
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewildered with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he passed —
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild —
All furious as a favoured child
Balked of its wish; or — fiercer still —
A woman piqued — who has her will! 520

XIII.

“The wood was passed; ‘twas more than noon,
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold —
Prolonged endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o’er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path — 530
Cold — hunger — sorrow — shame — distress —
Thus bound in Nature’s nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirred beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake’s, in act to strike —
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies rolled round,
I seemed to sink upon the ground; 540
But erred — for I was fastly bound.
My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb’d awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o’er my eyes,

Which saw no farther. He who dies
Can die no more than then I died,
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride.
I felt the blackness come and go, ⁵⁵⁰
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below:
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain; ⁵⁶⁰
But soon it passed, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust!
No matter! I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face — before — and now.

XIV.

“My thoughts came back. Where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse ⁵⁷⁰
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb, — till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflowed, though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight returned, though dim; alas!
And thickened, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
There was a gleam too of the sky, ⁵⁸⁰
Studded with stars; — it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!

The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength
My stiffened limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves, 590
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew. 600

XV.

"With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward — seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white, 610
Or scattered spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right:
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;

Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes: 620
That very cheat had cheered me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI.

“Onward we went — but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o’erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went:
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour! 630
But, useless all to me,
His new-born tameness nought availed —
My limbs were bound; my force had failed,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o’er,
Which but prolonged their pain. 640
The dizzy race seemed almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun —
How slow, alas! he came!
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day,
How heavily it rolled away!
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And called the radiance from their cars, 650
And filled the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII.

“Uprose the sun; the mists were curled
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around — behind — before.
What booted it to traverse o’er
Plain — forest — river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil —
No sign of travel, none of toil — 660
The very air was mute:
And not an insect’s shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird’s new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a *werst*,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still staggered on;
And still we were — or seemed — alone:
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs. 670
Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry — my lips were dumb!
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse, and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretched by pain, 680
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarred by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o’er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet!
The sight re-nerved my courser’s feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh, 690
He answered, and then fell!

With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable,
His first and last career is done!
On came the troop — they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong.
They stop — they start — they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round, 700
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seemed the Patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort — they foam — neigh — swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.
They left me there to my despair,
Linked to the dead and stiffening wretch, 710
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me — and there we lay,
The dying on the dead!
I little deemed another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.
“And there from morn to twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see 720
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of, mind,
That makes us feel at length resigned
To that which our foreboding years
Present the worst and last of fears:
Inevitable — even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon,
Yet shunned and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare
That Prudence might escape: 730

At times both wished for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revelled beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
Whose heritage was Misery. 740
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future, (which is viewed
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued,)
With nought perhaps to grieve:
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distempered eyes, 750
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repaired his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power 760
To rule — to shine — to smite — to save —
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII.

“The sun was sinking — still I lay
Chained to the chill and stiffening steed!
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,

No hope arose of being freed.
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly, 770
Who scarce would wait till both should die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew, and perched, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lacked the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise, 780
Which scarcely could be called a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more — my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fixed my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold — dull — swimming — dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath, 790
A little thrill — a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that crossed my brain —
A gasp — a throb — a start of pain,
A sigh — and nothing more.

XIX.

“I woke — where was I? — Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie? 800
And is it mortal yon bright eye,
That watches me with gentle glance?

I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that my former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-haired, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall.
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw ⁸¹⁰
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free:
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be, —
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast:
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unsealed,
She smiled — and I essayed to speak,
But failed — and she approached, and made ⁸²⁰
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free;
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smoothed the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers — ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music followed her light feet. ⁸³⁰
But those she called were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she passed,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near, at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return: — while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.

“She came with mother and with sire — 840
What need of more? — I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack’s guest.
They found me senseless on the plain,
They bore me to the nearest hut,
They brought me into life again —
Me — one day o’er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness, 850
Bound — naked — bleeding — and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne, —
What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!
To-morrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank, — and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!” — The Hetman threw 860
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made —
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest whene’er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wondered not, —
The King had been an hour asleep!

THE ISLAND

OR,
CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMRADES.

INTRODUCTION

The first canto of *The Island* was finished January 10, 1823. We know that Byron was still at work on “the poeshie,” January 25 (*Letters*, 1901, vi. 164), and may reasonably conjecture that a somewhat illegible date affixed to the fourth canto, stands for February 14, 1823. The MS. had been received in London before April 9 (*ibid.*, p. 192); and on June 26, 1823, *The Island; or, The Adventures of Christian and his Comrades*, was published by John Hunt.

Byron’s “Advertisement,” or note, prefixed to *The Island* contains all that need be said with regard to the “sources” of the poem.

Two separate works were consulted: (1) *A Narrative of the Mutiny on board His Majesty’s Ship Bounty, and the subsequent Voyage of ... the Ship’s Boat from Tafoa, one of the Friendly Islands, to Timor, a Dutch Settlement in the East Indies*, written by Lieutenant William Bligh, 1790; and (2) *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, Compiled and Arranged from the Extensive Communications of Mr. William Mariner, by John Martin, M.D., 1817.

According to George Clinton (*Life and Writings of Lord Byron*, 1824, p. 656), Byron was profoundly impressed by Mariner’s report of the scenery and folklore of the *Friendly Islands*, was “never tired of talking of it to his friends,” and, in order to turn this poetic material to account, finally bethought him that Bligh’s *Narrative* of the mutiny of the *Bounty* would serve as a framework or structure “for an embroidery of rare device” — the figures and foliage of a tropical pattern. That, at least, is the substance of Clinton’s analysis of the “sources” of *The Island*, and whether he spoke, or only feigned to speak, with authority, his criticism is sound and to the point. The story of the mutiny of the *Bounty*, which is faithfully related in the first canto, is not, as the second title implies, a prelude to the “Adventures of Christian and his Comrades,” but to a description of “The Island,” an Ogygia of the South Seas.

It must be borne in mind that Byron’s acquaintance with the details of the

mutiny of the *Bounty* was derived exclusively from Bligh's *Narrative*; that he does not seem to have studied the minutes of the court-martial on Peter Heywood and the other prisoners (September, 1792), or to have possessed the information that in 1809, and, again, in 1815, the Admiralty received authentic information with regard to the final settlement of Christian and his comrades on Pitcairn Island. Articles, however, had appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, February, 1810, vol. iii. pp. 23, 24, and July, 1815, vol. xiii. pp. 376-378, which contained an extract from the log-book of Captain Mayhew Folger, of the American ship *Topaz*, dated September 29, 1808, and letters from Folger (March 1, 1813), and Sir Thomas Staines, October 18, 1814, which solved the mystery. Moreover, the article of February, 1810, is quoted in the notes (pp. 313-318) affixed to Miss Mitford's *Christina, the Maid of the South Seas*, 1811, a poem founded on Bligh's *Narrative*, of which neither Byron or his reviewers seem to have heard.

But whatever may have been his opportunities of ascertaining the facts of the case, it is certain that he did not know what became of Christian, and that whereas in the first canto he follows the text of Bligh's *Narrative*, in the three last cantos he draws upon his imagination, turning Tahiti into Toobonai (Tubuai), and transporting Toobonai from one archipelago to another — from the Society to the Friendly Islands.

Another and still more surprising feature of *The Island* is that Byron accepts, without qualification or reserve, the guilt of the mutineers and the innocence and worth of Lieutenant Bligh. It is true that by inheritance he was imbued with the traditions of the service, and from personal experience understood the necessity of discipline on board ship; but it may be taken for granted that if he had known that the sympathy, if not the esteem, of the public had been transferred from Bligh to Christian, that in the opinion of grave and competent writers, the guilt of mutiny on the high seas had been almost condoned by the violence and brutality of the commanding officer, he would have sided with the oppressed rather than the oppressor. As it is, he takes Bligh at his own valuation, and carefully abstains from "eulogizing mutiny." (Letter to L. Hunt, January 25, 1823.) The story of the "mutiny of the *Bounty*" happened in this wise. In 1787 it occurred to certain West India planters and merchants, resident in London, that it would benefit the natives, and perhaps themselves, if the bread-fruit tree, which flourished in Tahiti (the Otaheite of Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks, see *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 7, note 2) and other islands of the South Seas, could be acclimatized in the West Indies. A petition was addressed to the king, with the

result that a vessel, with a burden of 215 tons, which Banks christened the *Bounty*, sailed from Spithead December 23, 1787. Lieutenant William Bligh, who had sailed with Cook in the *Resolution*, acted as commanding officer, and under him were five midshipmen, a master, two master's mates, *etc.* — forty-four persons all told. The *Bounty* arrived at Tahiti October 26, 1788, and there for six delightful months the ship's company tarried, "fleeting the time carelessly, as in the elder world." But "Scripture saith an ending to all fine things must be," and on April 4, 1789, the *Bounty*, with a cargo of over a thousand bread-fruit trees, planted in pots, tubs, and boxes (see for plate of the pots, *etc.*, *A Voyage, etc.*, 1792, p. 1), sailed away westward for the Cape of Good Hope, and the West Indies. All went well at first, but "just before sun-rising" on Tuesday, April 28, 1789, "the north-westernmost of the Friendly Islands, called Tofoa, bearing north-east," Fletcher Christian, who was mate of the watch, assisted by Charles Churchill, master-at-arms, Alexander Smith (the John Adams of Pitcairn Island), and Thomas Burkitt, able seamen, seized the captain, tied his hands behind his back, hauled him out of his berth, and forced him on deck. The boatswain, William Cole, was ordered to hoist out the ship's launch, which measured twenty-three feet from stem to stern, and into this open boat Bligh, together with eighteen of the crew, who were or were supposed to be on his side, were thrust, on pain of instant death. When they were in the boat they were "veered round with a rope, and finally cast adrift." Bligh and his eighteen innocent companions sailed westward, and, after a voyage of "twelve hundred leagues," during which they were preserved from death and destruction by the wise ordering and patient heroism of the commander, safely anchored in Kœpang Bay, on the north-west coast of the Isle of Timor, June 14, 1789. (See Bligh's *Narrative, etc.*, 1790, pp. 11-88; and *The Island*, Canto I. section ix. lines 169-201.) The *Bounty*, with the remainder of the crew, twenty-five in number, "the most able of the ship's company," sailed eastward, first to Toobooai, or Tubuai, an island to the south of the Society Islands, thence to Tahiti (June 6), back to Tubuai (June 26), and yet again, to Tahiti (September 20), where sixteen of the mutineers, including the midshipman George Stewart (the "Torquil" of *The Island*), were put on shore. Finally, September 21, 1789, Fletcher Christian, with the *Bounty* and eight of her crew, six Tahitian men, and twelve women, sailed away still further east to unknown shores, and, so it was believed, disappeared for good and all. Long afterwards it was known that they had landed on Pitcairn Island, broken up the *Bounty*, and founded a permanent settlement.

When Bligh returned to England (March 14, 1790), and acquainted the Government “with the atrocious act of piracy and mutiny” which had been committed on the high seas, the *Pandora* frigate, with Captain Edwards, was despatched to apprehend the mutineers, and bring them back to England for trial and punishment. The *Pandora* reached Tahiti March 23, 1791, set sail, with fourteen prisoners, May 8, and was wrecked on the “Great Barrier Reef” north-east of Queensland, August 29, 1791. Four of the prisoners, including George Stewart, who had been manacled, and were confined in “Pandora’s box,” perished in the wreck, and the remaining ten were brought back to England, and tried by court-martial. (See *The Eventful History of the Mutiny, etc.* (by Sir John Barrow), 1831, pp. 205-244.) The story, which runs through the second, third, and fourth cantos, may possibly owe some of its details to a vague recollection of incidents which happened, or were supposed to happen, at Tahiti, in the interval between the final departure of the *Bounty*, September 21, 1789, and the arrival of the *Pandora*, March 23, 1791; but, as a whole, it is a work of fiction.

With the exception of the fifteenth and sixteenth cantos of *Don Juan*, *The Island* was the last poem of any importance which Byron lived to write, and the question naturally suggests itself — Is the new song as good as the old? Byron answers the question himself. He tells Leigh Hunt (January 25, 1823) that he hopes the “poem will be a little above the ordinary run of periodical poesy,” and that, though portions of the Toobonai (*sic*) islanders are “pamby,” he intends “to scatter some *uncommon* places here and there nevertheless.” On the whole, in point of conception and execution, *The Island* is weaker and less coherent than the *Corsair*; but it contains lines and passages (*e.g.* Canto I. lines 107-124, 133-140; Canto II. lines 272-297; Canto IV. lines 94-188) which display a finer feeling and a more “exalted wit” than the “purple patches” of *The Turkish Tales*.

The poetic faculty is somewhat exhausted, but the poetic vision has been purged and heightened by suffering and self-knowledge.

The Island was reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, July, 1823, E.S., vol. 101, pp. 316-319; the *New Monthly Magazine*, N.S., 1823, vol. 8, pp. 136-141; the *Atlantic Magazine*, April, 1826, vol. 2, pp. 333-337; in the *Literary Chronicle*, June 21, 1823; and the *Literary Gazette*, June 21, 1823.

ADVERTISEMENT

The foundation of the following story will be found partly in Lieutenant Bligh’s

“Narrative of the Mutiny and Seizure of the Bounty, in the South Seas (in 1789);” and partly in “Mariner’s Account of the Tonga Islands.”

Genoa, 1823.

THE ISLAND

CANTO THE FIRST

I.

The morning watch was come; the vessel lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid way;
The cloven billow flashed from off her prow
In furrows formed by that majestic plough;
The waters with their world were all before;
Behind, the South Sea's many an islet shore.
The quiet night, now dappling, 'gan to wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning main;
The dolphins, not unconscious of the day,
Swam high, as eager of the coming ray;
The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the deep;
The sail resumed its lately shadowed white,
And the wind fluttered with a freshening flight;
The purpling Ocean owns the coming Sun,
But ere he break — a deed is to be done.

II.

The gallant Chief within his cabin slept,
Secure in those by whom the watch was kept:
His dreams were of Old England's welcome shore,
Of toils rewarded, and of dangers o'er; ²⁰
His name was added to the glorious roll
Of those who search the storm-surrounded Pole.
The worst was over, and the rest seemed sure,
And why should not his slumber be secure?
Alas! his deck was trod by unwilling feet,
And wilder hands would hold the vessel's sheet;
Young hearts, which languished for some sunny isle,
Where summer years and summer women smile;
Men without country, who, too long estranged,

Had found no native home, or found it changed, 30
And, half uncivilised, preferred the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain wave —
The gushing fruits that nature gave unfilled;
The wood without a path — but where they willed;
The field o'er which promiscuous Plenty poured
Her horn; the equal land without a lord;
The wish — which ages have not yet subdued
In man — to have no master save his mood;
The earth, whose mine was on its face, unsold,
The glowing sun and produce all its gold; 40
The Freedom which can call each grot a home;
The general garden, where all steps may roam,
Where Nature owns a nation as her child,
Exulting in the enjoyment of the wild;
Their shells, their fruits, the only wealth they know,
Their unexploring navy, the canoe;
Their sport, the dashing breakers and the chase;
Their strangest sight, an European face: —
Such was the country which these strangers yearned
To see again — a sight they dearly earned. 50

III.

Awake, bold Bligh! the foe is at the gate!
Awake! awake! — — Alas! it is too late!
Fiercely beside thy cot the mutineer
Stands, and proclaims the reign of rage and fear.
Thy limbs are bound, the bayonet at thy breast;
The hands, which trembled at thy voice, arrest;
Dragged o'er the deck, no more at thy command
The obedient helm shall veer, the sail expand;
That savage Spirit, which would lull by wrath
Its desperate escape from Duty's path, 60
Glares round thee, in the scarce believing eyes
Of those who fear the Chief they sacrifice:
For ne'er can Man his conscience all assuage,
Unless he drain the wine of Passion — Rage.

In vain, not silenced by the eye of Death,
 Thou call'st the loyal with thy menaced breath: —
 They come not; they are few, and, overawed,
 Must acquiesce, while sterner hearts applaud.
 In vain thou dost demand the cause: a curse
 Is all the answer, with the threat of worse. 70
 Full in thine eyes is waved the glittering blade,
 Close to thy throat the pointed bayonet laid.
 The levelled muskets circle round thy breast
 In hands as steeled to do the deadly rest.
 Thou dar'st them to their worst, exclaiming — “Fire!”
 But they who pitied not could yet admire;
 Some lurking remnant of their former awe
 Restrained them longer than their broken law;
 They would not dip their souls at once in blood,
 But left thee to the mercies of the flood. 80

V.

“Hoist out the boat!” was now the leader's cry;
 And who dare answer “No!” to Mutiny,
 In the first dawning of the drunken hour,
 The Saturnalia of unhoped-for power?
 The boat is lowered with all the haste of hate,
 With its slight plank between thee and thy fate;
 Her only cargo such a scant supply
 As promises the death their hands deny;
 And just enough of water and of bread
 To keep, some days, the dying from the dead: 90
 Some cordage, canvass, sails, and lines, and twine,
 But treasures all to hermits of the brine,
 Were added after, to the earnest prayer
 Of those who saw no hope, save sea and air;
 And last, that trembling vassal of the Pole —
 The feeling compass — Navigation's soul.

VI.

And now the self-elected Chief finds time
To stun the first sensation of his crime,
And raise it in his followers — “Ho! the bowl!”
Lest passion should return to reason’s shoal. ¹⁰⁰
“Brandy for heroes!” Burke could once exclaim —
No doubt a liquid path to Epic fame;
And such the new-born heroes found it here,
And drained the draught with an applauding cheer.
“Huzza! for Otaheite!” was the cry.
How strange such shouts from sons of Mutiny!
The gentle island, and the genial soil,
The friendly hearts, the feasts without a toil,
The courteous manners but from nature caught,
The wealth unhoarded, and the love unbought; ¹¹⁰
Could these have charms for rudest sea-boys, driven
Before the mast by every wind of heaven?
And now, even now prepared with others’ woes
To earn mild Virtue’s vain desire, repose?
Alas! such is our nature! all but aim
At the same end by pathways not the same;
Our means — our birth — our nation, and our name,
Our fortune — temper — even our outward frame,
Are far more potent o’er our yielding clay
Than aught we know beyond our little day. ¹²⁰
Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain’s silence, and o’er Glory’s din:
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man’s conscience is the Oracle of God.

VII.

The launch is crowded with the faithful few
Who wait their Chief, a melancholy crew:
But some remained reluctant on the deck
Of that proud vessel — now a moral wreck —
And viewed their Captain’s fate with piteous eyes;
While others scoffed his augured miseries, ¹³⁰
Sneered at the prospect of his pigmy sail,
And the slight bark so laden and so frail.

The tender nautilus, who steers his prow,
The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe,
The ocean Mab, the fairy of the sea,
Seems far less fragile, and, alas! more free.
He, when the lightning-winged Tornados sweep
The surge, is safe — his port is in the deep —
And triumphs o'er the armadas of Mankind,
Which shake the World, yet crumble in the wind. 140

VIII.

When all was now prepared, the vessel clear
Which hailed her master in the mutineer,
A seaman, less obdurate than his mates,
Showed the vain pity which but irritates;
Watched his late Chieftain with exploring eye,
And told, in signs, repentant sympathy;
Held the moist shaddock to his parched mouth,
Which felt Exhaustion's deep and bitter drouth.
But soon observed, this guardian was withdrawn,
Nor further Mercy clouds Rebellion's dawn. 150
Then forward stepped the bold and froward boy
His Chief had cherished only to destroy,
And, pointing to the helpless prow beneath,
Exclaimed, "Depart at once! delay is death!"
Yet then, even then, his feelings ceased not all:
In that last moment could a word recall
Remorse for the black deed as yet half done,
And what he hid from many showed to one:
When Bligh in stern reproach demanded where
Was now his grateful sense of former care? 160
Where all his hopes to see his name aspire,
And blazon Britain's thousand glories higher?
His feverish lips thus broke their gloomy spell,
"Tis that! 'tis that! I am in hell! in hell!"
No more he said; but urging to the bark
His Chief, commits him to his fragile ark;
These the sole accents from his tongue that fell,
But volumes lurked below his fierce farewell.

IX.

The arctic Sun rose broad above the wave;
The breeze now sank, now whispered from his cave; 170
As on the Æolian harp, his fitful wings
Now swelled, now fluttered o'er his Ocean strings.
With slow, despairing oar, the abandoned skiff
Ploughs its drear progress to the scarce seen cliff,
Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main:
That boat and ship shall never meet again!
But 'tis not mine to tell their tale of grief,
Their constant peril, and their scant relief;
Their days of danger, and their nights of pain;
Their manly courage even when deemed in vain; 180
The sapping famine, rendering scarce a son
Known to his mother in the skeleton;
The ills that lessened still their little store,
And starved even Hunger till he wrung no more;
The varying frowns and favours of the deep,
That now almost ingulfs, then leaves to creep
With crazy oar and shattered strength along
The tide that yields reluctant to the strong;
The incessant fever of that arid thirst
Which welcomes, as a well, the clouds that burst 190
Above their naked bones, and feels delight
In the cold drenching of the stormy night,
And from the outspread canvass gladly wrings
A drop to moisten Life's all-gasping springs;
The savage foe escaped, to seek again
More hospitable shelter from the main;
The ghastly Spectres which were doomed at last
To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
As ever the dark annals of the deep
Disclosed for man to dread or woman weep. 200

X.

We leave them to their fate, but not unknown
Nor unredressed. Revenge may have her own:

Roused Discipline aloud proclaims their cause,
And injured Navies urge their broken laws.
Pursue we on his track the mutineer,
Whom distant vengeance had not taught to fear.
Wide o'er the wave — away! away! away!
Once more his eyes shall hail the welcome bay;
Once more the happy shores without a law
Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw; ²¹⁰
Nature, and Nature's goddess — Woman — woos
To lands where, save their conscience, none accuse;
Where all partake the earth without dispute,
And bread itself is gathered as a fruit;
Where none contest the fields, the woods, the streams: —
The goldless Age, where Gold disturbs no dreams,
Inhabits or inhabited the shore,
Till Europe taught them better than before;
Bestowed her customs, and amended theirs,
But left her vices also to their heirs. ²²⁰
Away with this! behold them as they were,
Do good with Nature, or with Nature err.
“Huzza! for Otaheite!” was the cry,
As stately swept the gallant vessel by.
The breeze springs up; the lately flapping sail
Extends its arch before the growing gale;
In swifter ripples stream aside the seas,
Which her bold bow flings off with dashing ease.
Thus Argo ploughed the Euxine's virgin foam,
But those she wafted still looked back to home; ²³⁰
These spurn their country with their rebel bark,
And fly her as the raven fled the Ark;
And yet they seek to nestle with the dove,
And tame their fiery spirits down to Love.
End of Canto 1st, Jⁿ 14.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

How pleasant were the songs of Toobonai,
When Summer's Sun went down the coral bay!
Come, let us to the islet's softest shade,
And hear the warbling birds! the damsels said:
The wood-dove from the forest depth shall coo,
Like voices of the Gods from Bolotoo;
We'll cull the flowers that grow above the dead,
For these most bloom where rests the warrior's head;
And we will sit in Twilight's face, and see
The sweet Moon glancing through the Tooa tree, 10
The lofty accents of whose sighing bough
Shall sadly please us as we lean below;
Or climb the steep, and view the surf in vain
Wrestle with rocky giants o'er the main,
Which spurn in columns back the baffled spray.
How beautiful are these! how happy they,
Who, from the toil and tumult of their lives,
Steal to look down where nought but Ocean strives!
Even He too loves at times the blue lagoon,
And smooths his ruffled mane beneath the Moon. 20

II.

Yes — from the sepulchre we'll gather flowers,
Then feast like spirits in their promised bowers,
Then plunge and revel in the rolling surf,
Then lay our limbs along the tender turf,
And, wet and shining from the sportive toil,
Anoint our bodies with the fragrant oil,
And plait our garlands gathered from the grave,
And wear the wreaths that sprung from out the brave.
But lo! night comes, the Mooa woos us back,
The sound of mats are heard along our track; 30
Anon the torchlight dance shall fling its sheen

In flashing mazes o'er the Marly's green;
And we too will be there; we too recall
The memory bright with many a festival,
Ere Fiji blew the shell of war, when foes
For the first time were wafted in canoes.
Alas! for them the flower of manhood bleeds;
Alas! for them our fields are rank with weeds:
Forgotten is the rapture, or unknown,
Of wandering with the Moon and Love alone. 40
But be it so: — *they* taught us how to wield
The club, and rain our arrows o'er the field:
Now let them reap the harvest of their art!
But feast to-night! to-morrow we depart.
Strike up the dance! the Cava bowl fill high!
Drain every drop! — to-morrow we may die.
In summer garments be our limbs arrayed;
Around our waists the Tappa's white displayed;
Thick wreaths shall form our coronal, like Spring's,
And round our necks shall glance the Hooni strings; 50
So shall their brighter hues contrast the glow
Of the dusk bosoms that beat high below.

III.

But now the dance is o'er — yet stay awhile;
Ah, pause! nor yet put out the social smile.
To-morrow for the Mooa we depart,
But not to-night — to-night is for the heart.
Again bestow the wreaths we gently woo,
Ye young Enchantresses of gay Licoo!
How lovely are your forms! how every sense
Bows to your beauties, softened, but intense, 60
Like to the flowers on Mataloco's steep,
Which fling their fragrance far athwart the deep! —
We too will see Licoo; but — oh! my heart! —
What do I say? — to-morrow we depart!

IV.

Thus rose a song — the harmony of times
Before the winds blew Europe o'er these climes.
True, they had vices — such are Nature's growth —
But only the barbarian's — we have both;
The sordor of civilisation, mixed
With all the savage which Man's fall hath fixed. 70
Who hath not seen Dissimulation's reign,
The prayers of Abel linked to deeds of Cain?
Who such would see may from his lattice view
The Old World more degraded than the New, —
Now *new* no more, save where Columbia rears
Twin giants, born by Freedom to her spheres,
Where Chimborazo, over air, — earth, — wave, —
Glares with his Titan eye, and sees no slave.

V.

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
Which to the dead a lingering fame conveys 80
In song, where Fame as yet hath left no sign
Beyond the sound whose charm is half divine;
Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
But yields young History all to Harmony;
A boy Achilles, with the Centaur's lyre
In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
For one long-cherished ballad's simple stave,
Rung from the rock, or mingled with the wave,
Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
Or gathering mountain echoes as they glide, 90
Hath greater power o'er each true heart and ear,
Than all the columns Conquest's minions rear;
Invites, when Hieroglyphics are a theme
For sages' labours, or the student's dream;
Attracts, when History's volumes are a toil, —
The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
Such was this rude rhyme — rhyme is of the rude —
But such inspired the Norseman's solitude,
Who came and conquered; such, wherever rise
Lands which no foes destroy or civilise, 100

Exist: and what can our accomplished art
Of verse do more than reach the awakened heart?

VI.

And sweetly now those untaught melodies
Broke the luxurious silence of the skies,
The sweet siesta of a summer day,
The tropic afternoon of Toobonai,
When every flower was bloom, and air was balm,
And the first breath began to stir the palm,
The first yet voiceless wind to urge the wave
All gently to refresh the thirsty cave, ¹¹⁰
Where sat the Songstress with the stranger boy,
Who taught her Passion's desolating joy,
Too powerful over every heart, but most
O'er those who know not how it may be lost;
O'er those who, burning in the new-born fire,
Like martyrs revel in their funeral pyre,
With such devotion to their ecstasy,
That Life knows no such rapture as to die:
And die they do; for earthly life has nought
Matched with that burst of Nature, even in thought; ¹²⁰
And all our dreams of better life above
But close in one eternal gush of Love.

VII.

There sat the gentle savage of the wild,
In growth a woman, though in years a child,
As childhood dates within our colder clime,
Where nought is ripened rapidly save crime;
The infant of an infant world, as pure
From Nature — lovely, warm, and premature;
Dusky like night, but night with all her stars;
Or cavern sparkling with its native spars; ¹³⁰
With eyes that were a language and a spell,
A form like Aphrodite's in her shell,
With all her loves around her on the deep,

Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep;
Yet full of life — for through her tropic cheek
The blush would make its way, and all but speak;
The sun-born blood suffused her neck, and threw
O'er her clear nut-brown skin a lucid hue,
Like coral reddening through the darkened wave,
Which draws the diver to the crimson cave. 140
Such was this daughter of the southern seas,
Herself a billow in her energies,
To bear the bark of others' happiness,
Nor feel a sorrow till their joy grew less:
Her wild and warm yet faithful bosom knew
No joy like what it gave; her hopes ne'er drew
Aught from Experience, that chill touchstone, whose
Sad proof reduces all things from their hues:
She feared no ill, because she knew it not,
Or what she knew was soon — too soon — forgot: 150
Her smiles and tears had passed, as light winds pass
O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
Whose depths unsearched, and fountains from the hill,
Restore their surface, in itself so still,
Until the Earthquake tear the Naiad's cave,
Root up the spring, and trample on the wave,
And crush the living waters to a mass,
The amphibious desert of the dank morass!
And must their fate be hers? The eternal change
But grasps Humanity with quicker range; 160
And they who fall but fall as worlds will fall,
To rise, if just, a Spirit o'er them all.

VIII.

And who is he? the blue-eyed northern child
Of isles more known to man, but scarce less wild;
The fair-haired offspring of the Hebrides,
Where roars the Pentland with its whirling seas;
Rocked in his cradle by the roaring wind,
The tempest-born in body and in mind,
His young eyes opening on the ocean-foam,

Had from that moment deemed the deep his home, 170
The giant comrade of his pensive moods,
The sharer of his craggy solitudes,
The only Mentor of his youth, where'er
His bark was borne; the sport of wave and air;
A careless thing, who placed his choice in chance,
Nursed by the legends of his land's romance;
Eager to hope, but not less firm to bear,
Acquainted with all feelings save despair.
Placed in the Arab's clime he would have been
As bold a rover as the sands have seen, 180
And braved their thirst with as enduring lip
As Ishmael, wafted on his Desert-Ship;
Fixed upon Chili's shore, a proud cacique:
On Hellas' mountains, a rebellious Greek;
Born in a tent, perhaps a Tamerlane;
Bred to a throne, perhaps unfit to reign.
For the same soul that rends its path to sway,
If reared to such, can find no further prey
Beyond itself, and must retrace its way,
Plunging for pleasure into pain: the same 190
Spirit which made a Nero, Rome's worst shame,
A humbler state and discipline of heart,
Had formed his glorious namesake's counterpart;
But grant his vices, grant them all his own,
How small their theatre without a throne!

IX.

Thou smilest: — these comparisons seem high
To those who scan all things with dazzled eye;
Linked with the unknown name of one whose doom
Has nought to do with glory or with Rome,
With Chili, Hellas, or with Araby; — 200
Thou smilest? — Smile; 'tis better thus than sigh;
Yet such he might have been; he was a man,
A soaring spirit, ever in the van,
A patriot hero or despotic chief,
To form a nation's glory or its grief,

Born under auspices which make us more
Or less than we delight to ponder o'er.
But these are visions; say, what was he here?
A blooming boy, a truant mutineer.
The fair-haired Torquil, free as Ocean's spray, ²¹⁰
The husband of the bride of Toobonai.

X.

By Neuha's side he sate, and watched the waters, —
Neuha, the sun-flower of the island daughters,
Highborn, (a birth at which the herald smiles,
Without a scutcheon for these secret isles,)
Of a long race, the valiant and the free,
The naked knights of savage chivalry,
Whose grassy cairns ascend along the shore;
And thine — I've seen — Achilles! do no more.
She, when the thunder-bearing strangers came, ²²⁰
In vast canoes, begirt with bolts of flame,
Topped with tall trees, which, loftier than the palm,
Seemed rooted in the deep amidst its calm:
But when the winds awakened, shot forth wings
Broad as the cloud along the horizon flings,
And swayed the waves, like cities of the sea,
Making the very billows look less free; —
She, with her paddling oar and dancing prow,
Shot through the surf, like reindeer through the snow,
Swift-gliding o'er the breaker's whitening edge, ²³⁰
Light as a Nereid in her ocean sledge,
And gazed and wondered at the giant hulk,
Which heaved from wave to wave its trampling bulk.
The anchor dropped; it lay along the deep,
Like a huge lion in the sun asleep,
While round it swarmed the Proas' flitting chain,
Like summer bees that hum around his mane.

XI.

The white man landed! — need the rest be told?

The New World stretched its dusk hand to the Old;
Each was to each a marvel, and the tie ²⁴⁰
Of wonder warmed to better sympathy.
Kind was the welcome of the sun-born sires,
And kinder still their daughters' gentler fires.
Their union grew: the children of the storm
Found beauty linked with many a dusky form;
While these in turn admired the paler glow,
Which seemed so white in climes that knew no snow.
The chace, the race, the liberty to roam,
The soil where every cottage showed a home;
The sea-spread net, the lightly launched canoe, ²⁵⁰
Which stemmed the studded archipelago,
O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles;
The healthy slumber, earned by sportive toils;
The palm, the loftiest Dryad of the woods,
Within whose bosom infant Bacchus broods,
While eagles scarce build higher than the crest
Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her breast;
The Cava feast, the Yam, the Cocoa's root,
Which bears at once the cup, and milk, and fruit;
The Bread-tree, which, without the ploughshare, yields ²⁶⁰
The unreaped harvest of unfurrowed fields,
And bakes its unadulterated loaves
Without a furnace in unpurchased groves,
And flings off famine from its fertile breast,
A priceless market for the gathering guest; —
These, with the luxuries of seas and woods,
The airy joys of social solitudes,
Tamed each rude wanderer to the sympathies
Of those who were more happy, if less wise,
Did more than Europe's discipline had done, ²⁷⁰
And civilised Civilisation's son!

XII.

Of these, and there was many a willing pair,
Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:
Both children of the isles, though distant far;

Both born beneath a sea-presiding star;
Both nourished amidst Nature's native scenes,
Loved to the last, whatever intervenes
Between us and our Childhood's sympathy,
Which still reverts to what first caught the eye.
He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue ²⁸⁰
Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountain in his Mind's embrace.
Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;
The infant rapture still survived the boy, ²⁹⁰
And Loch-na-gar with Ida looked o'er Troy,
Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear fount.
Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
Forgive me, Phœbus! that my fancy strayed;
The North and Nature taught me to adore
Your scenes sublime, from those beloved before.

XIII.

The love which maketh all things fond and fair,
The youth which makes one rainbow of the air,
The dangers past, that make even Man enjoy ³⁰⁰
The pause in which he ceases to destroy,
The mutual beauty, which the sternest feel
Strike to their hearts like lightning to the steel,
United the half savage and the whole,
The maid and boy, in one absorbing soul.
No more the thundering memory of the fight
Wrapped his weaned bosom in its dark delight;
No more the irksome restlessness of Rest
Disturbed him like the eagle in her nest,
Whose whetted beak and far-pervading eye ³¹⁰

Darts for a victim over all the sky:
His heart was tamed to that voluptuous state,
At once Elysian and effeminate,
Which leaves no laurels o'er the Hero's urn; —
These wither when for aught save blood they burn;
Yet when their ashes in their nook are laid,
Doth not the myrtle leave as sweet a shade?
Had Cæsar known but Cleopatra's kiss,
Rome had been free, the world had not been his.
And what have Cæsar's deeds and Cæsar's fame 320
Done for the earth? We feel them in our shame.
The gory sanction of his Glory stains
The rust which tyrants cherish on our chains.
Though Glory — Nature — Reason — Freedom, bid
Roused millions do what single Brutus did —
Sweep these mere mock-birds of the Despot's song
From the tall bough where they have perched so long, —
Still are we hawked at by such mousing owls,
And take for falcons those ignoble fowls,
When but a word of freedom would dispel 330
These bugbears, as their terrors show too well.

XIV.

Rapt in the fond forgetfulness of life,
Neuha, the South Sea girl, was all a wife,
With no distracting world to call her off
From Love; with no Society to scoff
At the new transient flame; no babbling crowd
Of coxcombry in admiration loud,
Or with adulterous whisper to alloy
Her duty, and her glory, and her joy:
With faith and feelings naked as her form, 340
She stood as stands a rainbow in a storm,
Changing its hues with bright variety,
But still expanding lovelier o'er the sky,
Howe'er its arch may swell, its colours move,
The cloud-compelling harbinger of Love.

Here, in this grotto of the wave-worn shore,
 They passed the Tropic's red meridian o'er;
 Nor long the hours — they never paused o'er time,
 Unbroken by the clock's funereal chime,
 Which deals the daily pittance of our span, ³⁵⁰
 And points and mocks with iron laugh at man.
 What deemed they of the future or the past?
 The present, like a tyrant, held them fast:
 Their hour-glass was the sea-sand, and the tide,
 Like her smooth billow, saw their moments glide
 Their clock the Sun, in his unbounded tower
 They reckoned not, whose day was but an hour;
 The nightingale, their only vesper-bell,
 Sung sweetly to the rose the day's farewell;
 The broad Sun set, but not with lingering sweep, ³⁶⁰
 As in the North he mellows o'er the deep;
 But fiery, full, and fierce, as if he left
 The World for ever, earth of light bereft,
 Plunged with red forehead down along the wave,
 As dives a hero headlong to his grave.
 Then rose they, looking first along the skies,
 And then for light into each other's eyes,
 Wondering that Summer showed so brief a sun,
 And asking if indeed the day were done.

XVI.

And let not this seem strange: the devotee ³⁷⁰
 Lives not in earth, but in his ecstasy;
 Around him days and worlds are heedless driven,
 His Soul is gone before his dust to Heaven.
 Is Love less potent? No — his path is trod,
 Alike uplifted gloriously to God;
 Or linked to all we know of Heaven below,
 The other better self, whose joy or woe
 Is more than ours; the all-absorbing flame
 Which, kindled by another, grows the same,
 Wrapt in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral pile, ³⁸⁰

Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and smile.
How often we forget all time, when lone,
Admiring Nature's universal throne,
Her woods — her wilds — her waters — the intense
Reply of *hers* to our intelligence!
Live not the Stars and Mountains? Are the Waves
Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
Without a feeling in their silent tears?
No, no; — they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before ³⁹⁰
Its hour, and merge our soul in the great shore.
Strip off this fond and false identity! —
Who thinks of self when gazing on the sky?
And who, though gazing lower, ever thought,
In the young moments ere the heart is taught
Time's lesson, of Man's baseness or his own?
All Nature is his realm, and Love his throne.

XVII.

Neuha arose, and Torquil: Twilight's hour
Came sad and softly to their rocky bower,
Which, kindling by degrees its dewy spars, ⁴⁰⁰
Echoed their dim light to the mustering stars.
Slowly the pair, partaking Nature's calm,
Sought out their cottage, built beneath the palm;
Now smiling and now silent, as the scene;
Lovely as Love — the Spirit! — when serene.
The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell,
Than breathes his mimic murmurer in the shell,
As, far divided from his parent deep,
The sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave ⁴¹⁰
For the broad bosom of his nursing wave:
The woods drooped darkly, as inclined to rest,
The tropic bird wheeled rockward to his nest,
And the blue sky spread round them like a lake
Of peace, where Piety her thirst might slake.

Λ V III.

But through the palm and plantain, hark, a Voice!
 Not such as would have been a lover's choice,
 In such an hour, to break the air so still;
 No dying night-breeze, harping o'er the hill,
 Striking the strings of nature, rock and tree, ⁴²⁰
 Those best and earliest lyres of Harmony,
 With Echo for their chorus; nor the alarm
 Of the loud war-whoop to dispel the charm;
 Nor the soliloquy of the hermit owl,
 Exhaling all his solitary soul,
 The dim though large-eyed wingéd anchorite,
 Who peals his dreary Pæan o'er the night;
 But a loud, long, and naval whistle, shrill
 As ever started through a sea-bird's bill;
 And then a pause, and then a hoarse "Hillo! ⁴³⁰
 Torquil, my boy! what cheer? Ho! brother, ho!"
 "Who hails?" cried Torquil, following with his eye
 The sound. "Here's one," was all the brief reply.

XIX.

But here the herald of the self-same mouth
 Came breathing o'er the aromatic south,
 Not like a "bed of violets" on the gale,
 But such as wafts its cloud o'er grog or ale,
 Borne from a short frail pipe, which yet had blown
 Its gentle odours over either zone,
 And, puffed where'er winds rise or waters roll, ⁴⁴⁰
 Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to the Pole,
 Opposed its vapour as the lightning flashed,
 And reeked, 'midst mountain-billows, unabashed,
 To Æolus a constant sacrifice,
 Through every change of all the varying skies.
 And what was he who bore it? — I may err,
 But deem him sailor or philosopher.
 Sublime Tobacco! which from East to West
 Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
 Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides ⁴⁵⁰

His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe:
Like other charmers, wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties — Give me a cigar!

XX.

Through the approaching darkness of the wood 460
A human figure broke the solitude,
Fantastically, it may be, arrayed,
A seaman in a savage masquerade;
Such as appears to rise out from the deep,
When o'er the line the merry vessels sweep,
And the rough Saturnalia of the tar
Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrowed car;
And, pleased, the God of Ocean sees his name
Revive once more, though but in mimic game
Of his true sons, who riot in the breeze 470
Undreamt of in his native Cyclades.
Still the old God delights, from out the main,
To snatch some glimpses of his ancient reign.
Our sailor's jacket, though in ragged trim,
His constant pipe, which never yet burned dim,
His foremast air, and somewhat rolling gait,
Like his dear vessel, spoke his former state;
But then a sort of kerchief round his head,
Not over tightly bound, nor nicely spread;
And, 'stead of trowsers (ah! too early torn! 480
For even the mildest woods will have their thorn)
A curious sort of somewhat scanty mat
Now served for inexpressibles and hat;
His naked feet and neck, and sunburnt face,
Perchance might suit alike with either race.
His arms were all his own, our Europe's growth,

Which two worlds bless for civilising both;
The musket swung behind his shoulders broad,
And somewhat stooped by his marine abode,
But brawny as the boar's; and hung beneath, 490
His cutlass drooped, unconscious of a sheath,
Or lost or worn away; his pistols were
Linked to his belt, a matrimonial pair —
(Let not this metaphor appear a scoff,
Though one missed fire, the other would go off);
These, with a bayonet, not so free from rust
As when the arm-chest held its brighter trust,
Completed his accoutrements, as Night
Surveyed him in his garb heteroclite.

XXI.

"What cheer, Ben Bunting?" cried (when in full view 500
Our new acquaintance) Torquil. "Aught of new?"
"Ey, ey!" quoth Ben, "not new, but news enow;
A strange sail in the offing." — "Sail! and how?
What! could you make her out? It cannot be;
I've seen no rag of canvass on the sea."
"Belike," said Ben, "you might not from the bay,
But from the bluff-head, where I watched to-day,
I saw her in the doldrums; for the wind
Was light and baffling." — "When the Sun declined
Where lay she? had she anchored?" — "No, but still 510
She bore down on us, till the wind grew still."
"Her flag?" — "I had no glass: but fore and aft,
Egad! she seemed a wicked-looking craft."
"Armed?" — "I expect so; — sent on the look-out:
'Tis time, belike, to put our helm about."
"About? — Whate'er may have us now in chase,
We'll make no running fight, for that were base;
We will die at our quarters, like true men."
"Ey, ey! for that 'tis all the same to Ben."
"Does Christian know this?" — "Aye; he has piped all hands 520
To quarters. They are furbishing the stands
Of arms; and we have got some guns to bear,

And scaled them. You are wanted.” — “That’s but fair;
And if it were not, mine is not the soul
To leave my comrades helpless on the shoal.
My Neuha! ah! and must my fate pursue
Not me alone, but one so sweet and true?
But whatsoe’er betide, ah, Neuha! now
Unman me not: the hour will not allow
A tear; I am thine whatever intervenes!” ⁵³⁰
“Right,” quoth Ben; “that will do for the marines.”

CANTO THE THIRD.

I.

The fight was o'er; the flashing through the gloom,
Which robes the cannon as he wings a tomb,
Had ceased; and sulphury vapours upward driven
Had left the Earth, and but polluted Heaven:
The rattling roar which rung in every volley
Had left the echoes to their melancholy;
No more they shrieked their horror, boom for boom;
The strife was done, the vanquished had their doom;
The mutineers were crushed, dispersed, or ta'en,
Or lived to deem the happiest were the slain. 10
Few, few escaped, and these were hunted o'er
The isle they loved beyond their native shore.
No further home was theirs, it seemed, on earth,
Once renegades to that which gave them birth;
Tracked like wild beasts, like them they sought the wild,
As to a Mother's bosom flies the child;
But vainly wolves and lions seek their den,
And still more vainly men escape from men.

II.

Beneath a rock whose jutting base protrudes
Far over Ocean in its fiercest moods, 20
When scaling his enormous crag the wave
Is hurled down headlong, like the foremost brave,
And falls back on the foaming crowd behind,
Which fight beneath the banners of the wind,
But now at rest, a little remnant drew
Together, bleeding, thirsty, faint, and few;
But still their weapons in their hands, and still
With something of the pride of former will,
As men not all unused to meditate,
And strive much more than wonder at their fate. 30
Their present lot was what they had foreseen,

And dared as what was likely to have been;
Yet still the lingering hope, which deemed their lot
Not pardoned, but unsought for or forgot,
Or trusted that, if sought, their distant caves
Might still be missed amidst the world of waves,
Had weaned their thoughts in part from what they saw
And felt, the vengeance of their country's law.
Their sea-green isle, their guilt-won Paradise,
No more could shield their Virtue or their Vice: 40
Their better feelings, if such were, were thrown
Back on themselves, — their sins remained alone.
Proscribed even in their second country, they
Were lost; in vain the World before them lay;
All outlets seemed secured. Their new allies
Had fought and bled in mutual sacrifice;
But what availed the club and spear, and arm
Of Hercules, against the sulphury charm,
The magic of the thunder, which destroyed
The warrior ere his strength could be employed? 50
Dug, like a spreading pestilence, the grave
No less of human bravery than the brave!
Their own scant numbers acted all the few
Against the many oft will dare and do;
But though the choice seems native to die free,
Even Greece can boast but one Thermopylæ,
Till *now*, when she has forged her broken chain
Back to a sword, and dies and lives again!

III.

Beside the jutting rock the few appeared,
Like the last remnant of the red-deer's herd; 60
Their eyes were feverish, and their aspect worn,
But still the hunter's blood was on their horn.
A little stream came tumbling from the height,
And straggling into ocean as it might,
Its bounding crystal frolicked in the ray,
And gushed from cliff to crag with saltless spray;
Close on the wild, wide ocean, yet as pure

And fresh as Innocence, and more secure,
Its silver torrent glittered o'er the deep,
As the shy chamois' eye o'erlooks the steep, 70
While far below the vast and sullen swell
Of Ocean's alpine azure rose and fell.
To this young spring they rushed, — all feelings first
Absorbed in Passion's and in Nature's thirst, —
Drank as they do who drink their last, and threw
Their arms aside to revel in its dew;
Cooled their scorched throats, and washed the gory stains
From wounds whose only bandage might be chains;
Then, when their drought was quenched, looked sadly round,
As wondering how so many still were found 80
Alive and fetterless: — but silent all,
Each sought his fellow's eyes, as if to call
On him for language which his lips denied,
As though their voices with their cause had died.

IV.

Stern, and aloof a little from the rest,
Stood Christian, with his arms across his chest.
The ruddy, reckless, dauntless hue once spread
Along his cheek was livid now as lead;
His light-brown locks, so graceful in their flow,
Now rose like startled vipers o'er his brow. 90
Still as a statue, with his lips comprest
To stifle even the breath within his breast,
Fast by the rock, all menacing, but mute,
He stood; and, save a slight beat of his foot,
Which deepened now and then the sandy dint
Beneath his heel, his form seemed turned to flint.
Some paces further Torquil leaned his head
Against a bank, and spoke not, but he bled, —
Not mortally: — his worst wound was within;
His brow was pale, his blue eyes sunken in, 100
And blood-drops, sprinkled o'er his yellow hair,
Showed that his faintness came not from despair,
But Nature's ebb. Beside him was another,

Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother, —
 Ben Bunting, who essayed to wash, and wipe,
 And bind his wound — then calmly lit his pipe,
 A trophy which survived a hundred fights,
 A beacon which had cheered ten thousand nights.
 The fourth and last of this deserted group
 Walked up and down — at times would stand, then stoop 110
 To pick a pebble up — then let it drop —
 Then hurry as in haste — then quickly stop —
 Then cast his eyes on his companions — then
 Half whistle half a tune, and pause again —
 And then his former movements would redouble,
 With something between carelessness and trouble.
 This is a long description, but applies
 To scarce five minutes passed before the eyes;
 But yet *what* minutes! Moments like to these
 Rend men's lives into immortalities. 120

V.

At length Jack Skyscape, a mercurial man,
 Who fluttered over all things like a fan,
 More brave than firm, and more disposed to dare
 And die at once than wrestle with despair,
 Exclaimed, "G — d damn!" — those syllables intense, —
 Nucleus of England's native eloquence,
 As the Turk's "Allah!" or the Roman's more
 Pagan "Proh Jupiter!" was wont of yore
 To give their first impressions such a vent,
 By way of echo to embarrassment. 130
 Jack was embarrassed, — never hero more,
 And as he knew not what to say, he swore:
 Nor swore in vain; the long congenial sound
 Revived Ben Bunting from his pipe profound;
 He drew it from his mouth, and looked full wise,
 But merely added to the oath his eyes;
 Thus rendering the imperfect phrase complete,
 A peroration I need not repeat.

V I.

But Christian, of a higher order, stood
 Like an extinct volcano in his mood; 140
 Silent, and sad, and savage, — with the trace
 Of passion reeking from his clouded face;
 Till lifting up again his sombre eye,
 It glanced on Torquil, who leaned faintly by.
 “And is it thus?” he cried, “unhappy boy!
 And thee, too, *thee* — my madness must destroy!”
 He said, and strode to where young Torquil stood,
 Yet dabbled with his lately flowing blood;
 Seized his hand wistfully, but did not press,
 And shrunk as fearful of his own caress; 150
 Enquired into his state: and when he heard
 The wound was slighter than he deemed or feared,
 A moment’s brightness passed along his brow,
 As much as such a moment would allow.
 “Yes,” he exclaimed, “we are taken in the toil,
 But not a coward or a common spoil;
 Dearly they have bought us — dearly still may buy, —
 And I must fall; but have *you* strength to fly?
 ‘Twould be some comfort still, could you survive;
 Our dwindled band is now too few to strive. 160
 Oh! for a sole canoe! though but a shell,
 To bear you hence to where a hope may dwell!
 For me, my lot is what I sought; to be,
 In life or death, the fearless and the free.”

VII.

Even as he spoke, around the promontory,
 Which nodded o’er the billows high and hoary,
 A dark speck dotted Ocean: on it flew
 Like to the shadow of a roused sea-mew;
 Onward it came — and, lo! a second followed —
 Now seen — now hid — where Ocean’s vale was hollowed; 170
 And near, and nearer, till the dusky crew
 Presented well-known aspects to the view,

Till on the surf their skimming paddles play,
Buoyant as wings, and flitting through the spray; —
Now perching on the wave's high curl, and now
Dashed downward in the thundering foam below,
Which flings it broad and boiling sheet on sheet,
And slings its high flakes, shivered into sleet:
But floating still through surf and swell, drew nigh
The barks, like small birds through a lowering sky. 180
Their art seemed nature — such the skill to sweep
The wave of these born playmates of the deep.

VIII.

And who the first that, springing on the strand,
Leaped like a Nereid from her shell to land,
With dark but brilliant skin, and dewy eye
Shining with love, and hope, and constancy?
Neuha — the fond, the faithful, the adored —
Her heart on Torquil's like a torrent poured;
And smiled, and wept, and near, and nearer clasped,
As if to be assured 'twas *him* she grasped; 190
Shuddered to see his yet warm wound, and then,
To find it trivial, smiled and wept again.
She was a warrior's daughter, and could bear
Such sights, and feel, and mourn, but not despair.
Her lover lived, — nor foes nor fears could blight
That full-blown moment in its all delight:
Joy trickled in her tears, joy filled the sob
That rocked her heart till almost heard to throb;
And Paradise was breathing in the sigh
Of Nature's child in Nature's ecstasy. 200

IX.

The sterner spirits who beheld that meeting
Were not unmoved; who are, when hearts are greeting?
Even Christian gazed upon the maid and boy
With tearless eye, but yet a gloomy joy
Mixed with those bitter thoughts the soul arrays

In hopeless visions of our better days,
When all's gone — to the rainbow's latest ray.
“And but for me!” he said, and turned away;
Then gazed upon the pair, as in his den
A lion looks upon his cubs again; ²¹⁰
And then relapsed into his sullen guise,
As heedless of his further destinies.

X.

But brief their time for good or evil thought;
The billows round the promontory brought
The splash of hostile oars. — Alas! who made
That sound a dread? All around them seemed arrayed
Against them, save the bride of Toobonai:
She, as she caught the first glimpse o'er the bay
Of the armed boats, which hurried to complete
The remnant's ruin with their flying feet, ²²⁰
Beckoned the natives round her to their prows,
Embarked their guests and launched their light canoes;
In one placed Christian and his comrades twain —
But she and Torquil must not part again.
She fixed him in her own. — Away! away!
They cleared the breakers, dart along the bay,
And towards a group of islets, such as bear
The sea-bird's nest and seal's surf-hollowed lair,
They skim the blue tops of the billows; fast
They flew, and fast their fierce pursuers chased. ²³⁰
They gain upon them — now they lose again, —
Again make way and menace o'er the main;
And now the two canoes in chase divide,
And follow different courses o'er the tide,
To baffle the pursuit. — Away! away!
As Life is on each paddle's flight to-day,
And more than Life or lives to Neuha: Love
Freights the frail bark and urges to the cove;
And now the refuge and the foe are nigh —
Yet, yet a moment! Fly, thou light ark, fly! ²⁴⁰

CANTO THE FOURTH.

I.

White as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon's clouded and half free,
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky,
Is Hope's last gleam in Man's extremity.
Her anchor parts; but still her snowy sail
Attracts our eye amidst the rudest gale:
Though every wave she climbs divides us more,
The heart still follows from the loneliest shore.

II.

Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o'er the spray, ¹⁰
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the wind,
And sleeps unwieldy in his cavern dun,
Or gambols with huge frolic in the sun:
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard
The startled echo of the Ocean bird,
Who rears on its bare breast her callow brood,
The feathered fishers of the solitude.
A narrow segment of the yellow sand
On one side forms the outline of a strand; ²⁰
Here the young turtle, crawling from his shell,
Steals to the deep wherein his parents dwell;
Chipped by the beam, a nursling of the day,
But hatched for ocean by the fostering ray;
The rest was one bleak precipice, as e'er
Gave mariners a shelter and despair;
A spot to make the saved regret the deck
Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck.
Such was the stern asylum Neuha chose
To shield her lover from his following foes; ³⁰
But all its secret was not told; she knew

In this a treasure hidden from the view.

III.

Ere the canoes divided, near the spot,
The men that manned what held her Torquil's lot,
By her command removed, to strengthen more
The skiff which wafted Christian from the shore.
This he would have opposed; but with a smile
She pointed calmly to the craggy isle,
And bade him "speed and prosper." *She* would take
The rest upon herself for Torquil's sake. 40
They parted with this added aid; afar,
The Proa darted like a shooting star,
And gained on the pursuers, who now steered
Right on the rock which she and Torquil neared.
They pulled; her arm, though delicate, was free
And firm as ever grappled with the sea,
And yielded scarce to Torquil's manlier strength.
The prow now almost lay within its length
Of the crag's steep inexorable face,
With nought but soundless waters for its base; 50
Within a hundred boats' length was the foe,
And now what refuge but their frail canoe?
This Torquil asked with half upbraiding eye,
Which said — "Has Neuha brought me here to die?
Is this a place of safety, or a grave,
And yon huge rock the tombstone of the wave?"

IV.

They rested on their paddles, and uprose
Neuha, and pointing to the approaching foes,
Cried, "Torquil, follow me, and fearless follow!"
Then plunged at once into the Ocean's hollow. 60
There was no time to pause — the foes were near —
Chains in his eye, and menace in his ear;
With vigour they pulled on, and as they came,
Hailed him to yield, and by his forfeit name.

Headlong he leapt — to him the swimmer's skill
Was native, and now all his hope from ill:
But how, or where? He dived, and rose no more;
The boat's crew looked amazed o'er sea and shore.
There was no landing on that precipice,
Steep, harsh, and slippery as a berg of ice. 70
They watched awhile to see him float again,
But not a trace rebubbled from the main:
The wave rolled on, no ripple on its face,
Since their first plunge recalled a single trace;
The little whirl which eddied, and slight foam,
That whitened o'er what seemed their latest home,
White as a sepulchre above the pair
Who left no marble (mournful as an heir)
The quiet Proa wavering o'er the tide
Was all that told of Torquil and his bride; 80
And but for this alone the whole might seem
The vanished phantom of a seaman's dream.
They paused and searched in vain, then pulled away;
Even Superstition now forbade their stay.
Some said he had not plunged into the wave,
But vanished like a corpse-light from a grave;
Others, that something supernatural
Glared in his figure, more than mortal tall;
While all agreed that in his cheek and eye
There was a dead hue of Eternity. 90
Still as their oars receded from the crag,
Round every weed a moment would they lag,
Expectant of some token of their prey;
But no — he had melted from them like the spray.

V.

And where was he the Pilgrim of the Deep,
Following the Nereid? Had they ceased to weep
For ever? or, received in coral caves,
Wrung life and pity from the softening waves?
Did they with Ocean's hidden sovereigns dwell,
And sound with Mermen the fantastic shell? 100

Did Neuha with the mermaids comb her hair
Flowing o'er ocean as it streamed in air?
Or had they perished, and in silence slept
Beneath the gulf wherein they boldly leapt?

VI.

Young Neuha plunged into the deep, and he
Followed: her track beneath her native sea
Was as a native's of the element,
So smoothly — bravely — brilliantly she went,
Leaving a streak of light behind her heel,
Which struck and flashed like an amphibious steel, 110
Closely, and scarcely less expert to trace
The depths where divers hold the pearl in chase,
Torquil, the nursling of the northern seas,
Pursued her liquid steps with heart and ease.
Deep — deeper for an instant Neuha led
The way — then upward soared — and as she spread
Her arms, and flung the foam from off her locks,
Laughed, and the sound was answered by the rocks.
They had gained a central realm of earth again,
But looked for tree, and field, and sky, in vain. 120
Around she pointed to a spacious cave,
Whose only portal was the keyless wave,
(A hollow archway by the sun unseen,
Save through the billows' glassy veil of green,
In some transparent ocean holiday,
When all the finny people are at play,)
Wiped with her hair the brine from Torquil's eyes,
And clapped her hands with joy at his surprise;
Led him to where the rock appeared to jut,
And form a something like a Triton's hut; 130
For all was darkness for a space, till day,
Through clefts above let in a sobered ray;
As in some old cathedral's glimmering aisle
The dusty monuments from light recoil,
Thus sadly in their refuge submarine
The vault drew half her shadow from the scene.

VII.

Forth from her bosom the young savage drew
A pine torch, strongly girded with gnattoo;
A plantain-leaf o'er all, the more to keep
Its latent sparkle from the sapping deep. 140
This mantle kept it dry; then from a nook
Of the same plantain-leaf a flint she took,
A few shrunk withered twigs, and from the blade
Of Torquil's knife struck fire, and thus arrayed
The grot with torchlight. Wide it was and high,
And showed a self-born Gothic canopy;
The arch upreared by Nature's architect,
The architrave some Earthquake might erect;
The buttress from some mountain's bosom hurled,
When the Poles crashed, and water was the world; 150
Or hardened from some earth-absorbing fire,
While yet the globe reeked from its funeral pyre;
The fretted pinnacle, the aisle, the nave,
Were there, all scooped by Darkness from her cave.
There, with a little tinge of phantasy,
Fantastic faces moped and mowed on high,
And then a mitre or a shrine would fix
The eye upon its seeming crucifix.
Thus Nature played with the stalactites,
And built herself a Chapel of the Seas. 160

VIII.

And Neuha took her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vault her kindled brand,
And led him into each recess, and showed
The secret places of their new abode.
Nor these alone, for all had been prepared
Before, to soothe the lover's lot she shared:
The mat for rest; for dress the fresh gnattoo,
And sandal oil to fence against the dew;
For food the cocoa-nut, the yam, the bread
Born of the fruit; for board the plantain spread 170

With its broad leaf, or turtle-shell which bore
A banquet in the flesh it covered o'er;
The gourd with water recent from the rill,
The ripe banana from the mellow hill;
A pine-torch pile to keep undying light,
And she herself, as beautiful as night,
To fling her shadowy spirit o'er the scene,
And make their subterranean world serene.
She had foreseen, since first the stranger's sail
Drew to their isle, that force or flight might fail, 180
And formed a refuge of the rocky den
For Torquil's safety from his countrymen.
Each dawn had wafted there her light canoe,
Laden with all the golden fruits that grew;
Each eve had seen her gliding through the hour
With all could cheer or deck their sparry bower;
And now she spread her little store with smiles,
The happiest daughter of the loving isles.

IX.

She, as he gazed with grateful wonder, pressed
Her sheltered love to her impassioned breast; 190
And suited to her soft caresses, told
An olden tale of Love, — for Love is old,
Old as eternity, but not outworn
With each new being born or to be born:
How a young Chief, a thousand moons ago,
Diving for turtle in the depths below,
Had risen, in tracking fast his ocean prey,
Into the cave which round and o'er them lay;
How, in some desperate feud of after-time,
He sheltered there a daughter of the clime, 200
A foe beloved, and offspring of a foe,
Saved by his tribe but for a captive's woe;
How, when the storm of war was stilled, he led
His island clan to where the waters spread
Their deep-green shadow o'er the rocky door,
Then dived — it seemed as if to rise no more:

His wondering mates, amazed within their bark,
Or deemed him mad, or prey to the blue shark;
Rowed round in sorrow the sea-girded rock,
Then paused upon their paddles from the shock; 210
When, fresh and springing from the deep, they saw
A Goddess rise — so deemed they in their awe;
And their companion, glorious by her side,
Proud and exulting in his Mermaid bride;
And how, when undeceived, the pair they bore
With sounding conchs and joyous shouts to shore;
How they had gladly lived and calmly died, —
And why not also Torquil and his bride?
Not mine to tell the rapturous caress
Which followed wildly in that wild recess 220
This tale; enough that all within that cave
Was love, though buried strong as in the grave,
Where Abelard, through twenty years of death,
When Eloïsa's form was lowered beneath
Their nuptial vault, his arms outstretched, and pressed
The kindling ashes to his kindled breast.
The waves without sang round their couch, their roar
As much unheeded as if life were o'er;
Within, their hearts made all their harmony,
Love's broken murmur and more broken sigh. 230

X.

And they, the cause and sharers of the shock
Which left them exiles of the hollow rock,
Where were they? O'er the sea for life they plied,
To seek from Heaven the shelter men denied.
Another course had been their choice — but where?
The wave which bore them still their foes would bear,
Who, disappointed of their former chase,
In search of Christian now renewed their race.
Eager with anger, their strong arms made way,
Like vultures baffled of their previous prey. 240
They gained upon them, all whose safety lay
In some bleak crag or deeply-hidden bay:

No further chance or choice remained; and right
For the first further rock which met their sight
They steered, to take their latest view of land,
And yield as victims, or die sword in hand;
Dismissed the natives and their shallop, who
Would still have battled for that scanty crew;
But Christian bade them seek their shore again,
Nor add a sacrifice which were in vain; ²⁵⁰
For what were simple bow and savage spear
Against the arms which must be wielded here?

XI.

They landed on a wild but narrow scene,
Where few but Nature's footsteps yet had been;
Prepared their arms, and with that gloomy eye,
Stern and sustained, of man's extremity,
When Hope is gone, nor Glory's self remains
To cheer resistance against death or chains. —
They stood, the three, as the three hundred stood
Who dyed Thermopylæ with holy blood. ²⁶⁰
But, ah! how different! 'tis the *cause* makes all,
Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.
O'er them no fame, eternal and intense,
Blazed through the clouds of Death and beckoned hence;
No grateful country, smiling through her tears,
Begun the praises of a thousand years;
No nation's eyes would on their tomb be bent,
No heroes envy them their monument;
However boldly their warm blood was spilt,
Their Life was shame, their Epitaph was guilt. ²⁷⁰
And this they knew and felt, at least the one,
The leader of the band he had undone;
Who, born perchance for better things, had set
His life upon a cast which lingered yet:
But now the die was to be thrown, and all
The chances were in favour of his fall:
And such a fall! But still he faced the shock,
Obdurate as a portion of the rock

Whereon he stood, and fixed his levelled gun,
Dark as a sullen cloud before the sun. 280

XII.

The boat drew nigh, well armed, and firm the crew
To act whatever Duty bade them do;
Careless of danger, as the onward wind
Is of the leaves it strews, nor looks behind.
And, yet, perhaps, they rather wished to go
Against a nation's than a native foe,
And felt that this poor victim of self-will,
Briton no more, had once been Britain's still.
They hailed him to surrender — no reply;
Their arms were poised, and glittered in the sky. 290
They hailed again — no answer; yet once more
They offered quarter louder than before.
The echoes only, from the rock's rebound,
Took their last farewell of the dying sound.
Then flashed the flint, and blazed the volleying flame,
And the smoke rose between them and their aim,
While the rock rattled with the bullets' knell,
Which pealed in vain, and flattened as they fell;
Then flew the only answer to be given
By those who had lost all hope in earth or heaven. 300
After the first fierce peal as they pulled nigher,
They heard the voice of Christian shout, "Now, fire!"
And ere the word upon the echo died,
Two fell; the rest assailed the rock's rough side,
And, furious at the madness of their foes,
Disdained all further efforts, save to close.
But steep the crag, and all without a path,
Each step opposed a bastion to their wrath,
While, placed 'midst clefts the least accessible,
Which Christian's eye was trained to mark full well, 310
The three maintained a strife which must not yield,
In spots where eagles might have chosen to build.
Their every shot told; while the assailant fell,
Dashed on the shingles like the limpet shell;

But still enough survived, and mounted still,
Scattering their numbers here and there, until
Surrounded and commanded, though not nigh
Enough for seizure, near enough to die,
The desperate trio held aloof their fate
But by a thread, like sharks who have gorged the bait; 320
Yet to the very last they battled well,
And not a groan informed their foes *who* fell.
Christian died last — twice wounded; and once more
Mercy was offered when they saw his gore;
Too late for life, but not too late to die,
With, though a hostile hand, to close his eye.
A limb was broken, and he drooped along
The crag, as doth a falcon reft of young.
The sound revived him, or appeared to wake
Some passion which a weakly gesture spake: 330
He beckoned to the foremost, who drew nigh,
But, as they neared, he reared his weapon high —
His last ball had been aimed, but from his breast
He tore the topmost button from his vest,
Down the tube dashed it — levelled — fired, and smiled
As his foe fell; then, like a serpent, coiled
His wounded, weary form, to where the steep
Looked desperate as himself along the deep;
Cast one glance back, and clenched his hand, and shook
His last rage ‘gainst the earth which he forsook; 340
Then plunged: the rock below received like glass
His body crushed into one gory mass,
With scarce a shred to tell of human form,
Or fragment for the sea-bird or the worm;
A fair-haired scalp, besmeared with blood and weeds,
Yet reeked, the remnant of himself and deeds;
Some splinters of his weapons (to the last,
As long as hand could hold, he held them fast)
Yet glittered, but at distance — hurled away
To rust beneath the dew and dashing spray. 350
The rest was nothing — save a life mis-spent,
And soul — but who shall answer where it went?
‘Tis ours to bear, not judge the dead; and they

Who doom to Hell, themselves are on the way,
Unless these bullies of eternal pains
Are pardoned their bad hearts for their worse brains.

XIII.

The deed was over! All were gone or ta'en,
The fugitive, the captive, or the slain.
Chained on the deck, where once, a gallant crew,
They stood with honour, were the wretched few ³⁶⁰
Survivors of the skirmish on the isle;
But the last rock left no surviving spoil.
Cold lay they where they fell, and weltering,
While o'er them flapped the sea-birds' dewy wing,
Now wheeling nearer from the neighbouring surge,
And screaming high their harsh and hungry dirge:
But calm and careless heaved the wave below,
Eternal with unsympathetic flow;
Far o'er its face the Dolphins sported on,
And sprung the flying fish against the sun, ³⁷⁰
Till its dried wing relapsed from its brief height,
To gather moisture for another flight.

XIV.

'Twas morn; and Neuha, who by dawn of day
Swam smoothly forth to catch the rising ray,
And watch if aught approached the amphibious lair
Where lay her lover, saw a sail in air:
It flapped, it filled, and to the growing gale
Bent its broad arch: her breath began to fail
With fluttering fear, her heart beat thick and high,
While yet a doubt sprung where its course might lie. ³⁸⁰
But no! it came not; fast and far away
The shadow lessened as it cleared the bay.
She gazed, and flung the sea-foam from her eyes,
To watch as for a rainbow in the skies.
On the horizon verged the distant deck,
Diminished, dwindled to a very speck —

Then vanished. All was Ocean, all was Joy!
Down plunged she through the cave to rouse her boy;
Told all she had seen, and all she hoped, and all
That happy love could augur or recall; 390
Sprung forth again, with Torquil following free
His bounding Nereid over the broad sea;
Swam round the rock, to where a shallow cleft
Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
Drifting along the tide, without an oar,
That eve the strangers chased them from the shore;
But when these vanished, she pursued her prow,
Regained, and urged to where they found it now:
Nor ever did more love and joy embark,
Than now were wafted in that slender ark. 400

XV.

Again their own shore rises on the view,
No more polluted with a hostile hue;
No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,
A floating dungeon: — all was Hope and Home!
A thousand Proas darted o'er the bay,
With sounding shells, and heralded their way;
The chiefs came down, around the people poured,
And welcomed Torquil as a son restored;
The women thronged, embracing and embraced
By Neuha, asking where they had been chased, 410
And how escaped? The tale was told; and then
One acclamation rent the sky again;
And from that hour a new tradition gave
Their sanctuary the name of "Neuha's Cave."
A hundred fires, far flickering from the height,
Blazed o'er the general revel of the night,
The feast in honour of the guest, returned
To Peace and Pleasure, perilously earned;
A night succeeded by such happy days
As only the yet infant world displays. 420

THE LAMENT OF TASSO

INTRODUCTION

The MS. of the *Lament of Tasso* is dated April 20, 1817. It was despatched from Florence April 23, and reached England May 12 (see *Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 384). Proofs reached Byron June 7, and the poem was published July 17, 1817.

“It was,” he writes (April 26), “written in consequence of my having been lately in Ferrara.” Again, writing from Rome (May 5, 1817), he asks if the MS. has arrived, and adds, “I look upon it as a ‘These be good rhymes,’ as Pope’s papa said to him when he was a boy” (*Letters*, 1900, iv. 112-115). Two months later he reverted to the theme of Tasso’s ill-treatment at the hands of Duke Alphonso, in the memorable stanzas xxxv.-xxxix. of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* (*Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 354-359; and for examination of the circumstances of Tasso’s imprisonment in the Hospital of Sant’ Anna, *vide ibid.*, pp. 355, 356, note 1).

Notices of the *Lament of Tasso* appeared in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, August, 1817, vol. 87, pp. 150, 151; in *The Scot’s Magazine*, August, 1817, N.S., vol. i. pp. 48, 49; and a eulogistic but uncritical review in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, November, 1817, vol. ii. pp. 142-144.

ADVERTISEMENT

At Ferrara, in the Library, are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's *Gierusalemme* and of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto, and the inkstand and chair, the tomb and the house, of the latter. But, as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto — at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed and depopulated: the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

THE LAMENT OF TASSO I.

Long years! — It tries the thrilling frame to bear
And eagle-spirit of a Child of Song —
Long years of outrage — calumny — and wrong;
Imputed madness, prisoned solitude,
And the Mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorred grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain,
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain; ¹⁰
And bare, at once, Captivity displayed
Stands scoffing through the never-opened gate,
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day,
And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and — it may be — my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair; ²⁰
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revelled among men and things divine,
And poured my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for Him,
The God who was on earth and is in Heaven,
For He has strengthened me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven, ³⁰
I have employed my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won, and how adored.

II.

But this is o'er — my pleasant task is done: —

My long-sustaining Friend of many years!
If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But Thou, my young creation! my Soul's child!
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And wooed me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone — and so is my delight: 40
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended — what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear — and how?
I know not that — but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they called me mad — and why?
Oh Leonora! wilt not thou reply?
I was indeed delirious in my heart 50
To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind:
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;
But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still;
Successful Love may sate itself away;
The wretched are the faithful; 't is their fate 60
To have all feeling, save the one, decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into Ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III.

Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,

Some who do still goad on the o'er-laboured mind, 70
And dim the little light that's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant Will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill:
With these and with their victims am I classed,
'Mid sounds and sights like these long years have passed;
'Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close:
So let it be — for then I shall repose.

IV.

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives — Oh! would it were my lot 80
To be forgetful as I am forgot! —
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast Lazar-house of many woes?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor ev'n men mankind;
Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell —
For we are crowded in our solitudes —
Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods; 90
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call —
None! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?
Would I not pay them back these pangs again, 100
And teach them inward Sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress,
Which undermines our Stoical success?
No! — still too proud to be vindictive — I
Have pardoned Princes' insults, and would die.

Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where *thou* art a guest:
Thy brother hates — but I can not detest;
Thou pitiest not — but I can not forsake. 110

V.

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquenched is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart,
As dwells the gathered lightning in its cloud,
Encompassed with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck, — forth flies the all-ethereal dart!
And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me; — they are gone — I am the same. 120
And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state — my station — and I knew
A Princess was no love-mate for a bard;
I told it not — I breathed it not — it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes revealed it, they, alas!
Were punished by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipped at holy distance, and around 130
Hallowed and meekly kissed the saintly ground;
Not for thou wert a Princess, but that Love
Had robed thee with a glory, and arrayed
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismayed —
Oh! not dismayed — but awed, like One above!
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass —
I know not how — thy Genius mastered mine —
My Star stood still before thee: — if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design, 140
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;

But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell, which wrongs me — but for *thee*.
The very love which locked me to my chain
Hath lightened half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI.

It is no marvel — from my very birth
My soul was drunk with Love, — which did pervade 150
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth:
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks, whereby they grew, a Paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dreamed uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering; and the Wise
Shook their white agéd heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe, 160
And that the only lesson was a blow; —
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Returned and wept alone, and dreamed again
The visions which arise without a sleep.
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain;
And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought — and that was thee; 170
And then I lost my being, all to be
Absorbed in thine; — the world was past away; —
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII.

I loved all Solitude — but little thought

To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant; — had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave.
But who hath seen me writhe, or heard me rave? 180
Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wrecked sailor on his desert shore;
The world is all before him — *mine is here*,
Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.
What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye,
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky;
I will not raise my own in such reproof,
Although 'tis clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII.

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay: I see 190
Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
And a strange Demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below
The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffered so,
Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that may be borne, or can debase.
I thought mine enemies had been but Man,
But Spirits may be leagued with them — all Earth
Abandons — Heaven forgets me; — in the dearth 200
Of such defence the Powers of Evil can —
It may be — tempt me further, — and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved,
Like steel in tempering fire? because I loved?
Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal, and than me.

IX.

I once was quick in feeling — that is o'er; —
My scars are callous, or I should have dashed
My brain against these bars, as the sun flashed ²¹⁰
In mockery through them; — - If I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words, — 't is that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamp Madness deep into my memory,
And woo Compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No — it shall be immortal! — and I make
A future temple of my present cell, ²²⁰
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shall fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls,
A Poet's wreath shall be thine only crown, —
A Poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy unpeopled walls!
And thou, Leonora! — thou — who wert ashamed
That such as I could love — who blushed to hear
To less than monarchs that thou couldst be dear, ²³⁰
Go! tell thy brother, that my heart, untamed
By grief — years — weariness — and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me —
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss, —
Adores thee still; — and add — that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours
Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,
This — this — shall be a consecrated spot! ²⁴⁰
But *Thou* — when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct — shalt have
One half the laurel which o'ershades my grave.
No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate

To be entwined for ever — but too late!

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

“‘Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.”

Campbell, [*Lochiel's Warning*].

INTRODUCTION

The *Prophecy of Dante* was written at Ravenna, during the month of June, 1819, “to gratify” the Countess Guiccioli. Before she left Venice in April she had received a promise from Byron to visit her at Ravenna. “Dante’s tomb, the classical pinewood,” and so forth, had afforded a pretext for the invitation to be given and accepted, and, at length, when she was, as she imagined, “at the point of death,” he arrived, better late than never, “on the Festival of the *Corpus Domini*” which fell that year on the tenth of June (see her communication to Moore, *Life*, p. 399). Horses and books were left behind at Venice, but he could occupy his enforced leisure by “writing something on the subject of Dante” (*ibid.*, p. 402). A heightened interest born of fuller knowledge, in Italian literature and Italian politics, lent zest to this labour of love, and, time and place conspiring, he composed “the best thing he ever wrote” (Letter to Murray, March 23, 1820, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 422), his *Vision* (or *Prophecy*) of Dante.

It would have been strange if Byron, who had sounded his *Lament* over the sufferings of Tasso, and who had become *de facto* if not *de jure* a naturalized Italian, had forborne to associate his name and fame with the sacred memory of the “Gran padre Alighier.” If there had been any truth in Friedrich Schlegel’s pronouncement, in a lecture delivered at Vienna in 1814, “that at no time has the greatest and most national of all Italian poets ever been much the favourite of his countrymen,” the reproach had become meaningless. As the sumptuous folio edition (4 vols.) of the *Divina Commedia*, published at Florence, 1817-19; a quarto edition (4 vols.) published at Rome, 1815-17; a folio edition (3 vols.) published at Bologna 1819-21, to which the Conte Giovanni Marchetti contributed his famous excursus on the allegory in the First Canto of the *Inferno*, and numerous other issues remain to testify, Dante’s own countrymen were eager “to pay honours almost divine” to his memory. “The last age,” writes Hobhouse, in 1817 (note 18 to Canto IV. of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *Poetical Works*, 1899, ii. 496), “seemed inclined to undervalue him.... The present generation ... has returned to the ancient worship, and the *Danteggiare* of

the northern Italians is thought even indiscreet by the more moderate Tuscans.” Dante was in the air. As Byron wrote in his Diary (January 29, 1821), “Read Schlegel [probably in a translation published at Edinburgh, 1818]. Not a favourite! Why, they talk Dante, write Dante, and think and dream Dante at this moment (1821), to an excess which would be ridiculous, but that he deserves it.”

There was, too, another reason why he was minded to write a poem “on the subject of Dante.” There was, at this time, a hope, if not a clear prospect, of political change — of throwing off the yoke of the Bourbon, of liberating Italy from the tyrant and the stranger. “Dante was the poet of liberty. Persecution, exile, the dread of a foreign grave, could not shake his principles” (Medwin, *Conversations*, 1824, p. 242). The *Prophecy* was “intended for the Italians,” intended to foreshadow as in a vision “liberty and the resurrection of Italy” (*ibid.*, p. 241). As he rode at twilight through the pine forest, or along “the silent shore Which bounds Ravenna’s immemorial wood,” the undying past inspired him with a vision of the future, delayed, indeed, for a time, “the flame ending in smoke,” but fulfilled after many days, a vision of a redeemed and united Italy.

“The poem,” he says, in the Preface, “may be considered as a metrical experiment.” In *Beppo*, and the two first cantos of *Don Juan*, he had proved that the *ottava rima* of the Italians, which Frere had been one of the first to transplant, might grow and flourish in an alien soil, and now, by way of a second venture, he proposed to acclimatize the *terza rima*. He was under the impression that Hayley, whom he had held up to ridicule as “for ever feeble, and for ever tame,” had been the first and last to try the measure in English; but of Hayley’s excellent translation of the three first cantos of the *Inferno*, praised but somewhat grudgingly praised by Southey, he had only seen an extract, and of earlier experiments he was altogether ignorant. As a matter of fact, many poets had already essayed, but timidly and without perseverance, to “come to the test in the metrification” of the *Divine Comedy*. Some twenty-seven lines, “the sole example in English literature of that period, of the use of *terza rima*, obviously copied from Dante” (*Complete Works of Chaucer*, by the Rev. W. Skeat, 1894, i. 76, 261), are imbedded in Chaucer’s *Complaint to his Lady*. In the sixteenth century Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (“Description of the restless state of a lover”), “as novises newly sprung out of the schools of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch” (Puttenham’s *Art of Poesie*, 1589, pp. 48-50); and later again, Daniel (“To the Lady Lucy, Countess of Bedford”), Ben Jonson, and Milton (*Psalms* ii., vi.) afford specimens of *terza rima*. There was, too, one

among Byron's contemporaries who had already made trial of the metre in his *Prince Athanase* (1817) and *The Woodman and the Nightingale* (1818), and who, shortly, in his *Ode to the West Wind* (October, 1819, published 1820) was to prove that it was not impossible to write English poetry, if not in genuine *terza rima*, with its interchange of double rhymes, at least in what has been happily styled the "Byronic *terza rima*." It may, however, be taken for granted that, at any rate in June, 1819, these fragments of Shelley's were unknown to Byron. Long after Byron's day, but long years before his dream was realized, Mrs. Browning, in her *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), in the same metre, re-echoed the same aspiration (see her *Preface*), "that the future of Italy shall not be disinherited." (See for some of these instances of *terza rima*, *Englische Metrik*, von Dr. J. Schipper, 1888, ii. 896. See, too, *The Metre of Dante's Comedy discussed and exemplified*, by Alfred Forman and Harry Buxton Forman, 1878, p. 7.) The MS. of the *Prophecy of Dante*, together with the Preface, was forwarded to Murray, March 14, 1820; but in spite of some impatience on the part of the author (Letter to Murray, May 8, 1820, *Letters*, 1901, v. 20), and, after the lapse of some months, a pretty broad hint (Letter, August 17, 1820, *ibid.*, p. 165) that "the time for the Dante would be good now ... as Italy is on the eve of great things," publication was deferred till the following year. *Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice*, and the *Prophecy of Dante* were published in the same volume, April 21, 1821.

The *Prophecy of Dante* was briefly but favourably noticed by Jeffrey in his review of *Marino Faliero* (*Edinb. Rev.*, July, 1821, vol. 35, p. 285). "It is a very grand, fervid, turbulent, and somewhat mystical composition, full of the highest sentiment and the highest poetry; ... but disfigured by many faults of precipitation, and overclouded with many obscurities. Its great fault with common readers will be that it is not sufficiently intelligible.... It is, however, beyond all question, a work of a man of great genius."

Other notices of *Marino Faliero* and the *Prophecy of Dante* appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, April, 1821, vol. 9, pp. 93-103; in the *Monthly Review*, May, 1821, Enlarged Series, vol. 95, pp. 41-50; and in the *Eclectic Review*, June 21, New Series, vol. xv. pp. 518-527.

DEDICATION.

Lady! if for the cold and cloudy clime
Where I was born, but where I would not die,
Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy
I dare to build the imitative rhyme,
Harsh Runic copy of the South's sublime,
Thou art the cause; and howsoever I
Fall short of his immortal harmony,
Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.
Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,
Spakest; and for thee to speak and be obeyed
Are one; but only in the sunny South
Such sounds are uttered, and such charms displayed,
So sweet a language from so fair a mouth —
Ah! to what effort would it not persuade?
Ravenna, June 21, 1819.

PREFACE

In the course of a visit to the city of Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he should do the same on Dante's exile, — the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city, both to the native and to the stranger.

"On this hint I spake," and the result has been the following four cantos, in *terza rima*, now offered to the reader. If they are understood and approved, it is my purpose to continue the poem in various other cantos to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the *Divina Commedia* and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan I have had in my mind the Cassandra of Lycophron, and the Prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the Prophecies of Holy Writ. The measure adopted is the *terza rima* of Dante, which I am not aware to have seen hitherto *tried in our language, except it may be by Mr. Hayley*, of whose translation I never saw but one extract, quoted in the notes to *Caliph Vathek*; so that — if I do not err — this poem may be considered as a metrical experiment. The cantos are short, and about the same length of those of the poet, whose name I have borrowed and most likely taken in vain.

Amongst the inconveniences of authors in the present day, it is difficult for any who have a name, good or bad, to escape translation. I have had the fortune to see the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* translated into Italian *versi sciolti*, — that is, a poem written in the *Spenserean stanza* into *blank verse*, without regard to the natural divisions of the stanza or the sense. If the present poem, being on a national topic, should chance to undergo the same fate, I would request the Italian reader to remember that when I have failed in the imitation of his great "Padre Alighier," I have failed in imitating that which all study and few understand, since to this very day it is not yet settled what was the meaning of the allegory in the first canto of the *Inferno*, unless Count Marchetti's ingenious and probable conjecture may be considered as having decided the question.

He may also pardon my failure the more, as I am not quite sure that he would be pleased with my success, since the Italians, with a pardonable nationality, are particularly jealous of all that is left them as a nation — their literature; and in the present bitterness of the classic and romantic war, are but ill disposed to permit a foreigner even to approve or imitate them, without finding some fault

with his ultramontane presumption. I can easily enter into all this, knowing what would be thought in England of an Italian imitator of Milton, or if a translation of Monti, Pindemonte, or Arici, should be held up to the rising generation as a model for their future poetical essays. But I perceive that I am deviating into an address to the Italian reader, where my business is with the English one; and be they few or many, I must take my leave of both.

THE PROPHECY OF DANTE

CANTO THE FIRST

Once more in Man's frail world! which I had left
So long that 'twas forgotten; and I feel
The weight of clay again, — too soon bereft
Of the Immortal Vision which could heal
My earthly sorrows, and to God's own skies
Lift me from that deep Gulf without repeal,
Where late my ears rung with the damned cries
Of Souls in hopeless bale; and from that place
Of lesser torment, whence men may arise
Pure from the fire to join the Angelic race; 10
Midst whom my own bright Beatrice blessed
My spirit with her light; and to the base
Of the Eternal Triad! first, last, best,
Mysterious, three, sole, infinite, great God!
Soul universal! led the mortal guest,
Unblasted by the Glory, though he trod
From star to star to reach the almighty throne.
Oh Beatrice! whose sweet limbs the sod
So long hath pressed, and the cold marble stone,
Thou sole pure Seraph of my earliest love, 20
Love so ineffable, and so alone,
That nought on earth could more my bosom move,
And meeting thee in Heaven was but to meet
That without which my Soul, like the arkless dove,
Had wandered still in search of, nor her feet
Relieved her wing till found; without thy light
My Paradise had still been incomplete.
Since my tenth sun gave summer to my sight
Thou wert my Life, the Essence of my thought,
Loved ere I knew the name of Love, and bright 30
Still in these dim old eyes, now overwrought
With the World's war, and years, and banishment,

And tears for thee, by other woes untaught;
For mine is not a nature to be bent
By tyrannous faction, and the brawling crowd,
And though the long, long conflict hath been spent
In vain, — and never more, save when the cloud
Which overhangs the Apennine my mind's eye
Pierces to fancy Florence, once so proud
Of me, can I return, though but to die, ⁴⁰
Unto my native soil, — they have not yet
Quenched the old exile's spirit, stern and high.
But the Sun, though not overcast, must set
And the night cometh; I am old in days,
And deeds, and contemplation, and have met
Destruction face to face in all his ways.
The World hath left me, what it found me, pure,
And if I have not gathered yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure;
Man wrongs, and Time avenges, and my name ⁵⁰
May form a monument not all obscure,
Though such was not my Ambition's end or aim,
To add to the vain-glorious list of those
Who dabble in the pettiness of fame,
And make men's fickle breath the wind that blows
Their sail, and deem it glory to be classed
With conquerors, and Virtue's other foes,
In bloody chronicles of ages past.
I would have had my Florence great and free;
Oh Florence! Florence! unto me thou wast ⁶⁰
Like that Jerusalem which the Almighty He
Wept over, "but thou wouldst not;" as the bird
Gathers its young, I would have gathered thee
Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and fierce,
Against the breast that cherished thee was stirred
Thy venom, and my state thou didst amerce,
And doom this body forfeit to the fire.
Alas! how bitter is his country's curse
To him who *for* that country would expire, ⁷⁰
But did not merit to expire *by* her,

And loves her, loves her even in her ire.
The day may come when she will cease to err,
The day may come she would be proud to have
The dust she dooms to scatter, and transfer
Of him, whom she denied a home, the grave.
But this shall not be granted; let my dust
Lie where it falls; nor shall the soil which gave
Me breath, but in her sudden fury thrust
Me forth to breathe elsewhere, so reassume ⁸⁰
My indignant bones, because her angry gust
Forsooth is over, and repealed her doom;
No, — she denied me what was mine — my roof,
And shall not have what is not hers — my tomb.
Too long her armed wrath hath kept aloof
The breast which would have bled for her, the heart
That beat, the mind that was temptation proof,
The man who fought, toiled, travelled, and each part
Of a true citizen fulfilled, and saw
For his reward the Guelf's ascendant art ⁹⁰
Pass his destruction even into a law.
These things are not made for forgetfulness,
Florence shall be forgotten first; too raw
The wound, too deep the wrong, and the distress
Of such endurance too prolonged to make
My pardon greater, her injustice less,
Though late repented; yet — yet for her sake
I feel some fonder yearnings, and for thine,
My own Beatrice, I would hardly take
Vengeance upon the land which once was mine, ¹⁰⁰
And still is hallowed by thy dust's return,
Which would protect the murderess like a shrine,
And save ten thousand foes by thy sole urn.
Though, like old Marius from Minturnæ's marsh
And Carthage ruins, my lone breast may burn
At times with evil feelings hot and harsh,
And sometimes the last pangs of a vile foe
Writhe in a dream before me, and o'erarch
My brow with hopes of triumph, — let them go!
Such are the last infirmities of those ¹¹⁰

Who long have suffered more than mortal woe,
And yet being mortal still, have no repose
But on the pillow of Revenge — Revenge,
Who sleeps to dream of blood, and waking glows
With the oft-baffled, slakeless thirst of change,
When we shall mount again, and they that trod
Be trampled on, while Death and Até range
O'er humbled heads and severed necks — — Great God!
Take these thoughts from me — to thy hands I yield
My many wrongs, and thine Almighty rod ¹²⁰
Will fall on those who smote me, — be my Shield!
As thou hast been in peril, and in pain,
In turbulent cities, and the tented field —
In toil, and many troubles borne in vain
For Florence, — I appeal from her to Thee!
Thee, whom I late saw in thy loftiest reign,
Even in that glorious Vision, which to see
And live was never granted until now,
And yet thou hast permitted this to me.
Alas! with what a weight upon my brow ¹³⁰
The sense of earth and earthly things come back,
Corrosive passions, feelings dull and low,
The heart's quick throb upon the mental rack,
Long day, and dreary night; the retrospect
Of half a century bloody and black,
And the frail few years I may yet expect
Hoary and hopeless, but less hard to bear,
For I have been too long and deeply wrecked
On the lone rock of desolate Despair,
To lift my eyes more to the passing sail ¹⁴⁰
Which shuns that reef so horrible and bare;
Nor raise my voice — for who would heed my wail?
I am not of this people, nor this age,
And yet my harpings will unfold a tale
Which shall preserve these times when not a page
Of their perturbéd annals could attract
An eye to gaze upon their civil rage,
Did not my verse embalm full many an act
Worthless as they who wrought it: 'tis the doom

Of spirits of my order to be racked 150
In life, to wear their hearts out, and consume
Their days in endless strife, and die alone;
Then future thousands crowd around their tomb,
And pilgrims come from climes where they have known
The name of him — who now is but a name,
And wasting homage o'er the sullen stone,
Spread his — by him unheard, unheeded — fame;
And mine at least hath cost me dear: to die
Is nothing; but to wither thus — to tame
My mind down from its own infinity — 160
To live in narrow ways with little men,
A common sight to every common eye,
A wanderer, while even wolves can find a den,
Ripped from all kindred, from all home, all things
That make communion sweet, and soften pain —
To feel me in the solitude of kings
Without the power that makes them bear a crown —
To envy every dove his nest and wings
Which waft him where the Apennine looks down
On Arno, till he perches, it may be, 170
Within my all inexorable town,
Where yet my boys are, and that fatal She,
Their mother, the cold partner who hath brought
Destruction for a dowry — this to see
And feel, and know without repair, hath taught
A bitter lesson; but it leaves me free:
I have not vilely found, nor basely sought,
They made an Exile — not a Slave of me.

CANTO THE SECOND

The Spirit of the fervent days of Old,
When words were things that came to pass, and Thought
Flashed o'er the future, bidding men behold
Their children's children's doom already brought
Forth from the abyss of Time which is to be,
The Chaos of events, where lie half-wrought
Shapes that must undergo mortality;
What the great Seers of Israel wore within,
That Spirit was on them, and is on me,
And if, Cassandra-like, amidst the din ¹⁰
Of conflict none will hear, or hearing heed
This voice from out the Wilderness, the sin
Be theirs, and my own feelings be my meed,
The only guerdon I have ever known.
Hast thou not bled? and hast thou still to bleed,
Italia? Ah! to me such things, foreshown
With dim sepulchral light, bid me forget
In thine irreparable wrongs my own;
We can have but one Country, and even yet
Thou'rt mine — my bones shall be within thy breast, ²⁰
My Soul within thy language, which once set
With our old Roman sway in the wide West;
But I will make another tongue arise
As lofty and more sweet, in which expressed
The hero's ardour, or the lover's sighs,
Shall find alike such sounds for every theme
That every word, as brilliant as thy skies,
Shall realise a Poet's proudest dream,
And make thee Europe's Nightingale of Song;
So that all present speech to thine shall seem ³⁰
The note of meaner birds, and every tongue
Confess its barbarism when compared with thine.
This shalt thou owe to him thou didst so wrong,
Thy Tuscan bard, the banished Ghibelline.
Woe! woe! the veil of coming centuries
Is rent, — a thousand years which yet supine

Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,
Heaving in dark and sullen undulation,
Float from Eternity into these eyes;
The storms yet sleep, the clouds still keep their station, 40
The unborn Earthquake yet is in the womb,
The bloody Chaos yet expects Creation,
But all things are disposing for thy doom;
The Elements await but for the Word,
“Let there be darkness!” and thou grow’st a tomb!
Yes! thou, so beautiful, shalt feel the sword,
Thou, Italy! so fair that Paradise,
Revived in thee, blooms forth to man restored:
Ah! must the sons of Adam lose it twice?
Thou, Italy! whose ever golden fields, 50
Ploughed by the sunbeams solely, would suffice
For the world’s granary; thou, whose sky Heaven gilds
With brighter stars, and robes with deeper blue;
Thou, in whose pleasant places Summer builds
Her palace, in whose cradle Empire grew,
And formed the Eternal City’s ornaments
From spoils of Kings whom freemen overthrew;
Birthplace of heroes, sanctuary of Saints,
Where earthly first, then heavenly glory made
Her home; thou, all which fondest Fancy paints, 60
And finds her prior vision but portrayed
In feeble colours, when the eye — from the Alp
Of horrid snow, and rock, and shaggy shade
Of desert-loving pine, whose emerald scalp
Nods to the storm — dilates and dotes o’er thee,
And wistfully implores, as ‘twere, for help
To see thy sunny fields, my Italy,
Nearer and nearer yet, and dearer still
The more approached, and dearest were they free,
Thou — Thou must wither to each tyrant’s will: 70
The Goth hath been, — the German, Frank, and Hun
Are yet to come, — and on the imperial hill
Ruin, already proud of the deeds done
By the old barbarians, there awaits the new,
Throned on the Palatine, while lost and won

Rome at her feet lies bleeding; and the hue
Of human sacrifice and Roman slaughter
Troubles the clotted air, of late so blue,
And deepens into red the saffron water
Of Tiber, thick with dead; the helpless priest, ⁸⁰
And still more helpless nor less holy daughter,
Vowed to their God, have shrieking fled, and ceased
Their ministry: the nations take their prey,
Iberian, Almain, Lombard, and the beast
And bird, wolf, vulture, more humane than they
Are; these but gorge the flesh, and lap the gore
Of the departed, and then go their way;
But those, the human savages, explore
All paths of torture, and insatiate yet,
With Ugolino hunger prowl for more. ⁹⁰
Nine moons shall rise o'er scenes like this and set;
The chiefless army of the dead, which late
Beneath the traitor Prince's banner met,
Hath left its leader's ashes at the gate;
Had but the royal Rebel lived, perchance
Thou hadst been spared, but his involved thy fate.
Oh! Rome, the Spoiler or the spoil of France,
From Brennus to the Bourbon, never, never
Shall foreign standard to thy walls advance,
But Tiber shall become a mournful river. ¹⁰⁰
Oh! when the strangers pass the Alps and Po,
Crush them, ye Rocks! Floods overwhelm them, and for ever!
Why sleep the idle Avalanches so,
To topple on the lonely pilgrim's head?
Why doth Eridanus but overflow
The peasant's harvest from his turbid bed?
Were not each barbarous horde a nobler prey?
Over Cambyzes' host the desert spread
Her sandy ocean, and the Sea-waves' sway
Rolled over Pharaoh and his thousands, — why, ¹¹⁰
Mountains and waters, do ye not as they?
And you, ye Men! Romans, who dare not die,
Sons of the conquerors who overthrew
Those who overthrew proud Xerxes, where yet lie

The dead whose tomb Oblivion never knew,
Are the Alps weaker than Thermopylæ?
Their passes more alluring to the view
Of an invader? is it they, or ye,
That to each host the mountain-gate unbar,
And leave the march in peace, the passage free? 120
Why, Nature's self detains the Victor's car,
And makes your land impregnable, if earth
Could be so; but alone she will not war,
Yet aids the warrior worthy of his birth
In a soil where the mothers bring forth men:
Not so with those whose souls are little worth;
For them no fortress can avail, — the den
Of the poor reptile which preserves its sting
Is more secure than walls of adamant, when
The hearts of those within are quivering. 130
Are ye not brave? Yes, yet the Ausonian soil
Hath hearts, and hands, and arms, and hosts to bring
Against Oppression; but how vain the toil,
While still Division sows the seeds of woe
And weakness, till the Stranger reaps the spoil.
Oh! my own beauteous land! so long laid low,
So long the grave of thy own children's hopes,
When there is but required a single blow
To break the chain, yet — yet the Avenger stops,
And Doubt and Discord step 'twixt thine and thee, 140
And join their strength to that which with thee copes;
What is there wanting then to set thee free,
And show thy beauty in its fullest light?
To make the Alps impassable; and we,
Her Sons, may do this with one deed — Unite.

CANTO THE THIRD

From out the mass of never-dying ill,
The Plague, the Prince, the Stranger, and the Sword,
Vials of wrath but emptied to refill
And flow again, I cannot all record
That crowds on my prophetic eye: the Earth
And Ocean written o'er would not afford
Space for the annal, yet it shall go forth;
Yes, all, though not by human pen, is graven,
There where the farthest suns and stars have birth,
Spread like a banner at the gate of Heaven, ¹⁰
The bloody scroll of our millennial wrongs
Waves, and the echo of our groans is driven
Athwart the sound of archangelic songs,
And Italy, the martyred nation's gore,
Will not in vain arise to where belongs
Omnipotence and Mercy evermore:
Like to a harpstring stricken by the wind,
The sound of her lament shall, rising o'er
The Seraph voices, touch the Almighty Mind.
Meantime I, humblest of thy sons, and of ²⁰
Earth's dust by immortality refined
To Sense and Suffering, though the vain may scoff,
And tyrants threat, and meeker victims bow
Before the storm because its breath is rough,
To thee, my Country! whom before, as now,
I loved and love, devote the mournful lyre
And melancholy gift high Powers allow
To read the future: and if now my fire
Is not as once it shone o'er thee, forgive!
I but foretell thy fortunes — then expire; ³⁰
Think not that I would look on them and live.
A Spirit forces me to see and speak,
And for my guerdon grants *not* to survive;
My Heart shall be poured over thee and break:
Yet for a moment, ere I must resume
Thy sable web of Sorrow, let me take

Over the gleams that flash athwart thy gloom
A softer glimpse; some stars shine through thy night,
And many meteors, and above thy tomb
Leans sculptured Beauty, which Death cannot blight: 40
And from thine ashes boundless Spirits rise
To give thee honour, and the earth delight;
Thy soil shall still be pregnant with the wise,
The gay, the learned, the generous, and the brave,
Native to thee as Summer to thy skies,
Conquerors on foreign shores, and the far wave,
Discoverers of new worlds, which take their name;
For *thee* alone they have no arm to save,
And all thy recompense is in their fame,
A noble one to them, but not to thee — 50
Shall they be glorious, and thou still the same?
Oh! more than these illustrious far shall be
The Being — and even yet he may be born —
The mortal Saviour who shall set thee free,
And see thy diadem, so changed and worn
By fresh barbarians, on thy brow replaced;
And the sweet Sun replenishing thy morn,
Thy moral morn, too long with clouds defaced,
And noxious vapours from Avernus risen,
Such as all they must breathe who are debased 60
By Servitude, and have the mind in prison.
Yet through this centuried eclipse of woe
Some voices shall be heard, and Earth shall listen;
Poets shall follow in the path I show,
And make it broader: the same brilliant sky
Which cheers the birds to song shall bid them glow,
And raise their notes as natural and high;
Tuneful shall be their numbers; they shall sing
Many of Love, and some of Liberty,
But few shall soar upon that Eagle's wing, 70
And look in the Sun's face, with Eagle's gaze,
All free and fearless as the feathered King,
But fly more near the earth; how many a phrase
Sublime shall lavished be on some small prince
In all the prodigality of Praise!

And language, eloquently false, evince
The harlotry of Genius, which, like Beauty,
Too oft forgets its own self-reverence,
And looks on prostitution as a duty.
He who once enters in a Tyrant's hall ⁸⁰
As guest is slave — his thoughts become a booty,
And the first day which sees the chain enthrall
A captive, sees his half of Manhood gone —
The Soul's emasculation saddens all
His spirit; thus the Bard too near the throne
Quails from his inspiration, bound to *please*, —
How servile is the task to please alone!
To smooth the verse to suit his Sovereign's ease
And royal leisure, nor too much prolong
Aught save his eulogy, and find, and seize, ⁹⁰
Or force, or forge fit argument of Song!
Thus trammelled, thus condemned to Flattery's trebles,
He toils through all, still trembling to be wrong:
For fear some noble thoughts, like heavenly rebels,
Should rise up in high treason to his brain,
He sings, as the Athenian spoke, with pebbles
In's mouth, lest Truth should stammer through his strain.
But out of the long file of sonneteers
There shall be some who will not sing in vain,
And he, their Prince, shall rank among my peers,
And Love shall be his torment; but his grief
Shall make an immortality of tears,
And Italy shall hail him as the Chief
Of Poet-lovers, and his higher song
Of Freedom wreath him with as green a leaf.
But in a farther age shall rise along
The banks of Po two greater still than he;
The World which smiled on him shall do them wrong
Till they are ashes, and repose with me.
The first will make an epoch with his lyre, ¹¹⁰
And fill the earth with feats of Chivalry:
His Fancy like a rainbow, and his Fire,
Like that of Heaven, immortal, and his Thought
Borne onward with a wing that cannot tire;

Pleasure shall, like a butterfly new caught,
Flutter her lovely pinions o'er his theme,
And Art itself seem into Nature wrought
By the transparency of his bright dream. —
The second, of a tenderer, sadder mood,
Shall pour his soul out o'er Jerusalem; ¹²⁰
He, too, shall sing of Arms, and Christian blood
Shed where Christ bled for man; and his high harp
Shall, by the willow over Jordan's flood,
Revive a song of Sion, and the sharp
Conflict, and final triumph of the brave
And pious, and the strife of Hell to warp
Their hearts from their great purpose, until wave
The red-cross banners where the first red Cross
Was crimsoned from His veins who died to save,
Shall be his sacred argument; the loss ¹³⁰
Of years, of favour, freedom, even of fame
Contested for a time, while the smooth gloss
Of Courts would slide o'er his forgotten name
And call Captivity a kindness — meant
To shield him from insanity or shame —
Such shall be his meek guerdon! who was sent
To be Christ's Laureate — they reward him well!
Florence dooms me but death or banishment,
Ferrara him a pittance and a cell,
Harder to bear and less deserved, for I ¹⁴⁰
Had stung the factions which I strove to quell;
But this meek man who with a lover's eye
Will look on Earth and Heaven, and who will deign
To embalm with his celestial flattery,
As poor a thing as e'er was spawned to reign,
What will *he* do to merit such a doom?
Perhaps he'll *love*, — and is not Love in vain
Torture enough without a living tomb?
Yet it will be so — he and his compeer,
The Bard of Chivalry, will both consume ¹⁵⁰
In penury and pain too many a year,
And, dying in despondency, bequeath
To the kind World, which scarce will yield a tear,

A heritage enriching all who breathe
With the wealth of a genuine Poet's soul,
And to their country a redoubled wreath,
Unmatched by time; not Hellas can unroll
Through her Olympiads two such names, though one
Of hers be mighty; — and is this the whole
Of such men's destiny beneath the Sun? ¹⁶⁰
Must all the finer thoughts, the thrilling sense,
The electric blood with which their arteries run,
Their body's self turned soul with the intense
Feeling of that which is, and fancy of
That which should be, to such a recompense
Conduct? shall their bright plumage on the rough
Storm be still scattered? Yes, and it must be;
For, formed of far too penetrable stuff,
These birds of Paradise but long to flee
Back to their native mansion, soon they find ¹⁷⁰
Earth's mist with their pure pinions not agree,
And die or are degraded; for the mind
Succumbs to long infection, and despair,
And vulture Passions flying close behind,
Await the moment to assail and tear;
And when, at length, the wingéd wanderers stoop,
Then is the Prey-birds' triumph, then they share
The spoil, o'erpowered at length by one fell swoop.
Yet some have been untouched who learned to bear,
Some whom no Power could ever force to droop, ¹⁸⁰
Who could resist themselves even, hardest care!
And task most hopeless; but some such have been,
And if my name amongst the number were,
That Destiny austere, and yet serene,
Were prouder than more dazzling fame unblessed;
The Alp's snow summit nearer heaven is seen
Than the Volcano's fierce eruptive crest,
Whose splendour from the black abyss is flung,
While the scorched mountain, from whose burning breast
A temporary torturing flame is wrung, ¹⁹⁰
Shines for a night of terror, then repels
Its fire back to the Hell from whence it sprung,

The Hell which in its entrails ever dwells.

CANTO THE FOURTH

Many are Poets who have never penned
Their inspiration, and perchance the best:
They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
Their thoughts to meaner beings; they compressed
The God within them, and rejoined the stars
Unlaurelled upon earth, but far more blessed
Than those who are degraded by the jars
Of Passion, and their frailties linked to fame,
Conquerors of high renown, but full of scars.
Many are Poets but without the name; 10
For what is Poesy but to create
From overfeeling Good or Ill; and aim
At an external life beyond our fate,
And be the new Prometheus of new men,
Bestowing fire from Heaven, and then, too late,
Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain,
And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
Who, having lavished his high gift in vain,
Lies to his lone rock by the sea-shore?
So be it: we can bear. — But thus all they 20
Whose Intellect is an o’ermastering Power
Which still recoils from its encumbering clay
Or lightens it to spirit, whatsoe’er
The form which their creations may essay,
Are bards; the kindled Marble’s bust may wear
More poesy upon its speaking brow
Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear;
One noble stroke with a whole life may glow,
Or deify the canvass till it shine
With beauty so surpassing all below, 30
That they who kneel to Idols so divine
Break no commandment, for high Heaven is there
Transfused, transfigured: and the line
Of Poesy, which peoples but the air
With Thought and Beings of our thought reflected,
Can do no more: then let the artist share

The palm, he shares the peril, and dejected
Faints o'er the labour unapproved — Alas!
Despair and Genius are too oft connected.
Within the ages which before me pass 40
Art shall resume and equal even the sway
Which with Apelles and old Phidias
She held in Hellas' unforgotten day.
Ye shall be taught by Ruin to revive
The Grecian forms at least from their decay,
And Roman souls at last again shall live
In Roman works wrought by Italian hands,
And temples, loftier than the old temples, give
New wonders to the World; and while still stands
The austere Pantheon, into heaven shall soar 50
A Dome, its image, while the base expands
Into a fane surpassing all before,
Such as all flesh shall flock to kneel in: ne'er
Such sight hath been unfolded by a door
As this, to which all nations shall repair,
And lay their sins at this huge gate of Heaven.
And the bold Architect unto whose care
The daring charge to raise it shall be given,
Whom all Arts shall acknowledge as their Lord,
Whether into the marble chaos driven 60
His chisel bid the Hebrew, at whose word
Israel left Egypt, stop the waves in stone,
Or hues of Hell be by his pencil poured
Over the damned before the Judgement-throne,
Such as I saw them, such as all shall see,
Or fanes be built of grandeur yet unknown —
The Stream of his great thoughts shall spring from me
The Ghibelline, who traversed the three realms
Which form the Empire of Eternity.
Amidst the clash of swords, and clang of helms, 70
The age which I anticipate, no less
Shall be the Age of Beauty, and while whelms
Calamity the nations with distress,
The Genius of my Country shall arise,
A Cedar towering o'er the Wilderness,

Lovely in all its branches to all eyes,
Fragrant as fair, and recognised afar,
Wafting its native incense through the skies.
Sovereigns shall pause amidst their sport of war,
Weaned for an hour from blood, to turn and gaze 80
On canvass or on stone; and they who mar
All beauty upon earth, compelled to praise,
Shall feel the power of that which they destroy;
And Art's mistaken gratitude shall raise
To tyrants, who but take her for a toy,
Emblems and monuments, and prostitute
Her charms to Pontiffs proud, who but employ
The man of Genius as the meanest brute
To bear a burthen, and to serve a need,
To sell his labours, and his soul to boot. 90
Who toils for nations may be poor indeed,
But free; who sweats for Monarchs is no more
Than the gilt Chamberlain, who, clothed and feed,
Stands sleek and slavish, bowing at his door.
Oh, Power that rulest and inspirest! how
Is it that they on earth, whose earthly power
Is likest thine in heaven in outward show,
Least like to thee in attributes divine,
Tread on the universal necks that bow,
And then assure us that their rights are thine? 100
And how is it that they, the Sons of Fame,
Whose inspiration seems to them to shine
From high, they whom the nations ofttest name,
Must pass their days in penury or pain,
Or step to grandeur through the paths of shame,
And wear a deeper brand and gaudier chain?
Or if their Destiny be born aloof
From lowliness, or tempted thence in vain,
In their own souls sustain a harder proof,
The inner war of Passions deep and fierce? 110
Florence! when thy harsh sentence razed my roof,
I loved thee; but the vengeance of my verse,
The hate of injuries which every year
Makes greater, and accumulates my curse,

Shall live, outliving all thou holdest dear —
Thy pride, thy wealth, thy freedom, and even *that*,
The most infernal of all evils here,
The sway of petty tyrants in a state;
For such sway is not limited to Kings,
And Demagogues yield to them but in date, ¹²⁰
As swept off sooner; in all deadly things,
Which make men hate themselves, and one another,
In discord, cowardice, cruelty, all that springs
From Death the Sin-born's incest with his mother,
In rank oppression in its rudest shape,
The faction Chief is but the Sultan's brother,
And the worst Despot's far less human ape.
Florence! when this lone spirit, which so long
Yearned, as the captive toiling at escape,
To fly back to thee in despite of wrong, ¹³⁰
An exile, saddest of all prisoners,
Who has the whole world for a dungeon strong,
Seas, mountains, and the horizon's verge for bars,
Which shut him from the sole small spot of earth
Where — whatsoe'er his fate — he still were hers,
His Country's, and might die where he had birth —
Florence! when this lone Spirit shall return
To kindred Spirits, thou wilt feel my worth,
And seek to honour with an empty urn
The ashes thou shalt ne'er obtain — Alas! ¹⁴⁰
“What have I done to thee, my People?” Stern
Are all thy dealings, but in this they pass
The limits of Man's common malice, for
All that a citizen could be I was —
Raised by thy will, all thine in peace or war —
And for this thou hast warred with me. — 'Tis done:
I may not overleap the eternal bar
Built up between us, and will die alone,
Beholding with the dark eye of a Seer
The evil days to gifted souls foreshown, ¹⁵⁰
Foretelling them to those who will not hear;
As in the old time, till the hour be come
When Truth shall strike their eyes through many a tear,

And make them own the Prophet in his tomb.

THE MORGANTE MAGGIORE OF PULCI

INTRODUCTION

It is possible that Byron began his translation of the First Canto of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* (so called to distinguish the entire poem of twenty-eight cantos from the lesser *Morgante* [or, to coin a title, "*Morganid*"] which was published separately) in the late autumn of 1819, before he had left Venice (see his letter to Bankes, February 19, 1820, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 403). It is certain that it was finished at Ravenna during the first week of his "domestication" in the Palazzo Guiccioli (Letters to Murray, February 7, February 21, 1820). He took a deal of pains with his self-imposed task, "servilely translating stanza from stanza, and line from line, two octaves every night;" and when the first canto was finished he was naturally and reasonably proud of his achievement. More than two years had elapsed since Frere's *Whistlecraft* had begotten *Beppo*, and in the interval he had written four cantos of *Don Juan*, outstripping his "immediate model," and equalling if not surpassing his model's parents and precursors, the masters of "narrative romantic poetry among the Italians."

In attempting this translation — something, as he once said of his Armenian studies, "craggy for his mind to break upon" (Letter to Moore, December 5, 1816, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 10) — Byron believed that he was working upon virgin soil. He had read, as he admits in his "Advertisement," John Herman Merivale's poem, *Orlando in Roncesvalles*, which is founded upon the *Morgante Maggiore*; but he does not seem to have been aware that many years before (1806, 1807) the same writer (one of the "associate bards") had published in the *Monthly Magazine* a series of translations of selected passages of the poem. There is no resemblance whatever between Byron's laboured and faithful rendering of the text, and Merivale's far more readable paraphrase, and it is evident that if these selections ever passed before his eyes, they had left no impression on his memory. He was drawn to the task partly on account of its difficulty, but chiefly because in Pulci he recognized a kindred spirit who suggested and compelled a fresh and final dedication of his genius to the humorous epopee. The translation was an act of devotion, the offering of a disciple to a master.

"The apparent contradictions of the *Morgante Maggiore* ... the brusque transition from piety to ribaldry, from pathos to satire," the paradoxical union of persiflage with gravity, a confession of faith alternating with a profession of mockery and profanity, have puzzled and confounded more than one student and interpreter. An intimate knowledge of the history, the literature, the art, the

manners and passions of the times has enabled one of his latest critics and translators, John Addington Symonds, to come as near as may be to explaining the contradictions; but the essential quality of Pulci's humour eludes analysis.

We know that the poem itself, as Pio Rajna has shown, "the *rifacimento* of two earlier popular poems," was written to amuse Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the mother of Lorenzo de' Medici, and that it was recited, canto by canto, in the presence of such guests as Poliziano, Ficino, and Michelangelo Buonarroti; but how "it struck these contemporaries," and whether a subtler instinct permitted them to untwist the strands and to appraise the component parts at their precise ethical and spiritual value, are questions for the exercise of the critical imagination. That which attracted Byron to Pulci's writings was, no doubt, the co-presence of faith, a certain *simplicity* of faith, with an audacious and even outrageous handling of the objects of faith, combined with a facile and wanton alternation of romantic passion with a cynical mockery of whatsoever things are sober and venerable. *Don Juan* and the *Vision of Judgment* owe their existence to the *Morgante Maggiore*.

The MS. of the translation of Canto I. was despatched to England, February 28, 1820. It is evident (see Letters, March 29, April 23, May 18, 1820, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 425, 1901, v. 17, 21) that Murray looked coldly on Byron's "masterpiece" from the first. It was certain that any new work by the author of *Don Juan* would be subjected to the severest and most hostile scrutiny, and it was doubtful if a translation of part of an obscure and difficult poem, vaguely supposed to be coarse and irreligious, would meet with even a tolerable measure of success. At any rate, in spite of many inquiries and much vaunting of its excellence (see Letters, June 29, September 12, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 314, 362), the MS. remained for more than two years in Murray's hands, and it was not until other arrangements came into force that the translation of the First Canto of the *Morgante Maggiore* appeared in the fourth and last number of *The Liberal*, which was issued (by John Hunt) July 30, 1823.

For critical estimates of Luigi Pulci and the *Morgante Maggiore*, see an article (*Quarterly Review*, April, 1819, vol. xxi. pp. 486-556), by Ugo Foscolo, entitled "Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians;" *Preface to the Orlando Innamorato of Boiardo*, by A. Panizzi, 1830, i. 190-302; *Poems Original and Translated*, by J. H. Merivale, 1838, ii. 1-43; *Stories of the Italian Poets*, by J. H. Leigh Hunt, 1846, i. 283-314; *Renaissance in Italy*, by J. A. Symonds, 1881, iv. 431, 456, and for translations of the *Morgante Maggiore*, *vide ibid.*, Appendix V. pp. 543-560; and *Italian Literature*, by R. Garnett, C.B., LL.D., 1898, pp. 128-131.

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The *Morgante Maggiore*, of the first canto of which this translation is offered, divides with the *Orlando Innamorato* the honour of having formed and suggested the style and story of Ariosto. The great defects of Boiardo were his treating too seriously the narratives of chivalry, and his harsh style. Ariosto, in his continuation, by a judicious mixture of the gaiety of Pulci, has avoided the one; and Berni, in his reformation of Boiardo's poem, has corrected the other. Pulci may be considered as the precursor and model of Berni altogether, as he has partly been to Ariosto, however inferior to both his copyists. He is no less the founder of a new style of poetry very lately sprung up in England. I allude to that of the ingenious Whistlecraft. The serious poems on Roncesvalles in the same language, and more particularly the excellent one of Mr. Merivale, are to be traced to the same source. It has never yet been decided entirely whether Pulci's intention was or was not to deride the religion which is one of his favourite topics. It appears to me, that such an intention would have been no less hazardous to the poet than to the priest, particularly in that age and country; and the permission to publish the poem, and its reception among the classics of Italy, prove that it neither was nor is so interpreted. That he intended to ridicule the monastic life, and suffered his imagination to play with the simple dulness of his converted giant, seems evident enough; but surely it were as unjust to accuse him of irreligion on this account, as to denounce Fielding for his Parson Adams, Barnabas, Thwackum, Supple, and the Ordinary in Jonathan Wild, — or Scott, for the exquisite use of his Covenanters in the "Tales of my Landlord."

In the following translation I have used the liberty of the original with the proper names, as Pulci uses Gan, Ganellon, or Ganellone; Carlo, Carlomagno, or Carlornano; Rondel, or Rondello, etc., as it suits his convenience; so has the translator. In other respects the version is faithful to the best of the translator's ability in combining his interpretation of the one language with the not very easy task of reducing it to the same versification in the other. The reader, on comparing it with the original, is requested to remember that the antiquated language of Pulci, however pure, is not easy to the generality of Italians themselves, from its great mixture of Tuscan proverbs; and he may therefore be more indulgent to the present attempt. How far the translator has succeeded, and whether or no he shall continue the work, are questions which the public will decide. He was induced to make the experiment partly by his love for, and partial intercourse with, the Italian language, of which it is so easy to acquire a slight knowledge, and with which it is so nearly impossible for a foreigner to

become accurately conversant. The Italian language is like a capricious beauty, who accords her smiles to all, her favours to few, and sometimes least to those who have courted her longest. The translator wished also to present in an English dress a part at least of a poem never yet rendered into a northern language; at the same time that it has been the original of some of the most celebrated productions on this side of the Alps, as well of those recent experiments in poetry in England which have been already mentioned.

THE MORGANTE MAGGIORE

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

In the beginning was the Word next God;
God was the Word, the Word no less was He:
This was in the beginning, to my mode
Of thinking, and without Him nought could be:
Therefore, just Lord! from out thy high abode,
Benign and pious, bid an angel flee,
One only, to be my companion, who
Shall help my famous, worthy, old song through.

II.

And thou, oh Virgin! daughter, mother, bride,
Of the same Lord, who gave to you each key
Of Heaven, and Hell, and every thing beside,
The day thy Gabriel said "All hail!" to thee,
Since to thy servants Pity's ne'er denied,
With flowing rhymes, a pleasant style and free,
Be to my verses then benignly kind,
And to the end illuminate my mind.

III.

'Twas in the season when sad Philomel
Weeps with her sister, who remembers and
Deplores the ancient woes which both befel,
And makes the nymphs enamoured, to the hand
Of Phaëton, by Phoebus loved so well,
His car (but tempered by his sire's command)
Was given, and on the horizon's verge just now
Appeared, so that Tithonus scratched his brow:

IV.

When I prepared my bark first to obey,
As it should still obey, the helm, my mind,
And carry prose or rhyme, and this my lay
Of Charles the Emperor, whom you will find
By several pens already praised; but they
Who to diffuse his glory were inclined,
For all that I can see in prose or verse,
Have understood Charles badly, and wrote worse.

V.

Leonardo Aretino said already,
That if, like Pepin, Charles had had a writer
Of genius quick, and diligently steady,
No hero would in history look brighter;
He in the cabinet being always ready,
And in the field a most victorious fighter,
Who for the church and Christian faith had wrought,
Certes, far more than yet is said or thought.

VI.

You still may see at Saint Liberatore,
The abbey, no great way from Manopell,
Erected in the Abruzzi to his glory,
Because of the great battle in which fell
A pagan king, according to the story,
And felon people whom Charles sent to Hell:
And there are bones so many, and so many,
Near them Giusaffa's would seem few, if any.

VII.

But the world, blind and ignorant, don't prize
His virtues as I wish to see them: thou,
Florence, by his great bounty don't arise,
And hast, and may have, if thou wilt allow,
All proper customs and true courtesies:
Whate'er thou hast acquired from then till now,
With knightly courage, treasure, or the lance,

Is sprung from out the noble blood of France.

VIII.

Twelve Paladins had Charles in court, of whom
The wisest and most famous was Orlando;
Him traitor Gan conducted to the tomb
In Roncesvalles, as the villain planned too,
While the horn rang so loud, and knelled the doom
Of their sad rout, though he did all knight can do:
And Dante in his comedy has given
To him a happy seat with Charles in Heaven.

IX.

‘Twas Christmas-day; in Paris all his court
Charles held; the Chief, I say, Orlando was,
The Dane; Astolfo there too did resort,
Also Ansuigi, the gay time to pass
In festival and in triumphal sport,
The much-renowned St. Dennis being the cause;
Angiolin of Bayonne, and Oliver,
And gentle Belinhieri too came there:

X.

Avolio, and Arino, and Othone
Of Normandy, and Richard Paladin,
Wise Hamo, and the ancient Salamone,
Walter of Lion’s Mount, and Baldovin,
Who was the son of the sad Ganellone,
Were there, exciting too much gladness in
The son of Pepin: — when his knights came hither,
He groaned with joy to see them altogether.

XI.

But watchful Fortune, lurking, takes good heed
Ever some bar ‘gainst our intents to bring.
While Charles reposed him thus, in word and deed,

Orlando ruled court, Charles, and every thing;
Curst Gan, with envy bursting, had such need
To vent his spite, that thus with Charles the king
One day he openly began to say,
“Orlando must we always then obey?

XII.

“A thousand times I’ve been about to say,
Orlando too presumptuously goes on;
Here are we, counts, kings, dukes, to own thy sway,
Hamo, and Otho, Ogier, Solomon,
Each have to honour thee and to obey;
But he has too much credit near the throne,
Which we won’t suffer, but are quite decided
By such a boy to be no longer guided.

XIII.

“And even at Aspramont thou didst begin
To let him know he was a gallant knight,
And by the fount did much the day to win;
But I know *who* that day had won the fight
If it had not for good Gherardo been;
The victory was Almonte’s else; his sight
He kept upon the standard — and the laurels,
In fact and fairness, are his earning, Charles!

XIV.

“If thou rememberest being in Gascony,
When there advanced the nations out of Spain
The Christian cause had suffered shamefully,
Had not his valour driven them back again.
Best speak the truth when there’s a reason why:
Know then, oh Emperor! that all complain:
As for myself, I shall repass the mounts
O’er which I crossed with two and sixty counts.

XV.

“‘Tis fit thy grandeur should dispense relief,
So that each here may have his proper part,
For the whole court is more or less in grief:
Perhaps thou deem'st this lad a Mars in heart?”
Orlando one day heard this speech in brief,
As by himself it chanced he sate apart:
Displeased he was with Gan because he said it,
But much more still that Charles should give him credit.

XVI.

And with the sword he would have murdered Gan,
But Oliver thrust in between the pair,
And from his hand extracted Durlindan,
And thus at length they separated were.
Orlando angry too with Carloman,
Wanted but little to have slain him there;
Then forth alone from Paris went the Chief,
And burst and maddened with disdain and grief.

XVII.

From Ermellina, consort of the Dane,
He took Cortana, and then took Rondell,
And on towards Brara pricked him o'er the plain;
And when she saw him coming, Aldabelle
Stretched forth her arms to clasp her lord again:
Orlando, in whose brain all was not well,
As “Welcome, my Orlando, home,” she said,
Raised up his sword to smite her on the head.

XVIII.

Like him a Fury counsels, his revenge
On Gan in that rash act he seemed to take,
Which Aldabella thought extremely strange;
But soon Orlando found himself awake;
And his spouse took his bridle on this change,
And he dismounted from his horse, and spake
Of every thing which passed without demur,

And then reposed himself some days with her.

XIX.

Then full of wrath departed from the place,
As far as pagan countries roamed astray,
And while he rode, yet still at every pace
The traitor Gan remembered by the way;
And wandering on in error a long space,
An abbey which in a lone desert lay,
'Midst glens obscure, and distant lands, he found,
Which formed the Christian's and the Pagan's bound.

XX.

The Abbot was called Clermont, and by blood
Descended from Angrante: under cover
Of a great mountain's brow the abbey stood,
But certain savage giants looked him over;
One Passamont was foremost of the brood,
And Alabaster and Morgante hover
Second and third, with certain slings, and throw
In daily jeopardy the place below.

XXI.

The monks could pass the convent gate no more,
Nor leave their cells for water or for wood;
Orlando knocked, but none would ope, before
Unto the Prior it at length seemed good;
Entered, he said that he was taught to adore
Him who was born of Mary's holiest blood,
And was baptized a Christian; and then showed
How to the abbey he had found his road.

XXII.

Said the Abbot, "You are welcome; what is mine
We give you freely, since that you believe
With us in Mary Mother's Son divine;

And that you may not, Cavalier, conceive
The cause of our delay to let you in
To be rusticity, you shall receive
The reason why our gate was barred to you:
Thus those who in suspicion live must do.

XXIII.

“When hither to inhabit first we came
These mountains, albeit that they are obscure,
As you perceive, yet without fear or blame
They seemed to promise an asylum sure:
From savage brutes alone, too fierce to tame,
‘Twas fit our quiet dwelling to secure;
But now, if here we’d stay, we needs must guard
Against domestic beasts with watch and ward.

XXIV.

“These make us stand, in fact, upon the watch;
For late there have appeared three giants rough,
What nation or what kingdom bore the batch
I know not, but they are all of savage stuff;
When Force and Malice with some genius match,
You know, they can do all — we are not enough:
And these so much our orisons derange,
I know not what to do, till matters change.

XXV.

“Our ancient fathers, living the desert in,
For just and holy works were duly fed;
Think not they lived on locusts sole, ‘tis certain
That manna was rained down from heaven instead;
But here ‘tis fit we keep on the alert in
Our bounds, or taste the stones showered down for bread,
From off yon mountain daily raining faster,
And flung by Passamont and Alabaster.

XXVI.

“The third, Morgante, ‘s savagest by far; he
Plucks up pines, beeches, poplar-trees, and oaks,
And flings them, our community to bury;
And all that I can do but more provokes.”
While thus they parley in the cemetery,
A stone from one of their gigantic strokes,
Which nearly crushed Rondell, came tumbling over,
So that he took a long leap under cover.

XXVII.

“For God-sake, Cavalier, come in with speed;
The manna’s falling now,” the Abbot cried.
“This fellow does not wish my horse should feed,
Dear Abbot,” Roland unto him replied,
“Of restiveness he’d cure him had he need;
That stone seems with good will and aim applied.”
The holy father said, “I don’t deceive;
They’ll one day fling the mountain, I believe.”

XXVIII.

Orlando bade them take care of Rondello,
And also made a breakfast of his own;
“Abbot,” he said, “I want to find that fellow
Who flung at my good horse yon corner-stone.”
Said the abbot, “Let not my advice seem shallow;
As to a brother dear I speak alone;
I would dissuade you, Baron, from this strife,
As knowing sure that you will lose your life.

XXIX.

“That Passamont has in his hand three darts —
Such slings, clubs, ballast-stones, that yield you must:
You know that giants have much stouter hearts
Than us, with reason, in proportion just:
If go you will, guard well against their arts,
For these are very barbarous and robust.”

Orlando answered, "This I'll see, be sure,
And walk the wild on foot to be secure."

XXX.

The Abbot signed the great cross on his front,
"Then go you with God's benison and mine."
Orlando, after he had scaled the mount,
As the Abbot had directed, kept the line
Right to the usual haunt of Passamont;
Who, seeing him alone in this design,
Surveyed him fore and aft with eyes observant,
Then asked him, "If he wished to stay as servant?"

XXXI.

And promised him an office of great ease.
But, said Orlando, "Saracen insane!
I come to kill you, if it shall so please
God, not to serve as footboy in your train;
You with his monks so oft have broke the peace —
Vile dog! 'tis past his patience to sustain."
The Giant ran to fetch his arms, quite furious,
When he received an answer so injurious.

XXXII.

And being returned to where Orlando stood,
Who had not moved him from the spot, and swinging
The cord, he hurled a stone with strength so rude,
As showed a sample of his skill in slinging;
It rolled on Count Orlando's helmet good
And head, and set both head and helmet ringing,
So that he swooned with pain as if he died,
But more than dead, he seemed so stupified.

XXXIII.

Then Passamont, who thought him slain outright,
Said, "I will go, and while he lies along,

Disarm me: why such craven did I fight?"
But Christ his servants ne'er abandons long,
Especially Orlando, such a knight,
As to desert would almost be a wrong.
While the giant goes to put off his defences,
Orlando has recalled his force and senses:

XXXIV.

And loud he shouted, "Giant, where dost go?
Thou thought'st me doubtless for the bier outlaid;
To the right about — without wings thou'rt too slow
To fly my vengeance — currish renegade!
'Twas but by treachery thou laid'st me low."
The giant his astonishment betrayed,
And turned about, and stopped his journey on,
And then he stooped to pick up a great stone.

XXXV.

Orlando had Cortana bare in hand;
To split the head in twain was what he schemed:
Cortana clave the skull like a true brand,
And pagan Passamont died unredeemed;
Yet harsh and haughty, as he lay he banned,
And most devoutly Macon still blasphemed;
But while his crude, rude blasphemies he heard,
Orlando thanked the Father and the Word, —

XXXVI.

Saying, "What grace to me thou'st this day given!
And I to thee, O Lord! am ever bound;
I know my life was saved by thee from Heaven,
Since by the Giant I was fairly downed.
All things by thee are measured just and even;
Our power without thine aid would nought be found:
I pray thee take heed of me, till I can
At least return once more to Carloman."

XXXVII.

And having said thus much, he went his way;
And Alabaster he found out below,
Doing the very best that in him lay
To root from out a bank a rock or two.
Orlando, when he reached him, loud 'gan say,
"How think'st thou, glutton, such a stone to throw?"
When Alabaster heard his deep voice ring,
He suddenly betook him to his sling,

XXXVIII.

And hurled a fragment of a size so large
That if it had in fact fulfilled its mission,
And Roland not availed him of his targe,
There would have been no need of a physician.
Orlando set himself in turn to charge,
And in his bulky bosom made incision
With all his sword. The lout fell; but o'erthrown, he
However by no means forgot Macone.

XXXIX.

Morgante had a palace in his mode,
Composed of branches, logs of wood, and earth,
And stretched himself at ease in this abode,
And shut himself at night within his berth.
Orlando knocked, and knocked again, to goad
The giant from his sleep; and he came forth,
The door to open, like a crazy thing,
For a rough dream had shook him slumbering.

XL.

He thought that a fierce serpent had attacked him,
And Mahomet he called; but Mahomet
Is nothing worth, and, not an instant backed him;
But praying blessed Jesu, he was set
At liberty from all the fears which racked him;

And to the gate he came with great regret —
“Who knocks here?” grumbling all the while, said he.
“That,” said Orlando, “you will quickly see:

XLI.

“I come to preach to you, as to your brothers, —
Sent by the miserable monks — repentance;
For Providence divine, in you and others,
Condemns the evil done, my new acquaintance!
‘Tis writ on high — your wrong must pay another’s:
From Heaven itself is issued out this sentence.
Know then, that colder now than a pilaster
I left your Passamont and Alabaster.”

XLII.

Morgante said, “Oh gentle Cavalier!
Now by thy God say me no villany;
The favour of your name I fain would hear,
And if a Christian, speak for courtesy.”
Replied Orlando, “So much to your ear
I by my faith disclose contentedly;
Christ I adore, who is the genuine Lord,
And, if you please, by you may be adored.”

XLIII.

The Saracen rejoined in humble tone,
“I have had an extraordinary vision;
A savage serpent fell on me alone,
And Macon would not pity my condition;
Hence to thy God, who for ye did atone
Upon the cross, preferred I my petition;
His timely succour set me safe and free,
And I a Christian am disposed to be.”

XLIV.

Orlando answered, “Baron just and pious,

If this good wish your heart can really move
To the true God, who will not then deny us
Eternal honour, you will go above,
And, if you please, as friends we will ally us,
And I will love you with a perfect love.
Your idols are vain liars, full of fraud:
The only true God is the Christian's God.

XLV.

"The Lord descended to the virgin breast
Of Mary Mother, sinless and divine;
If you acknowledge the Redeemer blest,
Without whom neither sun nor star can shine,
Abjure bad Macon's false and felon test,
Your renegado god, and worship mine,
Baptize yourself with zeal, since you repent."
To which Morgante answered, "I'm content."

XLVI.

And then Orlando to embrace him flew,
And made much of his convert, as he cried,
"To the abbey I will gladly marshal you."
To whom Morgante, "Let us go," replied:
"I to the friars have for peace to sue."
Which thing Orlando heard with inward pride,
Saying, "My brother, so devout and good,
Ask the Abbot pardon, as I wish you would:

XLVII.

"Since God has granted your illumination,
Accepting you in mercy for his own,
Humility should be your first oblation."
Morgante said, "For goodness' sake, make known, —
Since that your God is to be mine — your station,
And let your name in verity be shown;
Then will I everything at your command do."
On which the other said, he was Orlando.

XLVIII.

“Then,” quoth the Giant, “blessed be Jesu
A thousand times with gratitude and praise!
Oft, perfect Baron! have I heard of you
Through all the different periods of my days:
And, as I said, to be your vassal too
I wish, for your great gallantry always.”
Thus reasoning, they continued much to say,
And onwards to the abbey went their way.

XLIX.

And by the way about the giants dead
Orlando with Morgante reasoned: “Be,
For their decease, I pray you, comforted,
And, since it is God’s pleasure, pardon me;
A thousand wrongs unto the monks they bred;
And our true Scripture soundeth openly,
Good is rewarded, and chastised the ill,
Which the Lord never faileth to fulfil:

L.

“Because His love of justice unto all
Is such, He wills His judgment should devour
All who have sin, however great or small;
But good He well remembers to restore.
Nor without justice holy could we call
Him, whom I now require you to adore.
All men must make His will their wishes sway,
And quickly and spontaneously obey.

LI.

“And here our doctors are of one accord,
Coming on this point to the same conclusion, —
That in their thoughts, who praise in Heaven the Lord,
If Pity e’er was guilty of intrusion
For their unfortunate relations stored

In Hell below, and damned in great confusion,
Their happiness would be reduced to nought, —
And thus unjust the Almighty's self be thought.

LII.

“But they in Christ have firmest hope, and all
Which seems to Him, to them too must appear
Well done; nor could it otherwise befall;
He never can in any purpose err.
If sire or mother suffer endless thrall,
They don't disturb themselves for him or her:
What pleases God to them must joy inspire; —
Such is the observance of the eternal choir.”

LIII.

“A word unto the wise,” Morgante said,
“Is wont to be enough, and you shall see
How much I grieve about my brethren dead;
And if the will of God seem good to me,
Just, as you tell me, 'tis in Heaven obeyed —
Ashes to ashes, — merry let us be!
I will cut off the hands from both their trunks,
And carry them unto the holy monks.

LIV.

“So that all persons may be sure and certain
That they are dead, and have no further fear
To wander solitary this desert in,
And that they may perceive my spirit clear
By the Lord's grace, who hath withdrawn the curtain
Of darkness, making His bright realm appear.”
He cut his brethren's hands off at these words,
And left them to the savage beasts and birds.

LV.

Then to the abbey they went on together,

Where waited them the Abbot in great doubt.
The monks, who knew not yet the fact, ran thither
To their superior, all in breathless rout,
Saying with tremor, "Please to tell us whether
You wish to have this person in or out?"
The Abbot, looking through upon the Giant,
Too greatly feared, at first, to be compliant.

LVI.

Orlando seeing him thus agitated,
Said quickly, "Abbot, be thou of good cheer;
He Christ believes, as Christian must be rated,
And hath renounced his Macon false;" which here
Morgante with the hands corroborated,
A proof of both the giants' fate quite clear:
Thence, with due thanks, the Abbot God adored,
Saying, "Thou hast contented me, O Lord!"

LVII.

He gazed; Morgante's height he calculated,
And more than once contemplated his size;
And then he said, "O Giant celebrated!
Know, that no more my wonder will arise,
How you could tear and fling the trees you late did,
When I behold your form with my own eyes.
You now a true and perfect friend will show
Yourself to Christ, as once you were a foe.

LVIII.

"And one of our apostles, Saul once named,
Long persecuted sore the faith of Christ,
Till, one day, by the Spirit being inflamed,
'Why dost thou persecute me thus?' said Christ;
And then from his offence he was reclaimed,
And went for ever after preaching Christ,
And of the faith became a trump, whose sounding
O'er the whole earth is echoing and rebounding.

LIX.

“So, my Morgante, you may do likewise:
He who repents — thus writes the Evangelist —
Occasions more rejoicing in the skies
Than ninety-nine of the celestial list.
You may be sure, should each desire arise
With just zeal for the Lord, that you’ll exist
Among the happy saints for evermore;
But you were lost and damned to Hell before!”

LX.

And thus great honour to Morgante paid
The Abbot: many days they did repose.
One day, as with Orlando they both strayed,
And sauntered here and there, where’er they chose,
The Abbot showed a chamber, where arrayed
Much armour was, and hung up certain bows;
And one of these Morgante for a whim
Girt on, though useless, he believed, to him.

LXI.

There being a want of water in the place,
Orlando, like a worthy brother, said,
“Morgante, I could wish you in this case
To go for water.” “You shall be obeyed
In all commands,” was the reply, “straight ways.”
Upon his shoulder a great tub he laid,
And went out on his way unto a fountain,
Where he was wont to drink, below the mountain.

LXII.

Arrived there, a prodigious noise he hears,
Which suddenly along the forest spread;
Whereat from out his quiver he prepares
An arrow for his bow, and lifts his head;
And lo! a monstrous herd of swine appears,

And onward rushes with tempestuous tread,
And to the fountain's brink precisely pours;
So that the Giant's joined by all the boars.

LXIII.

Morgante at a venture shot an arrow,
Which pierced a pig precisely in the ear,
And passed unto the other side quite through;
So that the boar, defunct, lay tripped up near.
Another, to revenge his fellow farrow,
Against the Giant rushed in fierce career,
And reached the passage with so swift a foot,
Morgante was not now in time to shoot.

LXIV.

Perceiving that the pig was on him close,
He gave him such a punch upon the head,
As floored him so that he no more arose,
Smashing the very bone; and he fell dead
Next to the other. Having seen such blows,
The other pigs along the valley fled;
Morgante on his neck the bucket took,
Full from the spring, which neither swerved nor shook.

LXV.

The tub was on one shoulder, and there were
The hogs on t'other, and he brushed apace
On to the abbey, though by no means near,
Nor spilt one drop of water in his race.
Orlando, seeing him so soon appear
With the dead boars, and with that brimful vase,
Marvelled to see his strength so very great;
So did the Abbot, and set wide the gate.

LXVI.

The monks, who saw the water fresh and good,

Rejoiced, but much more to perceive the pork;
All animals are glad at sight of food:
They lay their breviaries to sleep, and work
With greedy pleasure, and in such a mood,
That the flesh needs no salt beneath their fork.
Of rankness and of rot there is no fear,
For all the fasts are now left in arrear.

LXVII.

As though they wished to burst at once, they ate;
And gorged so that, as if the bones had been
In water, sorely grieved the dog and cat,
Perceiving that they all were picked too clean.
The Abbot, who to all did honour great,
A few days after this convivial scene,
Gave to Morgante a fine horse, well trained,
Which he long time had for himself maintained.

LXVIII.

The horse Morgante to a meadow led,
To gallop, and to put him to the proof,
Thinking that he a back of iron had,
Or to skim eggs unbroke was light enough;
But the horse, sinking with the pain, fell dead,
And burst, while cold on earth lay head and hoof.
Morgante said, "Get up, thou sulky cur!"
And still continued pricking with the spur.

LXIX.

But finally he thought fit to dismount,
And said, "I am as light as any feather,
And he has burst; — to this what say you, Count?"
Orlando answered, "Like a ship's mast rather
You seem to me, and with the truck for front:
Let him go! Fortune wills that we together
Should march, but you on foot Morgante still."
To which the Giant answered, "So I will.

LXX.

“When there shall be occasion, you will see
How I approve my courage in the fight.”
Orlando said, “I really think you’ll be,
If it should prove God’s will, a goodly knight;
Nor will you napping there discover me.
But never mind your horse, though out of sight
‘Twere best to carry him into some wood,
If but the means or way I understood.”

LXXI.

The Giant said, “Then carry him I will,
Since that to carry me he was so slack —
To render, as the gods do, good for ill;
But lend a hand to place him on my back.”
Orlando answered, “If my counsel still
May weigh, Morgante, do not undertake
To lift or carry this dead courser, who,
As you have done to him, will do to you.

LXXII.

“Take care he don’t revenge himself, though dead,
As Nessus did of old beyond all cure.
I don’t know if the fact you’ve heard or read;
But he will make you burst, you may be sure.”
“But help him on my back,” Morgante said,
“And you shall see what weight I can endure.
In place, my gentle Roland, of this palfrey,
With all the bells, I’d carry yonder belfry.”

LXXIII.

The Abbot said, “The steeple may do well,
But for the bells, you’ve broken them, I wot.”
Morgante answered, “Let them pay in Hell
The penalty who lie dead in yon grot;”
And hoisting up the horse from where he fell,

He said, "Now look if I the gout have got,
Orlando, in the legs, — or if I have force;" —
And then he made two gambols with the horse.

LXXIV.

Morgante was like any mountain framed;
So if he did this 'tis no prodigy;
But secretly himself Orlando blamed,
Because he was one of his family;
And fearing that he might be hurt or maimed,
Once more he bade him lay his burden by:
"Put down, nor bear him further the desert in."
Morgante said, "I'll carry him for certain."

LXXV.

He did; and stowed him in some nook away,
And to the abbey then returned with speed.
Orlando said, "Why longer do we stay?
Morgante, here is nought to do indeed."
The Abbot by the hand he took one day,
And said, with great respect, he had agreed
To leave his reverence; but for this decision
He wished to have his pardon and permission.

LXXVI.

The honours they continued to receive
Perhaps exceeded what his merits claimed:
He said, "I mean, and quickly, to retrieve
The lost days of time past, which may be blamed;
Some days ago I should have asked your leave,
Kind father, but I really was ashamed,
And know not how to show my sentiment,
So much I see you with our stay content.

LXXVII.

"But in my heart I bear through every clime

The Abbot, abbey, and this solitude —
So much I love you in so short a time;
For me, from Heaven reward you with all good
The God so true, the eternal Lord sublime!
Whose kingdom at the last hath open stood.
Meantime we stand expectant of your blessing.
And recommend us to your prayers with pressing.”

LXXVIII.

Now when the Abbot Count Orlando heard,
His heart grew soft with inner tenderness,
Such fervour in his bosom bred each word;
And, “Cavalier,” he said, “if I have less
Courteous and kind to your great worth appeared,
Than fits me for such gentle blood to express,
I know I have done too little in this case;
But blame our ignorance, and this poor place.

LXXIX.

“We can indeed but honour you with masses,
And sermons, thanksgivings, and pater-nosters,
Hot suppers, dinners (fitting other places
In verity much rather than the cloisters);
But such a love for you my heart embraces,
For thousand virtues which your bosom fosters,
That wheresoe’er you go I too shall be,
And, on the other part, you rest with me.

LXXX.

“This may involve a seeming contradiction;
But you I know are sage, and feel, and taste,
And understand my speech with full conviction.
For your just pious deeds may you be graced
With the Lord’s great reward and benediction,
By whom you were directed to this waste:
To His high mercy is our freedom due,
For which we render thanks to Him and you.

LXXXI.

“You saved at once our life and soul: such fear
The Giants caused us, that the way was lost
By which we could pursue a fit career
In search of Jesus and the saintly Host;
And your departure breeds such sorrow here,
That comfortless we all are to our cost;
But months and years you would not stay in sloth,
Nor are you formed to wear our sober cloth,

LXXXII.

“But to bear arms, and wield the lance; indeed,
With these as much is done as with this cowl;
In proof of which the Scripture you may read,
This Giant up to Heaven may bear his soul
By your compassion: now in peace proceed.
Your state and name I seek not to unroll;
But, if I’m asked, this answer shall be given,
That here an angel was sent down from Heaven.

LXXXIII.

“If you want armour or aught else, go in,
Look o’er the wardrobe, and take what you choose,
And cover with it o’er this Giant’s skin.”
Orlando answered, “If there should lie loose
Some armour, ere our journey we begin,
Which might be turned to my companion’s use,
The gift would be acceptable to me.”
The Abbot said to him, “Come in and see.”

LXXXIV.

And in a certain closet, where the wall
Was covered with old armour like a crust,
The Abbot said to them, “I give you all.”
Morgante rummaged piecemeal from the dust

The whole, which, save one cuirass, was too small,
And that too had the mail inlaid with rust.
They wondered how it fitted him exactly,
Which ne'er had suited others so compactly.

LXXXV.

'Twas an immeasurable Giant's, who
By the great Milo of Agrante fell
Before the abbey many years ago.
The story on the wall was figured well;
In the last moment of the abbey's foe,
Who long had waged a war implacable:
Precisely as the war occurred they drew him,
And there was Milo as he overthrew him.

LXXXVI.

Seeing this history, Count Orlando said
In his own heart, "O God who in the sky
Know'st all things! how was Milo hither led?
Who caused the Giant in this place to die?"
And certain letters, weeping, then he read,
So that he could not keep his visage dry, —
As I will tell in the ensuing story:
From evil keep you the high King of Glory!

[Note to Stanza v. Lines 1, 2. — In an Edition of the *Morgante Maggiore* issued at Florence by G. Pulci, in 1900, line 2 of stanza v. runs thus —

"Com' egli ebbe un Ormanno e 'l suo Turpino."

The allusion to "Ormanno," who has been identified with a mythical chronicler, "Urmano from Paris" (see Rajna's *Ricerche sui Reali di Francia*, 1872, p. 51), and the appeal to the authority of Leonardo Aretino, must not be taken *au pied de la lettre*. At the same time, the opinion attributed to Leonardo is in accordance with contemporary sentiment and phraseology. Compare "Horum res gestas si qui auctores digni celebrassent, quam magnæ, quam admirabiles, quam veteribus illis similes viderentur." — B. Accolti Aretini (*ob.* 1466) *Dialogus de Præstantiâ Virorum sui Ævi*. P. Villani, *Liber de Florentiæ Famosis Civibus*, 1847, p. 112. From information kindly supplied by Professor V. Rossi, of the

University of Pavia.]

FRANCESCA OF RIMINI INTRODUCTION

The MS. of “a *literal* translation, word for word (versed like the original), of the episode of Francesca of Rimini” (Letter March 23, 1820, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 421), was sent to Murray from Ravenna, March 20, 1820 (*ibid.*, p. 419), a week after Byron had forwarded the MS. of the *Prophecy of Dante*. Presumably the translation had been made in the interval by way of illustrating and justifying the unfamiliar metre of the “Dante Imitation.” In the letter which accompanied the translation he writes, “Enclosed you will find, *line for line*, in *third rhyme* (*terza rima*,) of which your British Blackguard reader as yet understands nothing, Fanny of Rimini. You know that she was born here, and married, and slain, from Cary, Boyd, and such people already. I have done it into *cramp* English, line for line, and rhyme for rhyme, to try the possibility. You had best append it to the poems already sent by last three posts.”

In the matter of the “British Blackguard,” that is, the general reader, Byron spoke by the card. Hayley’s excellent translation of the three first cantos of the *Inferno*, which must have been known to a previous generation, was forgotten, and with earlier experiments in *terza rima*, by Chaucer and the sixteenth and seventeenth century poets, neither Byron nor the British public had any familiar or definite acquaintance. But of late some interest had been awakened or revived in Dante and the *Divina Commedia*.

Cary’s translation — begun in 1796, but not published as a whole till 1814 — had met with a sudden and remarkable success. “The work, which had been published four years, but had remained in utter obscurity, was at once eagerly sought after. About a thousand copies of the first edition, that remained on hand, were immediately disposed of; in less than three months a new edition was called for.” Moreover, the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh Reviews* were loud in its praises (*Memoir of H. F. Cary*, 1847, ii. 28). Byron seems to have thought that a fragment of the *Inferno*, “versed like the original,” would challenge comparison with Cary’s rendering in blank verse, and would lend an additional interest to the “Pulci Translations, and the Dante Imitation.” *Dûs aliter visum*, and Byron’s translation of the episode of *Francesca of Rimini*, remained unpublished till it appeared in the pages of *The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, 1830, ii. 309-311. (For separate translations of the episode, see *Stories of the Italian Poets*, by Leigh Hunt, 1846, i. 393-395, and for a rendering in blank verse by Lord [John] Russell, see *Literary Souvenir*, 1830, pp. 285-287.)

FRANCESCA OF RIMINI FROM THE *INFERNO* OF DANTE.

CANTO THE FIFTH.

“The Land where I was born sits by the Seas
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.
Love, who to none beloved to love again
Remits, seized me with wish to please, so strong,
That, as thou see'st, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along, 10
But Caina waits for him our life who ended:”
These were the accents uttered by her tongue. —
Since I first listened to these Souls offended,
I bowed my visage, and so kept it till —
‘What think'st thou?’ said the bard; when I unbended,
And recommenced: ‘Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies,
Led these their evil fortune to fulfill!’
And then I turned unto their side my eyes,
And said, ‘Francesca, thy sad destinies 20
Have made me sorrow till the tears arise.
But tell me, in the Season of sweet sighs,
By what and how thy Love to Passion rose,
So as his dim desires to recognize?’
Then she to me: ‘The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days
In misery, and that thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our Passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such Sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says. 30
We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancilot, how Love enchained him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspectingly.
But oft our eyes met, and our Cheeks in hue

All o'er discoloured by that reading were;
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;
When we read the long-sighed-for smile of her,
To be thus kissed by such devoted lover,
He, who from me can be divided ne'er,
Kissed my mouth, trembling in the act all over: 40
Accurséd was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf we did uncover.'
While thus one Spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with Pity's thralls
I swooned, as if by Death I had been smote,
And fell down even as a dead body falls."
March 20, 1820.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.
DANTE, L'INFERNO.

CANTO QUINTO.

'Siede la terra dove nata fui
Sulla marina, dove il Po discende
Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.
Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,
Prese costui della bella persona
Che mi fu tolta, e il modo ancor m' offende.
Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona,
Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
Che, come vedi, ancor non mi abbandona.
Amor condusse noi ad una morte: 10
Caino attende chi vita ci spense.'
Queste parole da lor ci fur porte.
Da che io intesi quelle anime offense
Chinai 'l viso, e tanto il tenni basso,
Finchè il Poeta mi disse: 'Che pense?'
Quando risposi, cominciai: 'O lasso!
Quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio
Menò costoro al doloroso passo!'
Poi mi rivolsi a loro, e parla' io,
E cominciai: 'Francesca, i tuoi martiri 20

A lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.
Ma dimmi: al tempo de' dolci sospiri
A che e come concedette Amore,
Che conoscesti i dubbiosi desiri?
Ed ella a me: 'Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria; e ciò sa il tuo dottore.
Ma se a conoscer la prima radice
Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto
Farò come colui che piange e dice. 30
Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancelotto, come Amor lo strinse:
Soli eravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso:
Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante: 40
Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse —
Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante
Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse,
L'altro piangeva sì che di pietade
Io venni meno cos com' io morisse;
E caddi, come corpo morto cade.

DRAMAS



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'Lord Byron in Albanian dress' by Thomas Phillips, 1813

MANFRED

A DRAMATIC POEM.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

[*Hamlet*, Act i. Scene 5, Lines 166, 167.]

INTRODUCTION TO *MANFRED*

Byron passed four months and three weeks in Switzerland. He arrived at the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Sécheron, on Saturday, May 25, and he left the Campagne Diodati for Italy on Sunday, October 6, 1816. Within that period he wrote the greater part of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold*, he began and finished the *Prisoner of Chillon*, its seven attendant poems, and the *Monody* on the death of Sheridan, and he began *Manfred*.

A note to the "Incantation" (*Manfred*, act i. sc. 1, lines 192-261), which was begun in July and published together with the *Prisoner of Chillon*, December 5, 1816, records the existence of "an unfinished Witch Drama" (First Edition, p. 46); but, apart from this, the first announcement of his new work is contained in a letter to Murray, dated Venice, February 15, 1817 (*Letters*, 1900, iv. 52). "I forgot," he writes, "to mention to you that a kind of Poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama ... begun last summer in Switzerland, is finished; it is in three acts; but of a very wild, metaphysical, and inexplicable kind." The letter is imperfect, but some pages of "extracts" which were forwarded under the same cover have been preserved. Ten days later (February 25) he reverts to these "extracts," and on February 28 he despatches a fair copy of the first act. On March 9 he remits the third and final act of his "dramatic poem" (a definition adopted as a second title), but under reserve as to publication, and with a strict injunction to Murray "to submit it to Mr. G[ifford] and to whomsoever you please besides." It is certain that this third act was written at Venice (Letter to Murray, April 14), and it may be taken for granted that the composition of the first two acts belongs to the tour in the Bernese Alps (September 17-29), or to the last days at Diodati (September 30 to October 5, 1816), when the *estro* (see Letter to Murray, January 2, 1817) was upon him, when his "Passions slept," and, in spite of all that had come and gone and could not go, his spirit was uplifted by the "majesty and the power and the glory" of Nature.

Gifford's verdict on the first act was that it was "wonderfully poetical" and "merited publication," but, as Byron had foreseen, he did not "by any means like" the third act. It was, as its author admitted (Letter to Murray, April 14) "damnable bad," and savoured of the "dregs of a fever," for which the Carnival (Letter to Murray, February 28) or, more probably, the climate and insanitary "palaces" of Venice were responsible. Some weeks went by before there was either leisure or inclination for the task of correction, but at Rome the *estro* returned in full force, and on May 5 a "new third act of *Manfred* — the greater

part rewritten,” was sent by post to England. *Manfred, a Dramatic Poem*, was published June 16, 1817.

Manfred was criticized by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* (No. lvi., August, 1817, vol. 28, pp. 418-431), and by John Wilson in the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* (afterwards *Blackwood's, etc.*) (June, 1817, i. 289-295). Jeffrey, as Byron remarked (Letter to Murray, October 12, 1817), was “very kind,” and Wilson, whose article “had all the air of being a poet’s,” was eloquent in its praises. But there was a fly in the ointment. “A suggestion” had been thrown out, “in an ingenious paper in a late number of the *Edinburgh Magazine* [signed H. M. (John Wilson), July, 1817], that the general conception of this piece, and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution, have been borrowed from the *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* of Marlow (*sic*);” and from this contention Jeffrey dissented. A note to a second paper on Marlowe’s *Edward II.* (*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, October, 1817) offered explanations, and echoed Jeffrey’s exaltation of *Manfred* above *Dr. Faustus*; but the mischief had been done. Byron was evidently perplexed and distressed, not by the papers in *Blackwood*, which he never saw, but by Jeffrey’s remonstrance in his favour; and in the letter of October 12 he is at pains to trace the “evolution” of *Manfred*. “I never read,” he writes, “and do not know that I ever saw the *Faustus* of Marlow;” and, again, “As to the *Faustus* of Marlow, I never read, never saw, nor heard of it.” “I heard Mr. Lewis translate verbally some scenes of Goethe’s *Faust* ... last summer” (see, too, Letter to Rogers, April 4, 1817), which is all I know of the history of that magical personage; and as to the germs of *Manfred*, they may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh ... when I went over first the Dent, etc., ... shortly before I left Switzerland. I have the whole scene of *Manfred* before me.”

Again, three years later he writes (*à propos* of Goethe’s review of *Manfred*, which first appeared in print in his paper *Kunst und Alterthum*, June, 1820, and is republished in Goethe’s *Sämmtliche Werke* ... Stuttgart, 1874, xiii. 640-642; see *Letters*, 1901, v. Appendix II. “Goethe and Byron,” pp. 503-521): “His *Faust* I never read, for I don’t know German; but Matthew Monk Lewis (*sic*), in 1816, at Coligny, translated most of it to me *viva voce*, and I was naturally much struck with it; but it was the *Staubach* (*sic*) and the *Jungfrau*, and something else, much more than *Faustus*, that made me write *Manfred*. The first scene, however, and that of *Faustus* are very similar” (Letter to Murray, June 7, 1820, *Letters*, 1901, v. 36). Medwin (*Conversations, etc.*, pp. 210, 211), who of course had not seen the letters to Murray of 1817 or 1820, puts much the same story into Byron’s mouth.

Now, with regard to the originality of *Manfred*, it may be taken for granted that Byron knew nothing about the “Faust-legend,” or the “Faust-cycle.” He solemnly denies that he had ever read Marlowe’s *Faustus*, or the selections from the play in Lamb’s *Specimens, etc.* (see Medwin’s *Conversations, etc.*, pp. 208, 209, and a hitherto unpublished Preface to *Werner*, vol. v.), and it is highly improbable that he knew anything of Calderon’s *El Mágico Prodigioso*, which Shelley translated in 1822, or of “the beggarly elements” of the legend in Hroswitha’s *Lapsus et Conversio Theophrasti Vice-domini*. But Byron’s *Manfred* is “in the succession” of scholars who have reached the limits of natural and legitimate science, and who essay the supernatural in order to penetrate and comprehend the “hidden things of darkness.” A predecessor, if not a progenitor, he must have had, and there can be no doubt whatever that the primary conception of the character, though by no means the inspiration of the poem, is to be traced to the “Monk’s” oral rendering of Goethe’s *Faust*, which he gave in return for his “bread and salt” at Diodati. Neither Jeffrey nor Wilson mentioned *Faust*, but the writer of the notice in the *Critical Review* (June, 1817, series v. vol. 5, pp. 622-629) avowed that “this scene (the first) is a gross plagiarism from a great poet whom Lord Byron has imitated on former occasions without comprehending. Goethe’s *Faust* begins in the same way;” and Goethe himself, in a letter to his friend Knebel, October, 1817, and again in his review in *Kunst und Alterthum*, June, 1820, emphasizes whilst he justifies and applauds the use which Byron had made of his work. “This singular intellectual poet has taken my *Faustus* to himself, and extracted from it the strangest nourishment for his hypochondriac humour. He has made use of the impelling principles in his own way, for his own purposes, so that no one of them remains the same; and it is particularly on this account that I cannot enough admire his genius.” Afterwards (see record of a conversation with Herman Fürst von Pückler, September 14, 1826, *Letters*, v. 511) Goethe somewhat modified his views, but even then it interested him to trace the unconscious transformation which Byron had made of his Mephistopheles. It is, perhaps, enough to say that the link between *Manfred* and *Faust* is formal, not spiritual. The problem which Goethe raised but did not solve, his counterfeit presentment of the eternal issue between soul and sense, between innocence and renunciation on the one side, and achievement and satisfaction on the other, was not the struggle which Byron experienced in himself or desired to depict in his mysterious hierarch of the powers of nature. “It was the *Staubach* and the *Jungfrau*, and something else,” not the influence of *Faust* on a receptive listener, which called up a new theme, and struck out a fresh well-spring of the imagination. The *motif* of *Manfred* is remorse — eternal

suffering for inexpressible crime. The sufferer is for ever buoyed up with the hope that there is relief somewhere in nature, beyond nature, above nature, and experience replies with an everlasting No! As the sunshine enhances sorrow, so Nature, by the force of contrast, reveals and enhances guilt. *Manfred* is no echo of another's questioning, no expression of a general world-weariness on the part of the time-spirit, but a personal outcry: "De profundis clamavi!"

No doubt, apart from this main purport and essence of his song, his sensitive spirit responded to other and fainter influences. There are "points of resemblance," as Jeffrey pointed out and Byron proudly admitted, between *Manfred* and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus. Plainly, here and there, "the tone and pitch of the composition," and "the victim in the more solemn parts," are Æschylean. Again, with regard to the supernatural, there was the stimulus of the conversation of the Shelleys and of Lewis, brimful of magic and ghost-lore; and lastly, there was the glamour of *Christabel*, "the wild and original" poem which had taken Byron captive, and was often in his thoughts and on his lips. It was no wonder that the fuel kindled and burst into a flame.

For the text of Goethe's review of *Manfred*, and Hoppner's translation of that review, and an account of Goethe's relation with Byron, drawn from Professor A. Brandl's *Goethes Verhältniss zu Byron* (*Goethe-Jahrbuch*, Zwanzigster Band, 1899), and other sources, see *Letters*, 1901, v. Appendix II. pp. 503-521.

For contemporary and other notices of *Manfred*, in addition to those already mentioned, see *Eclectic Review*, July, 1817, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 62-66; *Gentleman's Magazine*, July, 1817, vol. 87, pp. 45-47; *Monthly Review*, July, 1817, Enlarged Series, vol. 83, pp. 300-307; *Dublin University Magazine*, April, 1874, vol. 83, pp. 502-508, etc.



'Manfred on the Jungfrau' by John Martin “, 1837

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Manfred.
Chamois Hunter.
Abbot of St. Maurice.
Manuel.
Herman.

Witch of the Alps.
Arimanes.
Nemesis.
The Destinies.
Spirits, etc.

The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps — partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.

MANFRED

ACT I Scene 1. — Manfred *alone*. — *Scene, a Gothic Gallery*. — *Time, Midnight*.

Man. The lamp must be replenished, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch:
My slumbers — if I slumber — are not sleep,
But a continuance, of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But Grief should be the Instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is Knowledge: they who know the most 10
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of Wonder, and the wisdom of the World,
I have essayed, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself —
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men —
But this availed not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me — 20
But this availed not: — Good — or evil — life —
Powers, passions — all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task. —
Mysterious Agency!
Ye Spirits of the unbounded Universe!
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light — 30
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
In subtler essence — ye, to whom the tops

Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And Earth's and Ocean's caves familiar things —
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you — Rise! Appear!
[*A pause.*

They come not yet. — Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you — by this sign,
Which makes you tremble — by the claims of him
Who is undying, — Rise! Appear! — -- Appear! 40
[*A pause.*

If it be so. — Spirits of Earth and Air,
Ye shall not so elude me! By a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star condemned,
The burning wreck of a demolished world,
A wandering hell in the eternal Space;
By the strong curse which is upon my Soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will. — Appear!

[*A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery:
it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.*]

First Spirit.

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed, 50
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of Twilight builds,
And the Summer's sunset gilds
With the azure and vermillion,
Which is mixed for my pavilion;
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden,
To thine adjuration bowed:
Mortal — be thy wish avowed!

Voice of the Second Spirit.

Mont Blanc is the Monarch of mountains; 60

They crowned him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a Diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass, 70
Or with its ice delay.
I am the Spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his caverned base —
And what with me would'st *Thou*?

Voice of the Third Spirit.

In the blue depth of the waters,
Where the wave hath no strife,
Where the Wind is a stranger,
And the Sea-snake hath life,
Where the Mermaid is decking 80
Her green hair with shells,
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells;
O'er my calm Hall of Coral
The deep Echo rolled —
To the Spirit of Ocean
Thy wishes unfold!

Fourth Spirit.

Where the slumbering Earthquake
Lies pillowed on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen 90
Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,

As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birthplace,
Thy bidding to bide —
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!

Fifth Spirit.

I am the Rider of the wind, ¹⁰⁰
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sailed well — and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

Sixth Spirit.

My dwelling is the shadow of the Night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

Seventh Spirit.

The Star which rules thy destiny no ¹¹⁰
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a World as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round Sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosomed not a lovelier star.
The Hour arrived — and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless Comet, and a curse,
The menace of the Universe;
Still rolling on with innate force, ¹²⁰
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!

And Thou! beneath its influence born —
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn —
Forced by a Power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak Spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee — 130
What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?

The Seven Spirits.

Earth — ocean — air — night — mountains — winds — thy Star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their Spirits are —
What would'st thou with us, Son of mortals — say?

Man. Forgetfulness — — *First Spirit.* Of what — of whom — and why?

Man. Of that which is within me; read it there —
Ye know it — and I cannot utter it.

Spirit. We can but give thee that which we possess:
Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power 140
O'er earth — the whole, or portion — or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators, — each and all,
These shall be thine.

Man. Oblivion — self-oblivion!
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely — what I ask?

Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our skill;
But — thou may'st die.

Man. Will Death bestow it on me?

Spirit. We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal; and to us the past 150

Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?

Man. Ye mock me — but the Power which brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
The Mind — the Spirit — the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though cooped in clay!
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spirit. We answer — as we answered; our reply
Is even in thine own words.

Man. Why say ye so? 160

Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have called ye from your realms in vain;
Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit. Say —
What we possess we offer; it is thine:
Bethink ere thou dismiss us; ask again;
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days — *Man.* Accurséd! what
have I to do with days?
They are too long already. — Hence — begone! 170

Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;
Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

Man. No, none: yet stay — one moment, ere we part,
I would behold ye face to face. I hear
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As Music on the waters; and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large Star;
But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,

Or one — or all — in your accustomed forms. 180

Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements
Of which we are the mind and principle:
But choose a form — in that we will appear.

Man. I have no choice; there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting — Come!

Seventh Spirit (appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure).
Behold!

Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee, 190
And we again will be — —
[*The figure vanishes.*
My heart is crushed!
[*Manfred falls senseless.*

(*A voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.*) When the Moon is on the
wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine, 200
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy Spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a Power to thee unknown,

Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell ²¹⁰
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel ²²⁰
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a Spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun, ²³⁰
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known, ²⁴⁰
I found the strongest was thine own.

By the cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel ²⁵⁰
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together ²⁶⁰
Hath the word been passed — now wither!

Scene II. — *The Mountain of the Jungfrau.* — *Time, Morning.* — *Manfred alone upon the cliffs.*

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I recked of tortured me
I lean no more on superhuman aid;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulfed in darkness,
It is not of my search. — My Mother Earth!
And thou fresh-breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright Eye of the Universe, ¹⁰
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight — thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath

Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever — wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse — yet I do not plunge; 20
I see the peril — yet do not recede;
And my brain reels — and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live, —
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of Spirit, and to be
My own Soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself —
The last infirmity of evil. Aye,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister, 30
[An Eagle passes.

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me — I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision. — Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit 40
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our Mortality predominates,
And men are — what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,
[The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.
The natural music of the mountain reed —
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable — pipes in the liberal air, 50
Mixed with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;

My soul would drink those echoes. Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment — born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a Chamois Hunter.

Chamois Hunter. Even so
This way the Chamois leapt: her nimble feet
Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail. — What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reached 60
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance:
I will approach him nearer.

Man. (not perceiving the other). To be thus —
Grey-haired with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a curséd root,
Which but supplies a feeling to Decay —
And to be thus, eternally but thus, 70
Having been otherwise! Now furrowed o'er
With wrinkles, ploughed by moments, not by years
And hours, all tortured into ages — hours
Which I outlive! — Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye Avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut 80
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance

To lose at once his way and life together.

Man. The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heaped with the damned like pebbles. — I am giddy.

C. Hun. I must approach him cautiously; if near, ⁹⁰
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

Man. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with Destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crushed the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel — thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg —
Why stood I not beneath it?

C. Hun. Friend! have a care, ¹⁰⁰
Your next step may be fatal! — for the love
Of Him who made you, stand not on that brink!

Man. (*not hearing him*).
Such would have been for me a fitting tomb;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime — as thus — thus they shall be —
In this one plunge. — Farewell, ye opening Heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully —
You were not meant for me — Earth! take these atoms!

[*As Manfred is in act to spring from the cliff, the Chamois Hunter seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.*]

C. Hun. Hold, madman! — though aweary of thy life, ¹¹⁰

Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood:
Away with me — — I will not quit my hold.

Man. I am most sick at heart — nay, grasp me not —
I am all feebleness — the mountains whirl
Spinning around me — — I grow blind — — What art thou?

C. Hun. I'll answer that anon. — Away with me — —
The clouds grow thicker — — there — now lean on me —
Place your foot here — here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub — now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle — softly — well — 120
The Chalet will be gained within an hour:
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath washed since winter. — Come, 'tis bravely done —
You should have been a hunter. — Follow me.

[As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.]

ACT II

Scene I. — *A Cottage among the Bernese Alps.* — Manfred *and the* Chamois Hunter.

C. Hun. No — no — yet pause — thou must not yet go forth;
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide —
But whither?

Man. It imports not: I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.

C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage —
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys — which of these
May call thee lord? I only know their portals; ¹⁰
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their doors,
I know from childhood — which of these is thine?

Man. No matter.

C. Hun. Well, Sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thawed my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine — Come, pledge me fairly! ²⁰

Man. Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never — never sink in the earth?

C. Hun. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

Man. I say 'tis blood — my blood! the pure warm stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from Heaven,
Where thou art not — and I shall never be. 30

C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet —
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience — —

Man. Patience — and patience! Hence — that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey!
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine, —
I am not of thine order.

C. Hun. Thanks to Heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill, 40
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

Man. Do I not bear it? — Look on me — I live.

C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Man. I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages — ages —
Space and eternity — and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death — and still unslaked!

C. Hun. Why on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far. 50

Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,

Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

C. Hun. Alas! he's mad — but yet I must not leave him.

Man. I would I were — for then the things I see ⁶⁰
Would be but a distempered dream.

C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

Man. Myself, and thee — a peasant of the Alps —
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf, ⁷⁰
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph!
This do I see — and then I look within —
It matters not — my Soul was scorched already!

C. Hun. And would'st thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

Man. No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange
My lot with living being: I can bear —
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear —
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.

C. Hun. And with this —
This cautious feeling for another's pain, ⁸⁰
Canst thou be black with evil? — say not so.
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked revenge
Upon his enemies?

Man. Oh! no, no, no!

My injuries came down on those who loved me —
On those whom I best loved: I never quelled
An enemy, save in my just defence —
But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun. Heaven give thee rest!
And Penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not,
But can endure thy pity. I depart — 90
'Tis time — farewell! — Here's gold, and thanks for thee —
No words — it is thy due. — Follow me not —
I know my path — the mountain peril's past:
And once again I charge thee, follow not!
[*Exit Manfred.*]

Scene II. — *A lower Valley in the Alps. — A Cataract.*

Enter Manfred.

It is not noon — the Sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude, 10
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters. — I will call her.

[*Manfred takes some of the water into the palm of his hand and flings it into the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the Witch of the Alps rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.*]

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of Earth's least mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth, —
Carnationed like a sleeping Infant's cheek,
Rocked by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which Summer's twilight leaves 20
Upon the lofty Glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her Heaven, —
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the Sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glassed serenity of Soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them — if that he 30
Avail him of his spells — to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch. Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the Powers which give thee power!
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this — what would'st thou with me?

Man. To look upon thy beauty — nothing further.
The face of the earth hath maddened me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce 40
To the abodes of those who govern her —
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.

Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?

Man. A boon; —

But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

Witch. I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

Man. Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards 50
My Spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys — my griefs — my passions — and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the Creatures of Clay that girded me
Was there but One who — but of her anon.
I said with men, and with the thoughts of men, 60
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the wilderness, — to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build — nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new-breaking wave
Of river-stream, or Ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving moon, 70
The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look, list'ning, on the scattered leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one, —
Hating to be so, — crossed me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of Death, 80
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From withered bones, and skulls, and heaped up dust

Conclusions most forbidden. Then I passed —
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old-time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled Infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity, ⁹⁰
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain-dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee; — and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until — —

Witch. Proceed.

Man. Oh! I but thus prolonged my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief —
But — to my task. I have not named to thee ¹⁰⁰
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seemed not such to me —
Yet there was One — —

Witch. Spare not thyself — proceed.

Man. She was like me in lineaments — her eyes —
Her hair — her features — all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But softened all, and tempered into beauty:
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind ¹¹⁰
To comprehend the Universe: nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears — which I had not;
And tenderness — but that I had for her;
Humility — and that I never had.

Her faults were mine — her virtues were her own —
I loved her, and destroyed her!

Witch. With thy hand?

Man. Not with my hand, but heart, which broke her heart;
It gazed on mine, and withered. I have shed
Blood, but not hers — and yet her blood was shed; ¹²⁰
I saw — and could not stanch it.

Witch. And for this —
A being of the race thou dost despise —
The order, which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, — thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality — — Away!

Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour —
But words are breath — look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings — Come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more, ¹³⁰
But peopled with the Furies; — I have gnashed
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset; — I have prayed
For madness as a blessing — 'tis denied me.
I have affronted Death — but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless; the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless Demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break.
In Fantasy, Imagination, all ¹⁴⁰
The affluence of my soul — which one day was
A Croesus in creation — I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dashed me back
Into the gulf of my unfathomed thought.
I plunged amidst Mankind — Forgetfulness
I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found —
And that I have to learn — my Sciences,
My long pursued and superhuman art,

Is mortal here: I dwell in my despair —
And live — and live for ever.

Witch. It may be ¹⁵⁰
That I can aid thee.

Man. To do this thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Do so — in any shape — in any hour —
With any torture — so it be the last.

Witch. That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

Man. I will not swear — Obey! and whom? the Spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me — Never!

Witch. Is this all? ¹⁶⁰
Hast thou no gentler answer? — Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.

Man. I have said it.

Witch. Enough! I may retire then — say!

Man. Retire!
[*The Witch disappears.*]

Man. (alone). We are the fools of Time and Terror: Days
Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke —
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness — ¹⁷⁰
In all the days of past and future — for
In life there is no present — we can number

How few — how less than few — wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science — I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing: if they answer not — 180
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny — he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardoned — though he called in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance — she replied 190
In words of dubious import, but fulfilled.
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful,
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now? — a sufferer for my sins —
A thing I dare not think upon — or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain —
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze 200
On spirit, good or evil — now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears. — The night approaches.
[Exit.

Scene III. — *The summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.*

Enter First Destiny.

The Moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;

And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces: o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment — a dead Whirlpool's image:
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake — where the clouds 10
Pause to repose themselves in passing by —
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils;
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
To the Hall of Arimanes — for to-night
Is our great festival — 'tis strange they come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurled down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;
I broke through his slumbers, 20
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers —
He's Tyrant again!
With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
With a Nation's destruction — his flight and despair!

Second Voice, without.

The Ship sailed on, the Ship sailed fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair, 30
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea —
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

First Destiny, *answering*.

The City lies sleeping;
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping:
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o'er it —
Thousands lie lowly;
Tens of thousands shall perish; ⁴⁰
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelope a nation;
The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation; ⁵⁰
This work of a night —
This wreck of a realm — this deed of my doing —
For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing!

Enter the Second and Third Destinies.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves;
We only give to take again
The Spirits of our slaves!

First Des. Welcome! — Where's Nemesis?

Second Des. At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.

Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter Nemesis.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been? 60
My Sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

Nem. I was detained repairing shattered thrones —
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties —
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh — for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance — and to speak 70
Of Freedom, the forbidden fruit. — Away!
We have outstayed the hour — mount we our clouds!
[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV. — *The Hall of Arimanes.* — *Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.*

Hymn of the Spirits.

Hail to our Master! — Prince of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters — in his hand
The sceptre of the Elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high command!
He breatheth — and a tempest shakes the sea;
He speaketh — and the clouds reply in thunder;
He gazeth — from his glance the sunbeams flee;
He moveth — Earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the Volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence: his path 10
The comets herald through the crackling skies;
And Planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
With all its Infinite of agonies —
And his the Spirit of whatever is!

Enter the Destinies and Nemesis.

First Des. Glory to Arimanes! on the earth
His power increaseth — both my sisters did
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

Second Des. Glory to Arimanes! we who bow 20
The necks of men, bow down before his throne!

Third Des. Glory to Arimanes! we await
His nod!

Nem. Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant. Thy late commands
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

Enter Manfred.

A Spirit. What is here?
A mortal! — Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
Bow down and worship!

Second Spirit. I do know the man — 30
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!

Third Spirit. Bow down and worship, slave! — What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign? — Tremble, and obey!

All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemnéd clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

Man. I know it;
And yet ye see I kneel not.

Fourth Spirit. 'Twill be taught thee.

Man. 'Tis taught already; — many a night on the earth,

On the bare ground, have I bowed down my face,
And strewed my head with ashes; I have known
The fulness of humiliation — for ⁴⁰
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.

Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his Glory? — Crouch! I say.

Man. Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him,
The overruling Infinite — the Maker
Who made him not for worship — let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.

The Spirits. Crush the worm!
Tear him in pieces! —

First Des. Hence! Avaunt! — he's mine. ⁵⁰
Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote: his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature — like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know — ⁶⁰
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all — the passions, attributes
Of Earth and Heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart; and in their consequence
Made him a thing — which — I who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine —

And thine it may be; be it so, or not — 70
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his — or power upon his soul.

Nem. What doth he here then?

First Des. Let *him* answer that.

Man. Ye know what I have known; and without power
I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond — I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

Nem. What would'st thou?

Man. *Thou* canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead — my question is for them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch 80
The wishes of this mortal?

Ari. Yea.

Nem. Whom wouldst thou
Uncharnel?

Man. One without a tomb — call up
Astarte.

Nemesis.

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth, 90
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worest
Redeem from the worm.
Appear! — Appear! — Appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!
[*The Phantom of Astarte rises and stands in the midst.*

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;
But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic — like the unnatural red 100
Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same — Astarte! — No,
I cannot speak to her — but bid her speak —
Forgive me or condemn me.

Nemesis.

By the Power which hath broken
The grave which enthralled thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken.
Or those who have called thee!

Man. She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answered. 110

Nem. My power extends no further. Prince of Air!
It rests with thee alone — command her voice.

Ari. Spirit — obey this sceptre!

Nem. Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.

Man. Hear me, hear me —
Astarte! my belovéd! speak to me:
I have so much endured — so much endure —

Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me ¹²⁰
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other — though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not — that I do bear
This punishment for both — that thou wilt be
One of the blesséd — and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence — in a life
Which makes me shrink from Immortality —
A future like the past. I cannot rest. ¹³⁰
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art, and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music — Speak to me!
For I have called on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me — many things answered me —
Spirits and men — but thou wert silent all. ¹⁴⁰
Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness — Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around — they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.
Speak to me! though it be in wrath; — but say —
I reckon not what — but let me hear thee once —
This once — once more!

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!

Man. Say on, say on —
I live but in the sound — it is thy voice! ¹⁵⁰

Phan. Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

Man. Yet one word more — am I forgiven?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. Say, shall we meet again?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. One word for mercy! Say thou lovest me.

Phan. Manfred!

[*The Spirit of Astarte disappears.*]

Nem. She's gone, and will not be recalled:
Her words will be fulfilled. Return to the earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed — This is to be a mortal,
And seek the things beyond mortality.

Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
His torture tributary to his will. ¹⁶⁰
Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful Spirit.

Nem. Hast thou further question
Of our great Sovereign, or his worshippers?

Man. None.

Nem. Then for a time farewell.

Man. We meet then! Where? On the earth? —
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!
[*Exit Manfred.*]

(*Scene closes.*)

ACT III

Scene I. — *A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.*

Manfred *and* Herman.

Man. What is the hour?

Her. It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her. All, my Lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well:
Thou mayst retire. [*Exit Herman.*]

Man. (alone). There is a calm upon me —
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know Philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest, ¹⁰
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought "Kalon," found,
And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once:
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter Herman.

Her. My Lord, the Abbot of St. Maurice craves

To greet your presence.

Enter the Abbot of St. Maurice.

Abbot. Peace be with Count Manfred! 20

Man. Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count! —
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Man. Herman, retire. — What would my reverend guest?

Abbot. Thus, without prelude: — Age and zeal — my office —
And good intent must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad, 30
And busy with thy name — a noble name
For centuries: may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired!

Man. Proceed, — I listen.

Abbot. 'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely 40
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an Anchorite's — were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot. My pious brethren — the scaréd peasantry —
Even thy own vassals — who do look on thee

With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril!

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy:
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee ⁵⁰
With the true church, and through the church to Heaven.

Man. I hear thee. This is my reply — whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself — I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator — Have I sinned
Against your ordinances? prove and punish!

Abbot. My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon; — with thyself
The choice of such remains — and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief ⁶⁰
Have given me power to smooth the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to Heaven, — "Vengeance is mine alone!"
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Man. Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony — nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep Despair, ⁷⁰
Which is Remorse without the fear of Hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of Heaven — can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins — wrongs — sufferance — and revenge
Upon itself; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self — condemned
He deals on his own soul.

Abbot. All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up ⁸⁰
With calm assurance to that blessed place,
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity. Say on —
And all our church can teach thee shall be taught;
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardoned.

Man. When Rome's sixth Emperor was near his last,
The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death ⁹⁰
From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have stanch'd
The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and said —
Some empire still in his expiring glance —
“It is too late — is this fidelity?”

Abbot. And what of this?

Man. I answer with the Roman —
“It is too late!”

Abbot. It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with Heaven. Hast thou no hope? ¹⁰⁰
‘Tis strange — even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

Man. Aye — father! I have had those early visions,
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither — it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,

Which having leapt from its more dazzling height, ¹¹⁰
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still. — But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.

Abbot. And wherefore so?

Man. I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway; and soothe, and sue,
And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living Lie, who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean — and such ¹²⁰
The mass are; I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader — and of wolves,
The lion is alone, and so am I.

Abbot. And why not live and act with other men?

Man. Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation. Like the Wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast, ¹³⁰
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly, — such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.

Abbot. Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so young,
I still would — —

Man. Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become

Old in their youth, and die ere middle age, ¹⁴⁰
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure — some of study —
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness, —
Some of disease — and some insanity —
And some of withered, or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things, ¹⁵⁰
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

Abbot. Yet, hear me still —

Man. Old man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain:
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy — and so — farewell.
[Exit Manfred.]

Abbot. This should have been a noble creature: he ¹⁶⁰
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos — Light and Darkness —
And mind and dust — and passions and pure thoughts
Mixed, and contending without end or order, —
All dormant or destructive. He will perish —
And yet he must not — I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end. ¹⁷⁰
I'll follow him — but cautiously, though surely.
[Exit Abbot.]

Scene II. — *Another Chamber.*

Manfred *and* Herman.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks behind the mountain.

Man. Doth he so?

I will look on him.

[*Manfred advances to the Window of the Hall.*

Glorious Orb! the idol

Of early nature, and the vigorous race

Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons

Of the embrace of Angels, with a sex

More beautiful than they, which did draw down

The erring Spirits who can ne'er return. —

Most glorious Orb! that wert a worship, ere

The mystery of thy making was revealed! 10

Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,

Which gladdened, on their mountain tops, the hearts

Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured

Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!

And representative of the Unknown —

Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief Star!

Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth

Endurable and temperest the hues

And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!

Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes, 20

And those who dwell in them! for near or far,

Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee

Even as our outward aspects; — thou dost rise,

And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!

I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance

Of love and wonder was for thee, then take

My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one

To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been

Of a more fatal nature. He is gone —

I follow. [*Exit Manfred.*

Scene III. — *The Mountains — The Castle of Manfred at some distance — A Terrace before a Tower. — Time, Twilight.*

Herman, Manuel, and other dependants of Manfred.

Her. 'Tis strange enough! night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it, —
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel. 'Twere dangerous; ¹⁰
Content thyself with what thou know'st already.

Her. Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle —
How many years is't?

Manuel. Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

Her. There be more sons in like predicament!
But wherein do they differ?

Manuel. I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free, —
A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not ²⁰
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Her. Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

Manuel. These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her. Come, be friendly; ³⁰
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts, by this same tower.

Manuel. That was a night indeed! I do remember
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening: — yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then, —
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon; ⁴⁰
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower, —
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings — her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love, —
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The Lady Astarte, his — —
Hush! who comes here?

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot. Where is your master?

Her. Yonder in the tower.

Abbot. I must speak with him.

Manuel. 'Tis impossible;

He is most private, and must not be thus 50
Intruded on.

Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be —
But I must see him.

Her. Thou hast seen him once
his eve already.

Abbot. Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.

Her. We dare not.

Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

Manuel. Reverend father, stop —
I pray you pause.

Abbot. Why so?

Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV. — *Interior of the Tower.*

Manfred *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learned the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering, — upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall, 10

‘Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars’ palace came
The owl’s long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach 20
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levelled battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel’s place of growth;
But the gladiators’ bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,
While Cæsar’s chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay. — 30
And thou didst shine, thou rolling Moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
As ‘twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not — till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o’er
With silent worship of the Great of old, —
The dead, but sceptred, Sovereigns, who still rule 40
Our spirits from their urns.
‘Twas such a night!
‘Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot. My good Lord!

I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head — could I say *heart* — 50
Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered,
But is not yet all lost.

Man. Thou know'st me not;
My days are numbered, and my deeds recorded:
Retire, or 'twill be dangerous — Away!

Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace me?

Man. Not I!
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.

Abbot. What dost thou mean?

Man. Look there!
What dost thou see?

Abbot. Nothing.

Man. Look there, I say,
And steadfastly; — now tell me what thou seest? 60

Abbot. That which should shake me, — but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between
Thyself and me — but I do fear him not.

Man. Thou hast no cause — he shall not harm thee — but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.

I say to thee — Retire!

Abbot. And I reply —

Never — till I have battled with this fiend: — 70
What doth he here?

Man. Why — aye — what doth he here?

I did not send for him, — he is unbidden.

Abbot. Alas! lost Mortal! what with guests like these

Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:

Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?

Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow

The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye

Glares forth the immortality of Hell —

Avaunt! —

Man. Pronounce — what is thy mission?

Spirit. Come!

Abbot. What art thou, unknown being? answer! — speak! 80

Spirit. The genius of this mortal. — Come! 'tis time.

Man. I am prepared for all things, but deny

The Power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

Spirit. Thou'lt know anon — Come! come!

Man. I have commanded

Things of an essence greater far than thine,

And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

Spirit. Mortal! thine hour is come — Away! I say.

Man. I knew, and know my hour is come, but not

To render up my soul to such as thee:

Away! I'll die as I have lived — alone. 90

Spirit. Then I must summon up my brethren. — Rise!
[*Other Spirits rise.*

Abbot. Avaunt! ye evil ones! — Avaunt! I say, —
Ye have no power where Piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name —

Spirit. Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more — I summon him — Away! Away!

Man. I do defy ye, — though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye; ¹⁰⁰
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye — earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

Spirit. Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal? Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched?

Man. Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour, — *that* I know, ¹¹⁰
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against Death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science — penance, daring,
And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill
In knowledge of our Fathers — when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
Upon my strength — I do defy — deny — ¹²⁰

Spurn back, and scorn ye! —

Spirit. But thy many crimes
Have made thee —

Man. What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punished but by other crimes,
And greater criminals? — Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The Mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts, — 130
Is its own origin of ill and end —
And its own place and time: its innate sense,
When stripped of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey —
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. — Back, ye baffled fiends! 140
The hand of Death is on me — but not yours!
[*The Demons disappear.*

Abbot. Alas! how pale thou art — thy lips are white —
And thy breast heaves — and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle: Give thy prayers to Heaven
Pray — albeit but in thought, — but die not thus.

Man. 'Tis over — my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well —
Give me thy hand.

Abbot. Cold — cold — even to the heart —
But yet one prayer — Alas! how fares it with thee? 150

Man. Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.
[Manfred *expires*.

Abbot. He's gone — his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight;
Whither? I dread to think — but he is gone.

MARINO FALIERO

DOGE OF VENICE;
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

“*Dux inquieti turbidus Adria.*”

Horace, [*Od.* III. c. iii. line 5]

INTRODUCTION

Byron had no sooner finished the first draft of *Manfred* than he began (February 25, 1817) to lay the foundation of another tragedy. Venice was new to him, and, on visiting the Doge's Palace, the veiled space intended for the portrait of Marin Falier, and the "Giants' Staircase," where, as he believed, "he was once crowned and afterwards decapitated," had laid hold of his imagination, while the legend of the *Congiura*, "an old man jealous and conspiring against the state of which he was ... Chief," promised a subject which the "devil himself" might have dramatized *con amore*.

But other interests and ideas claimed his attention, and for more than three years the project slept. At length he slips into the postscript of a letter to Murray, dated, "Ravenna, April 9, 1820" (*Letters*, 1901, v. 7), an intimation that he had begun "a tragedy on the subject of Marino Faliero, the Doge of Venice." The "Imitation of Dante, the Translation of Pulci, the Danticles," etc., were worked off, and, in prospecting for a new vein, a fresh lode of literary ore, he passed, by a natural transition, from Italian literature to Italian history, from the romantic and humorous *epopee* of Pulci and Berni, to the pseudo-classic drama of Alfieri and Monti.

Jealousy, as "Monk" Lewis had advised him (August, 1817), was an "exhausted passion" in the drama, and to lay the scene in Venice was to provoke comparison with Shakespeare and Otway; but the man himself, the fiery Doge, passionate but not jealous, a noble turned democrat *pro hac vice*, an old man "greatly" finding "quarrel in a straw," afforded a theme historically time-honoured, and yet unappropriated by tragic art.

There was, too, a living interest in the story. For history was repeating itself, and "politics were savage and uncertain." "Mischief was afoot," and the tradition of a conspiracy which failed might find an historic parallel in a conspiracy which would succeed. There was "that brewing in Italy" which might, perhaps, inspire "a people to redress itself," "and with a cry of, 'Up with the Republic!' 'Down with the Nobility!' send the Barbarians of all nations back to their own dens!" (*Letters*, 1901, v. 10, 12, 19.) In taking the field as a dramatist, Byron sought to win distinction for himself — in the first place by historical accuracy, and, secondly, by artistic regularity — by a stricter attention to the dramatic "unities." "History is closely followed," he tells Murray, in a letter dated July 17, 1820; and, again, in the Preface (*vide post*, pp. -), which is an expansion of the letter, he gives a list of the authorities which he had consulted, and claims to have

“transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.” More than once in his letters to Murray he reverts to this profession of accuracy, and encloses some additional note, in which he points out and rectifies an occasional deviation from the historical record. In this respect, at any rate, he could contend on more than equal terms “with established writers,” that is, with Shakespeare and Otway, and could present to his countrymen an exacter and, so, more lifelike picture of the Venetian Republic. It is plain, too, that he was bitten with the love of study for its own sake, with a premature passion for erudition, and that he sought and found relief from physical and intellectual excitement in the intricacies of research. If his history is at fault, it was not from any lack of diligence on his part, but because the materials at his disposal or within his cognizance were inaccurate and misleading. He makes no mention of the huge collection of Venetian archives which had recently been deposited in the Convent of the Frari, or of Doria’s transcript of Sanudo’s Diaries, bequeathed in 1816 to the Library of St. Mark; but he quotes as his authorities the *Vitæ Ducum Venetorum*, of Marin Sanudo (1466-1535), the *Storia, etc.*, of Andrea Navagero (1483-1529), and the *Principj di Storia, etc.*, of Vettor Sandi, which belongs to the latter half of the eighteenth century. Byron’s chroniclers were ancient, but not ancient enough; and, though they “handed down the story” (see Medwin, *Conversations*, p. 173), they depart in numerous particulars from the facts recorded in contemporary documents. Unquestionably the legend, as it appears in Sanudo’s perplexing and uncritical narrative (see, for the translation of an original version of the Italian, *Appendix*, pp. -), is more dramatic than the “low beginnings” of the myth, which may be traced to the annalists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; but, like other legends, it is insusceptible of proof. Byron’s Doge is almost, if not quite, as unhistorical as his Bonivard or his Mazeppa. (See *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, 1893, vol. v. pt. i. pp. 95-197; 1897, vol. xiii. pt. i. pp. 5-107; pt. ii. pp. 277-374; *Les Archives de Venise*, par Armand Baschet, 1870; *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, Giuseppe Cappelletti, 1849, iv. pp. 262-317.) At the close of the Preface, by way of an afterthought, Byron announces his determination to escape “the reproach of the English theatrical compositions” “by preserving a nearer approach to unity,” by substituting the regularity of French and Italian models for the barbarities of the Elizabethan dramatists and their successors. Goethe (*Conversations*, 1874, p. 114) is said to have “laughed to think that Byron, who, in practical life, could never adapt himself, and never even asked about a law, finally subjected himself to the stupidest of laws — that of the *three unities*.” It was, perhaps, in part with this object in view, to make his readers smile, to provoke their astonishment, that he

affected a severity foreign to his genius and at variance with his record. It was an agreeable thought that he could so easily pass from one extreme to another, from *Manfred* to *Marino Faliero*, and, at the same time, indulge “in a little sally of gratuitous sauciness” (*Quarterly Review*, July, 1822, vol. xxvii, p. 480) at the expense of his own countrymen. But there were other influences at work. He had been powerfully impressed by the energy and directness of Alfieri’s work, and he was eager to emulate the gravity and simplicity, if not the terseness and conciseness, of his style and language. The drama was a new world to conquer, and so far as “his own literature” was concerned it appeared that success might be attainable by “a severer approach to the rules” (Letter to Murray, February 16, 1821) — that by taking Alfieri as his model he might step into the first rank of English dramatists.

Goethe thought that Byron failed “to understand the purpose” of the “three unities,” that he regarded the law as an end in itself, and did not perceive that if a play was comprehensible the unities might be neglected and disregarded. It is possible that his “blind obedience to the law” may have been dictated by the fervour of a convert; but it is equally possible that he looked beyond the law or its fulfilment to an ulterior object, the discomfiture of the romantic school, with its contempt for regularity, its passionate appeal from art to nature. If he was minded to raise a “Grecian temple of the purest architecture” (*Letters*, 1901, v. Appendix III. p. 559), it was not without some thought and hope of shaming, by force of contrast, the “mosque,” the “grotesque edifice” of barbarian contemporaries and rivals. Byron was “ever a fighter,” and his claim to regularity, to a closer preservation of the “unities,” was of the nature of a challenge.

Marino Faliero was dedicated to “Baron Goethe,” but the letter which should have contained the dedication was delayed in transit. Goethe never saw the dedication till it was placed in his hands by John Murray the Third, in 1831, but he read the play, and after Byron’s death bore testimony to its peculiar characteristics and essential worth. “Lord Byron, notwithstanding his predominant personality, has sometimes had the power of renouncing himself altogether, as may be seen in some of his dramatic pieces, particularly in his *Marino Faliero*. In this piece one quite forgets that Lord Byron, or even an Englishman, wrote it. We live entirely in Venice, and entirely in the time in which the action takes place. The personages speak quite from themselves and their own condition, without having any of the subjective feelings, thoughts, and opinions of the poet” (*Conversations*, 1874, p. 453).

Byron spent three months over the composition of *Marino Faliero*. The

tragedy was completed July 17 (*Letters*, 1901, v. 52), and the copying (*vide post*,) a month later (August 16, 17, 1820). The final draft of “all the acts corrected” was despatched to England some days before October 6, 1820.

Early in January, 1821 (see Letters to Murray, January 11, 20, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 221-228), an announcement reached Byron that his play was to be brought out at Drury Lane Theatre, by Elliston. Against this he protested by every means in his power, and finally, on Wednesday, April 25, four days after the publication of the first edition (April 21, 1821), an injunction was obtained from Lord Chancellor Eldon, prohibiting a performance announced for that evening. Elliston pursued the Chancellor to the steps of his own house, and at the last moment persuaded him to allow the play to be acted on that night only. Legal proceedings were taken, but, in the end, the injunction was withdrawn, with the consent of Byron’s solicitors, and the play was represented again on April 30, and on five nights in the following May. As Byron had foreseen, *Marino Faliero* was coldly received by the playgoing public, and proved a loss to the “speculating buffoons,” who had not realized that it was “unfit for their Fair or their booth” (Letter to Murray, January 20, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 228, and p. 226, note 2. See, too, *Memoirs of Robert W. Elliston*, 1845, pp. 268-271).

Byron was the first to perceive that the story of Marino Faliero was a drama “ready to hand;” but he has had many followers, if not imitators or rivals.

“*Marino Faliero*, tragédie en cinq actes,” by Casimir Jean François Delavigne, was played for the first time at the Theatre of Porte Saint Martin, May 31, 1829.

In Germany tragedies based on the same theme have been published by Otto Ludwig, Leipzig, 1874; Martin Grief, Vienna, 1879; Murad Effendi (Franz von Werner), 1881, and others (*Englische Studien*, vol. xxvii. pp. 146, 147).

Marino Faliero, a Tragedy, by A. C. Swinburne, was published in 1885.

Marino Faliero was reviewed by Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 21, 1821, vol. 35, pp. 271-285; by Heber, in the *Quarterly Review*, July, 1822, vol. xxvii. pp. 476-492; and by John Wilson, in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, April, 1821, vol. 9, pp. 93-103. For other notices, *vide ante* (“Introduction to *The Prophecy of Dante*”), .

PREFACE

The conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the most singular government, city, and people of modern history. It occurred in the year 1355. Every thing about Venice is, or was, extraordinary — her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance. The story of this Doge is to be found in all her Chronicles, and particularly detailed in the “Lives of the Doges,” by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix. It is simply and clearly related, and is perhaps more dramatic in itself than any scenes which can be founded upon the subject.

Marino Faliero appears to have been a man of talents and of courage. I find him commander-in-chief of the land forces at the siege of Zara, where he beat the King of Hungary and his army of eighty thousand men, killing eight thousand men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check; an exploit to which I know none similar in history, except that of Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d’Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome, — at which last he received the news of his election to the dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprised of his predecessor’s death and his own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podesta and captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this, honest Sanuto “saddles him with a judgment,” as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of count, by Lorenzo, Count-bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable Abate Morelli, in his *Monumenti Veneziani di varia Letteratura*, printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Darù, Sismondi, and Laugier, nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers. Sismondi attributes the conspiracy to his *jealousy*; but I find this nowhere asserted by the national historians. Vettor Sandi, indeed, says that “Altri scrissero che....dalla gelosa suspizion di esso Doge siasi fatto (Michel Steno) staccar con violenza,” etc., etc.; but this appears to have been by no means the general opinion, nor is it alluded to by Sanuto, or by Navagero; and

Sandi himself adds, a moment after, that “per altre Veneziane memorie traspiri, che non il *solo* desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui aneleva a farsi principe indipendente.” The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their “tre Capi.” The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the “Dogaressa” herself, against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion) that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her, and for his own honour, warranted by his past services and present dignity.

I know not that the historical facts are alluded to in English, unless by Dr. Moore in his View of Italy. His account is false and flippant, full of stale jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause. How so acute and severe an observer of mankind as the author of Zeluco could wonder at this is inconceivable. He knew that a basin of water spilt on Mrs. Masham’s gown deprived the Duke of Marlborough of his command, and led to the inglorious peace of Utrecht — that Louis XIV. was plunged into the most desolating wars, because his minister was nettled at his finding fault with a window, and wished to give him another occupation — that Helen lost Troy — that Lucretia expelled the Tarquins from Rome — and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain — that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome — that a single verse of Frederick II. of Prussia on the Abbé de Bernis, and a jest on Madame de Pompadour, led to the battle of Rosbach — that the elopement of Dearbhorgil with Mac Murchad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland that a personal pique between Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons — and, not to multiply instances of the *teterrima causa*, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance — and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both King and Commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection it is indeed extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent, in a fierce age, an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to favour it — “The young man’s wrath is like [light] straw on fire,

But like red hot steel is the old man’s ire.”

[Davie Gellatley's song in *Waverley*, chap. xiv.]

"Young men soon give and soon forget affronts,
Old age is slow at both."

Laugier's reflections are more philosophical: — "Tale fù il fine ignominioso di un' uomo, che la sua nascita, la sua età, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi *talenti* per lungo tempo esercitati ne' maggiori impieghi, la sua capacità sperimentata ne' governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de' cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragj per collocarlo alla testa della repubblica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un' ingiuria leggiera insinuò nel suo cuore tal veleno che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati; serio esempio, che prova *non esservi età, in cui la prudenza umana sia sicura, e che nell' uomo restano sempre passioni capaci a disonorarlo, quando non invigili sopra se stesso.*"

Where did Dr. Moore find that Marino Faliero begged his life? I have searched the chroniclers, and find nothing of the kind: it is true that he avowed all. He was conducted to the place of torture, but there is no mention made of any application for mercy on his part; and the very circumstance of their having taken him to the rack seems to argue any thing but his having shown a want of firmness, which would doubtless have been also mentioned by those minute historians, who by no means favour him: such, indeed, would be contrary to his character as a soldier, to the age in which he lived, and *at* which he died, as it is to the truth of history. I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate: and they who have died upon a scaffold have generally had faults enough of their own, without attributing to them that which the very incurring of the perils which conducted them to their violent death renders, of all others, the most improbable. The black veil which is painted over the place of Marino Faliero amongst the Doges, and the Giants' Staircase, where he was crowned, and discrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination; as did his fiery character and strange story. I went, in 1819, in search of his tomb more than once to the church San Giovanni e San Paolo; and, as I was standing before the monument of another family, a priest came up to me and said, "I can show you finer monuments than that." I told him that I was in search of that of the Faliero family, and particularly of the Doge Marino's. "Oh," said he, "I will show it you;" and, conducting me to the outside, pointed out a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription. He said that it had been in a convent adjoining, but was removed after the French came, and placed in its present

situation; that he had seen the tomb opened at its removal; there were still some bones remaining, but no positive vestige of the decapitation. The equestrian statue of which I have made mention in the third act as before that church is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date. There were two other Doges of this family prior to Marino; Ordelafo, who fell in battle at Zara, in 1117 (where his descendant afterwards conquered the Huns), and Vital Faliero, who reigned in 1082. The family, originally from Fano, was of the most illustrious in blood and wealth in the city of once the most wealthy and still the most ancient families in Europe. The length I have gone into on this subject will show the interest I have taken in it. Whether I have succeeded or not in the tragedy, I have at least transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.

It is now four years that I have meditated this work; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero. But, perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was, besides, well advised by the late Matthew Lewis on that point, in talking with him of my intention at Venice in 1817. "If you make him jealous," said he, "recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakespeare, and an exhausted subject: — stick to the old fiery Doge's natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn; and make your plot as regular as you can." Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same counsel. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time. And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience. The sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labour to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that, even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made the attempt, and never will. But I wish that others would, for surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and Milman, and John Wilson exist. The *City of the Plague* and the *Fall of Jerusalem* are full of the best "*matériel*" for tragedy that has been

seen since Horace Walpole, except passages of *Ethwald* and *De Montfort*. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the *Castle of Otranto*, he is the “Ultimus Romanorum,” the author of the *Mysterious Mother*, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.

In speaking of the drama of *Marino Faliero*, I forgot to mention that the desire of preserving, though still too remote, a nearer approach to unity than the irregularity, which is the reproach of the English theatrical compositions, permits, has induced me to represent the conspiracy as already formed, and the Doge acceding to it; whereas, in fact, it was of his own preparation and that of Israel Bertuccio. The other characters (except that of the Duchess), incidents, and almost the time, which was wonderfully short for such a design in real life, are strictly historical, except that all the consultations took place in the palace. Had I followed this, the unity would have been better preserved; but I wished to produce the Doge in the full assembly of the conspirators, instead of monotonously placing him always in dialogue with the same individuals. For the real facts, I refer to the Appendix.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Marino Faliero, *Doge of Venice.*

Bertuccio Faliero, *Nephew of the Doge.*

Lioni, *a Patrician and Senator.*

Benintende, *Chief of the Council of Ten.*

Michel Steno, *One of the three Capi of the Forty.*

} *Conspirators.*

Israel Bertuccio, *Chief of the Arsenal, Philip Calendaro,*

Dagolino,

Bertram,

Signor of the Night, "Signore di Notte," one of the Officers belonging to the Republic.

First Citizen.

Second Citizen.

Third Citizen.

} *Officers belonging to the Ducal Palace.*

Vincenzo,

Pietro,

Battista,

Secretary of the Council of Ten.

Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, The Council of Ten, the Giunta, etc., etc.

WOMEN.

Angiolina, *Wife to the Doge.*

Marianna, *her Friend.*

Female Attendants, etc.

Scene Venice — in the year 1355.

MARINO FALIERO

DOGE OF VENICE.

(AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.)

ACT I

Scene I. — *An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.*

Pietro speaks, in entering, to Battista.

Pie. Is not the messenger returned?

Bat. Not yet;
I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno's accusation.

Pie. Too long — at least so thinks the Doge.

Bat. How bears he
These moments of suspense?

Pie. With struggling patience.
Placed at the Ducal table, covered o'er
With all the apparel of the state — petitions,
Despatches, judgments, acts, reprieves, reports, —
He sits as rapt in duty; but whene'er ¹⁰
He hears the jarring of a distant door,
Or aught that intimates a coming step,
Or murmur of a voice, his quick eye wanders,
And he will start up from his chair, then pause,
And seat himself again, and fix his gaze
Upon some edict; but I have observed
For the last hour he has not turned a leaf.

Bat. 'Tis said he is much moved, — and doubtless 'twas
Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.

Pie. Aye, if a poor man: Steno's a patrician, 20
Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.

Bat. Then you think
He will not be judged hardly?

Pie. 'Twere enough
He be judged justly; but 'tis not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.

Bat. And here it comes. — What news, Vincenzo?

Enter Vincenzo.

Vin. 'Tis
Decided; but as yet his doom's unknown:
I saw the President in act to seal
The parchment which will bear the Forty's judgment
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him.
[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II. — The Ducal Chamber.

Marino Faliero, *Doge*; and his Nephew, Bertuccio Faliero.

Ber. F. It cannot be but they will do you justice.

Doge. Aye, such as the Avogadori did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty
To try him by his peers, his own tribunal.

Ber. F. His peers will scarce protect him; such an act
Would bring contempt on all authority.

Doge. Know you not Venice? Know you not the Forty?
But we shall see anon.

Ber. F. (*addressing Vincenzo, then entering.*)
How now — what tidings?

Vin. I am charged to tell his Highness that the court
Has passed its resolution, and that, soon ¹⁰
As the due forms of judgment are gone through,
The sentence will be sent up to the Doge;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute
The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptance of their duty.

Doge. Yes —
They are wond'rous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is passed, you say?

Vin. It is, your Highness:
The President was sealing it, when I
Was called in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due ²⁰
Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.

Ber. F. Are you aware, from aught you have perceived,
Of their decision?

Vin. No, my Lord; you know
The secret custom of the courts in Venice.

Ber. F. True; but there still is something given to guess,
Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch at;
A whisper, or a murmur, or an air
More or less solemn spread o'er the tribunal.
The Forty are but men — most worthy men, ³⁰
And wise, and just, and cautious — this I grant —
And secret as the grave to which they doom
The guilty: but with all this, in their aspects —
At least in some, the juniors of the number —
A searching eye, an eye like yours, Vincenzo,
Would read the sentence ere it was pronounced.

Vin. My Lord, I came away upon the moment,
And had no leisure to take note of that

Which passed among the judges, even in seeming;
My station near the accused too, Michel Steno, ⁴⁰
Made me —

Doge (abruptly). And how looked *he*? deliver that.

Vin. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resigned
To the decree, whate'er it were; — but lo!
It comes, for the perusal of his Highness.

Enter the Secretary of the Forty.

Sec. The high tribunal of the Forty sends
Health and respect to the Doge Faliero,
Chief magistrate of Venice, and requests
His Highness to peruse and to approve
The sentence passed on Michel Steno, born
Patrician, and arraigned upon the charge ⁵⁰
Contained, together with its penalty,
Within the rescript which I now present.

Doge. Retire, and wait without.
[*Exeunt Secretary and Vincenzo.*]
Take thou this paper:
The misty letters vanish from my eyes;
I cannot fix them.

Ber. F. Patience, my dear Uncle:
Why do you tremble thus? — nay, doubt not, all
Will be as could be wished.

Doge. Say on.

Ber. F. (reading). "Decreed
In council, without one dissenting voice,
That Michel Steno, by his own confession,
Guilty on the last night of Carnival ⁶⁰
Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words — "

Doge. Would'st thou repeat them?
Would'st *thou* repeat them — *thou*, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonoured in its Chief — that Chief the Prince
Of Venice, first of cities? — To the sentence.

Ber. F. Forgive me, my good Lord; I will obey —
(*Reads*) “That Michel Steno be detained a month
In close arrest.”

Doge. Proceed.

Ber. F. My Lord, 'tis finished.

Doge. How say you? — finished! Do I dream? — 'tis false — 70
Give me the paper — (*snatches the paper and reads*) —
“‘Tis decreed in council
That Michel Steno” — Nephew, thine arm!

Ber. F. Nay,
Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncalled for —
Let me seek some assistance.

Doge. Stop, sir — Stir not —
‘Tis past.

Ber. F. I cannot but agree with you
The sentence is too slight for the offence;
It is not honourable in the Forty
To affix so slight a penalty to that
Which was a foul affront to you, and even
To them, as being your subjects; but 'tis not 80
Yet without remedy: you can appeal
To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,
And do you right upon the bold delinquent.
Think you not thus, good Uncle? why do you stand
So fixed? You heed me not: — I pray you, hear me!

Doge (dashing down the ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew).
Oh! that the Saracen were in St. Mark's!
Thus would I do him homage.

Ber. F. For the sake
Of Heaven and all its saints, my Lord —

Doge. Away! ⁹⁰
Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!
Oh, that the Huns whom I o'erthrew at Zara
Were ranged around the palace!

Ber. F. 'Tis not well
In Venice' Duke to say so.

Doge. Venice' Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him,
That he may do me right.

Ber. F. If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty.
Remember that of man, and curb this passion.
The Duke of Venice — —

Doge (interrupting him). There is no such thing —
It is a word — nay, worse — a worthless by-word: ¹⁰⁰
The most despised, wronged, outraged, helpless wretch,
Who begs his bread, if 'tis refused by one,
May win it from another kinder heart;
But he, who is denied his right by those
Whose place it is to do no wrong, is poorer
Than the rejected beggar — he's a slave —
And that am I — and thou — and all our house,
Even from this hour; the meanest artisan
Will point the finger, and the haughty noble
May spit upon us: — where is our redress? ¹¹⁰

Ber. F. The law, my Prince —

Doge (interrupting him). You see what it has done;
I asked no remedy but from the law —
I sought no vengeance but redress by law —
I called no judges but those named by law —
As Sovereign, I appealed unto my subjects,
The very subjects who had made me Sovereign,
And gave me thus a double right to be so.
The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,
Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
The travel — toil — the perils — the fatigues — 120
The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
Were weighed i' the balance, 'gainst the foulest stain,
The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime
Of a rank, rash patrician — and found wanting!
And this is to be borne!

Ber. F. I say not that: —
In case your fresh appeal should be rejected,
We will find other means to make all even.

Doge. Appeal again! art thou my brother's son?
A scion of the house of Faliero?
The nephew of a Doge? and of that blood 130
Which hath already given three dukes to Venice?
But thou say'st well — we must be humble now.

Ber. F. My princely Uncle! you are too much moved; —
I grant it was a gross offence, and grossly
Left without fitting punishment: but still
This fury doth exceed the provocation,
Or any provocation: if we are wronged,
We will ask justice; if it be denied,
We'll take it; but may do all this in calmness —
Deep Vengeance is the daughter of deep Silence. 140
I have yet scarce a third part of your years,
I love our house, I honour you, its Chief,
The guardian of my youth, and its instructor —
But though I understand your grief, and enter
In part of your disdain, it doth appal me

To see your anger, like our Adrian waves,
O'ersweep all bounds, and foam itself to air.

Doge. I tell thee — *must* I tell thee — what thy father
Would have required no words to comprehend?
Hast thou no feeling save the external sense ¹⁵⁰
Of torture from the touch? hast thou no soul —
No pride — no passion — no deep sense of honour?

Ber. F. 'Tis the first time that honour has been doubted,
And were the last, from any other sceptic.

Doge. You know the full offence of this born villain,
This creeping, coward, rank, acquitted felon,
Who threw his sting into a poisonous libel,
And on the honour of — Oh God! my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth ¹⁶⁰
Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,
And villainous jests, and blasphemies obscene;
While sneering nobles, in more polished guise,
Whispered the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them — a courteous wittol,
Patient — aye — proud, it may be, of dishonour.

Ber. F. But still it was a lie — you knew it false,
And so did all men.

Doge. Nephew, the high Roman
Said, "Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected,"
And put her from him.

Ber. F. True — but in those days — — ¹⁷⁰

Doge. What is it that a Roman would not suffer,
That a Venetian Prince must bear? old Dandolo
Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars,
And wore the ducal cap *I* trample on —
Because 'tis now degraded.

Ber. F. 'Tis even so.

Doge. It is — it is; — I did not visit on
The innocent creature thus most vilely slandered
Because she took an old man for her lord,
For that he had been long her father's friend
And patron of her house, as if there were ¹⁸⁰
No love in woman's heart but lust of youth
And beardless faces; — I did not for this
Visit the villain's infamy on her,
But craved my country's justice on his head,
The justice due unto the humblest being
Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to him,
Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to him —
Who hath a name whose honour's all to him,
When these are tainted by the accursing breath
Of Calumny and Scorn.

Ber. F. And what redress ¹⁹⁰
Did you expect as his fit punishment?

Doge. Death! Was I not the Sovereign of the state —
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me?
Was I not injured as a husband? scorned
As man? reviled, degraded, as a Prince?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason? — and he lives!
Had he instead of on the Doge's throne
Stamped the same brand upon a peasant's stool, ²⁰⁰
His blood had gilt the threshold; for the carle
Had stabbed him on the instant.

Ber. F. Do not doubt it,
He shall not live till sunset — leave to me
The means, and calm yourself.

Doge. Hold, nephew: this
Would have sufficed but yesterday; at present

I have no further wrath against this man.

Ber. F. What mean you? is not the offence redoubled
By this most rank — I will not say — acquittal;
For it is worse, being full acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunished? 210

Doge. It is *redoubled*, but not now by him:
The Forty hath decreed a month's arrest —
We must obey the Forty.

Ber. F. Obey *them*!
Who have forgot their duty to the Sovereign?

Doge. Why, yes; — boy, you perceive it then at last;
Whether as fellow citizen who sues
For justice, or as Sovereign who commands it,
They have defrauded me of both my rights
(For here the Sovereign is a citizen);
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair 220
Of Steno's head — he shall not wear it long.

Ber. F. Not twelve hours longer, had you left to me
The mode and means; if you had calmly heard me,
I never meant this miscreant should escape,
But wished you to suppress such gusts of passion,
That we more surely might devise together
His taking off.

Doge. No, nephew, he must live;
At least, just now — a life so vile as his
Were nothing at this hour; in th' olden time
Some sacrifices asked a single victim, 230
Great expiations had a hecatomb.

Ber. F. Your wishes are my law: and yet I fain
Would prove to you how near unto my heart
The honour of our house must ever be.

Doge. Fear not; you shall have time and place of proof:
But be not thou too rash, as I have been.
I am ashamed of my own anger now;
I pray you, pardon me.

Ber. F. Why, that's my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the chief
Of commonwealths, and sovereign of himself! 240
I wondered to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,
Although the cause —

Doge. Aye — think upon the cause —
Forget it not: — When you lie down to rest,
Let it be black among your dreams; and when
The morn returns, so let it stand between
The Sun and you, as an ill-omened cloud
Upon a summer-day of festival:
So will it stand to me; — but speak not, stir not, —
Leave all to me; we shall have much to do, 250
And you shall have a part. — But now retire,
'Tis fit I were alone.

Ber. F. (*taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the table*).
Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurned,
Till you can change it — haply, for a crown!
And now I take my leave, imploring you
In all things to rely upon my duty,
As doth become your near and faithful kinsman,
And not less loyal citizen and subject.
[Exit Bertuccio Faliero] Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge (solus). Adieu, my worthy nephew. — Hollow bauble!
[*Taking up the ducal cap.*
Beset with all the thorns that line a crown, 260
Without investing the insulted brow
With the all-swaying majesty of Kings;
Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,

Let me resume thee as I would a vizor. [*Puts it on.*
How my brain aches beneath thee! and my temples
Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
Could I not turn thee to a diadem?
Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
Which in this hundred-handed Senate rules,
Making the people nothing, and the Prince 270
A pageant? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult — achieved for them,
Who thus repay me! Can I not requite them?
Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day
Of my full youth, while yet my body served
My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,
I would have dashed amongst them, asking few
In aid to overthrow these swoln patricians;
But now I must look round for other hands
To serve this hoary head; but it shall plan 280
In such a sort as will not leave the task
Herculean, though as yet 'tis but a chaos
Of darkly brooding thoughts: my fancy is
In her first work, more nearly to the light
Holding the sleeping images of things
For the selection of the pausing judgment. —
The troops are few in — —

Enter Vincenzo.

Vin. There is one without
Craves audience of your Highness.

Doge. I'm unwell —
I can see no one, not even a patrician —
Let him refer his business to the Council. 290

Vin. My Lord, I will deliver your reply;
It cannot much import — he's a plebeian,
The master of a galley, I believe.

Doge. How! did you say the patron of a galley?

That is — I mean — a servant of the state:
Admit him, he may be on public service.
[Exit Vincenzo.]

Doge (solus). This patron may be sounded; I will try him.
I know the people to be discontented:
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse day,
When Genoa conquered: they have further cause, ³⁰⁰
Since they are nothing in the state, and in
The city worse than nothing — mere machines,
To serve the nobles' most patrician pleasure.
The troops have long arrears of pay, oft promised,
And murmur deeply — any hope of change
Will draw them forward: they shall pay themselves
With plunder: — but the priests — I doubt the priesthood
Will not be with us; they have hated me
Since that rash hour, when, maddened with the drone,
I smote the tardy Bishop at Treviso, ³¹⁰
Quickening his holy march; yet, ne'ertheless,
They may be won, at least their Chief at Rome,
By some well-timed concessions; but, above
All things, I must be speedy: at my hour
Of twilight little light of life remains.
Could I free Venice, and avenge my wrongs,
I had lived too long, and willingly would sleep
Next moment with my sires; and, wanting this,
Better that sixty of my fourscore years
Had been already where — how soon, I care not — ³²⁰
The whole must be extinguished; — better that
They ne'er had been, than drag me on to be
The thing these arch-oppressors fain would make me.
Let me consider — of efficient troops
There are three thousand posted at — —

Enter Vincenzo and Israel Bertuccio.

Vin. May it please
Your Highness, the same patron whom I spake of
Is here to crave your patience.

Doge. Leave the chamber,

Vincenzo. —

[*Exit Vincenzo.*

Sir, you may advance — what would you?

I. Ber. Redress.

Doge. Of whom?

I. Ber. Of God and of the Doge.

Doge. Alas! my friend, you seek it of the twain 330

Of least respect and interest in Venice.

You must address the Council.

I. Ber. 'Twere in vain;

For he who injured me is one of them.

Doge. There's blood upon thy face — how came it there?

I. Ber. 'Tis mine, and not the first I've shed for Venice,

But the first shed by a Venetian hand:

A noble smote me.

Doge. Doth he live?

I. Ber. Not long —

But for the hope I had and have, that you,

My Prince, yourself a soldier, will redress

Him, whom the laws of discipline and Venice 340

Permit not to protect himself: — if not —

I say no more.

Doge. But something you would do —

Is it not so?

I. Ber. I am a man, my Lord.

Doge. Why so is he who smote you.

I. Ber. He is called so;
Nay, more, a noble one — at least, in Venice:
But since he hath forgotten that I am one,
And treats me like a brute, the brute may turn —
‘Tis said the worm will.

Doge. Say — his name and lineage?

I. Ber. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause? or the pretext?

I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal, employed ³⁵⁰
At present in repairing certain galleys
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.
This morning comes the noble Barbaro
Full of reproof, because our artisans
Had left some frivolous order of his house,
To execute the state’s decree: I dared
To justify the men — he raised his hand; —
Behold my blood! the first time it e’er flowed
Dishonourably.

Doge. Have you long time served?

I. Ber. So long as to remember Zara’s siege, ³⁶⁰
And fight beneath the Chief who beat the Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Faliero. —

Doge. How! are we comrades? — the State’s ducal robes
Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed you?

I. Ber. The late Doge; keeping still my old command
As patron of a galley: my new office
Was given as the reward of certain scars
(So was your predecessor pleased to say): ³⁷⁰
I little thought his bounty would conduct me

To his successor as a helpless plaintiff;
At least, in such a cause.

Doge. Are you much hurt?

I. Ber. Irreparably in my self-esteem.

Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at heart,
What would you do to be revenged on this man?

I. Ber. That which I dare not name, and yet will do.

Doge. Then wherefore came you here?

I. Ber. I come for justice,
Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any, ³⁸⁰
Save Faliero, filled the ducal throne,
This blood had been washed out in other blood.

Doge. You come to me for justice — unto *me!*
The Doge of Venice, and I cannot give it;
I cannot even obtain it — 'twas denied
To me most solemnly an hour ago!

I. Ber. How says your Highness?

Doge. Steno is condemned
To a month's confinement.

I. Ber. What! the same who dared
To stain the ducal throne with those foul words,
That have cried shame to every ear in Venice? ³⁹⁰

Doge. Aye, doubtless they have echoed o'er the arsenal,
Keeping due time with every hammer's clink,
As a good jest to jolly artisans;
Or making chorus to the creaking oar,
In the vile tune of every galley-slave,
Who, as he sung the merry stave, exulted

He was not a shamed dotard like the Doge.

I. Ber. Is't possible? a month's imprisonment!
No more for Steno?

Doge. You have heard the offence,
And now you know his punishment; and then 400
You ask redress of *me*! Go to the Forty,
Who passed the sentence upon Michel Steno;
They'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.

I. Ber. Ah! dared I speak my feelings!

Doge. Give them breath.
Mine have no further outrage to endure.

I. Ber. Then, in a word, it rests but on your word
To punish and avenge — I will not say
My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,
However vile, to such a thing as I am? —
But the base insult done your state and person. 410

Doge. You overrate my power, which is a pageant.
This Cap is not the Monarch's crown; these robes
Might move compassion, like a beggar's rags;
Nay, more, a beggar's are his own, and these
But lent to the poor puppet, who must play
Its part with all its empire in this ermine.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be King?

Doge. Yes — of a happy people.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be sovereign lord of Venice?

Doge. Aye,
If that the people shared that sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves 420
To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra,

The poisonous heads of whose envenomed body
Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.

I. Ber. Yet, thou wast born, and still hast lived, patrician.

Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toiled a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the Senate;
Their good and my own honour were my guerdon.
I have fought and bled; commanded, aye, and conquered; 430
Have made and marred peace oft in embassies,
As it might chance to be our country's 'vantage;
Have traversed land and sea in constant duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for Venice,
My fathers' and my birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this? 440
Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripped her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
She'd tell thee 'twas for *all* her little ones.

I. Ber. And yet they made thee Duke.

Doge. *They made* me so;
I sought it not, the flattering fetters met me
Returning from my Roman embassy,
And never having hitherto refused
Toil, charge, or duty for the state, I did not,
At these late years, decline what was the highest
Of all in seeming, but of all most base 450
In what we have to do and to endure:
Bear witness for me thou, my injured subject,
When I can neither right myself nor thee.

I. Ber. You shall do both, if you possess the will;

And many thousands more not less oppressed,
Who wait but for a signal — will you give it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.

I. Ber. Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life — if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.

Doge. Say on.

I. Ber. Not thou,
Nor I alone, are injured and abused, ⁴⁶⁰
Contemned and trampled on; but the whole people
Groan with the strong conception of their wrongs:
The foreign soldiers in the Senate's pay
Are discontented for their long arrears;
The native mariners, and civic troops,
Feel with their friends; for who is he amongst them
Whose brethren, parents, children, wives, or sisters,
Have not partook oppression, or pollution,
From the patricians? And the hopeless war
Against the Genoese, which is still maintained ⁴⁷⁰
With the plebeian blood, and treasure wrung
From their hard earnings, has inflamed them further:
Even now — but, I forget that speaking thus,
Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death!

Doge. And suffering what thou hast done — fear'st thou death?
Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten
By those for whom thou hast bled.

I. Ber. No, I will speak
At every hazard; and if Venice' Doge
Should turn delator, be the shame on him,
And sorrow too; for he will lose far more ⁴⁸⁰
Than I.

Doge. From me fear nothing; out with it!

I. Ber. Know then, that there are met and sworn in secret
A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true;
Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long
Grieved over that of Venice, and have right
To do so; having served her in all climes,
And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same from those within her walls.
They are not numerous, nor yet too few
For their great purpose; they have arms, and means, ⁴⁹⁰
And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.

Doge. For what then do they pause?

I. Ber. An hour to strike.

Doge (aside). Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!

I. Ber. I now have placed
My life, my honour, all my earthly hopes
Within thy power, but in the firm belief
That injuries like ours, sprung from one cause,
Will generate one vengeance: should it be so,
Be our Chief now — our Sovereign hereafter.

Doge. How many are ye?

I. Ber. I'll not answer that
Till I am answered.

Doge. How, sir! do you menace? ⁵⁰⁰

I. Ber. No; I affirm. I have betrayed myself;
But there's no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace, nor in those
Not less appalling cells, the "leaden roofs,"
To force a single name from me of others.
The Pozzi and the Piombi were in vain;
They might wring blood from me, but treachery never.
And I would pass the fearful "Bridge of Sighs,"

Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows 510
Between the murderers and the murdered, washing
The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on't, and avenge me.

Doge. If such your power and purpose, why come here
To sue for justice, being in the course
To do yourself due right?

I. Ber. Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be
Suspected of combining to destroy it. 520
Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and muttered threats had made me
A marked man to the Forty's inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily
It shapes its phrase, is little to be feared,
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
I had another reason.

Doge. What was that?

I. Ber. Some rumours that the Doge was greatly moved
By the reference of the Avogadori
Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty 530
Had reached me. I had served you, honoured you,
And felt that you were dangerously insulted,
Being of an order of such spirits, as
Requite tenfold both good and evil: 'twas
My wish to prove and urge you to redress.
Now you know all; and that I speak the truth,
My peril be the proof.

Doge. You have deeply ventured;
But all must do so who would greatly win:
Thus far I'll answer you — your secret's safe.

I. Ber. And is this all?

Doge. Unless with all intrusted, ⁵⁴⁰
What would you have me answer?

I. Ber. I would have you
Trust him who leaves his life in trust with you.

Doge. But I must know your plan, your names, and numbers;
The last may then be doubled, and the former
Matured and strengthened.

I. Ber. We're enough already;
You are the sole ally we covet now.

Doge. But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.

I. Ber. That shall be done upon your formal pledge
To keep the faith that we will pledge to you.

Doge. When? where?

I. Ber. This night I'll bring to your apartment ⁵⁵⁰
Two of the principals: a greater number
Were hazardous.

Doge. Stay, I must think of this. —
What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?

I. Ber. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

I. Ber. Not were he your son!

Doge. Wretch! darrest thou name my son? He died in arms
At Sapienza for this faithless state.
Oh! that he were alive, and I in ashes!
Or that he were alive ere I be ashes!

I should not need the dubious aid of strangers. 560

I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers whom thou doubtest,
But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with them.

Doge. The die is cast. Where is the place of meeting?

I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and masked
Where'er your Highness pleases to direct me,
To wait your coming, and conduct you where
You shall receive our homage, and pronounce
Upon our project.

Doge. At what hour arises
The moon?

I. Ber. Late, but the atmosphere is thick and dusky, 570
'Tis a sirocco.

Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires; the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola, with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

I. Ber. I will not fail.

Doge. And now retire — —

I. Ber. In the full hope your Highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave.
[Exit Isreal Bertuccio.]

Doge (solus). At midnight, by the church Saints John and Paul,
Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair — 580
To what? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin states!

And will not my great sires leap from the vault,
Where lie two Doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them? Would they could!
For I should rest in honour with the honoured.
Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a name
Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles; but I will redeem it ⁵⁹⁰
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that's base in Venice,
And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of Time,
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,
But try the Cæsar, or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert — Success.

ACT II

Scene I. — *An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.*

Angiolina (wife of the Doge) and Marianna.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer?

Mar. That he was
That moment summoned to a conference;
But 'tis by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the Senators embarking;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.

Ang. Would he were returned!
He has been much disquieted of late;
And Time, which has not tamed his fiery spirit,
Nor yet enfeebled even his mortal frame, ¹⁰
Which seems to be more nourished by a soul
So quick and restless that it would consume
Less hardy clay — Time has but little power

On his resentments or his griefs. Unlike
To other spirits of his order, who,
In the first burst of passion, pour away
Their wrath or sorrow, all things wear in him
An aspect of Eternity: his thoughts,
His feelings, passions, good or evil, all
Have nothing of old age; and his bold brow ²⁰
Bears but the scars of mind, the thoughts of years,
Not their decrepitude: and he of late
Has been more agitated than his wont.
Would he were come! for I alone have power
Upon his troubled spirit.

Mar. It is true,
His Highness has of late been greatly moved
By the affront of Steno, and with cause:
But the offender doubtless even now
Is doomed to expiate his rash insult with
Such chastisement as will enforce respect ³⁰
To female virtue, and to noble blood.

Ang. 'Twas a gross insult; but I heed it not
For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep impression
Which it has made upon Faliero's soul,
The proud, the fiery, the austere — austere
To all save me: I tremble when I think
To what it may conduct.

Mar. Assuredly
The Doge can not suspect you?

Ang. Suspect *me*!
Why Steno dared not: when he scrawled his lie, ⁴⁰
Groveling by stealth in the moon's glimmering light,
His own still conscience smote him for the act,
And every shadow on the walls frowned shame
Upon his coward calumny.

Mar. 'Twere fit
He should be punished grievously.

Ang. He is so.

Mar. What! is the sentence passed? is he condemned?

Ang. I know not that, but he has been detected.

Mar. And deem you this enough for such foul scorn?

Ang. I would not be a judge in my own cause,
Nor do I know what sense of punishment ⁵⁰
May reach the soul of ribalds such as Steno;
But if his insults sink no deeper in
The minds of the inquisitors than they
Have ruffled mine, he will, for all acquittance,
Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.

Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slandered virtue.

Ang. Why, what is virtue if it needs a victim?
Or if it must depend upon men's words?
The dying Roman said, "'twas but a name:"
It were indeed no more, if human breath ⁶⁰
Could make or mar it.

Mar. Yet full many a dame,
Stainless and faithful, would feel all the wrong
Of such a slander; and less rigid ladies,
Such as abound in Venice, would be loud
And all-inexorable in their cry
For justice.

Ang. This but proves it is the name
And not the quality they prize: the first
Have found it a hard task to hold their honour,
If they require it to be blazoned forth;
And those who have not kept it, seek its seeming ⁷⁰

As they would look out for an ornament
Of which they feel the want, but not because
They think it so; they live in others' thoughts,
And would seem honest as they must seem fair.

Mar. You have strange thoughts for a patrician dame.

Ang. And yet they were my father's; with his name,
The sole inheritance he left.

Mar. You want none;
Wife to a Prince, the Chief of the Republic.

Ang. I should have sought none though a peasant's bride,
But feel not less the love and gratitude ⁸⁰
Due to my father, who bestowed my hand
Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend,
The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge.

Mar. And with that hand did he bestow your heart?

Ang. He did so, or it had not been bestowed.

Mar. Yet this strange disproportion in your years,
And, let me add, disparity of tempers,
Might make the world doubt whether such an union
Could make you wisely, permanently happy.

Ang. The world will think with worldlings; but my heart ⁹⁰
Has still been in my duties, which are many,
But never difficult.

Mar. And do you love him?

Ang. I love all noble qualities which merit
Love, and I loved my father, who first taught me
To single out what we should love in others,
And to subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
To baser passions. He bestowed my hand

Upon Faliero: he had known him noble,
Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities 100
Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all
Such have I found him as my father said.
His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms
Of men who have commanded; too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely fostered by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honour, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrained, and this I fear in him. 110
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet tempered by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavished all its chief employs upon him,
From his first fight to his last embassy,
From which on his return the Dukedom met him.

Mar. But previous to this marriage, had your heart
Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
Such as in years had been more meet to match
Beauty like yours? or, since, have you ne'er seen 120
One, who, if your fair hand were still to give,
Might now pretend to Loredano's daughter?

Ang. I answered your first question when I said
I married.

Mar. And the second?

Ang. Needs no answer.

Mar. I pray you pardon, if I have offended.

Ang. I feel no wrath, but some surprise: I knew not
That wedded bosoms could permit themselves
To ponder upon what they *now* might choose,
Or aught save their past choice.

Mar. 'Tis their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they would 130
Now choose more wisely, could they cancel it.

Ang. It may be so. I knew not of such thoughts.

Mar. Here comes the Doge — shall I retire?

Ang. It may
Be better you should quit me; he seems rapt
In thought. — How pensively he takes his way!
[*Exit Marianna.*

Enter the Doge and Pietro.

Doge (musing). There is a certain Philip Calendaro
Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
Of eighty men, and has great influence
Besides on all the spirits of his comrades:
This man, I hear, is bold and popular, 140
Sudden and daring, and yet secret; 'twould
Be well that he were won: I needs must hope
That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
But fain would be — —

Pie. My Lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and enquire your pleasure
To fix an hour when he may speak with you.

Doge. At sunset. — Stay a moment — let me see —
Say in the second hour of night. [*Exit Pietro.*

Ang. My Lord! 150

Doge. My dearest child, forgive me — why delay
So long approaching me? — I saw you not.

Ang. You were absorbed in thought, and he who now
Has parted from you might have words of weight
To bear you from the Senate.

Doge. From the Senate?

Ang. I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.

Doge. The Senate's duty! you mistake;
'Tis we who owe all service to the Senate.

Ang. I thought the Duke had held command in Venice.

Doge. He shall. — But let that pass. — We will be jocund. 160
How fares it with you? have you been abroad?
The day is overcast, but the calm wave
Favours the gondolier's light skimming oar;
Or have you held a levee of your friends?
Or has your music made you solitary?
Say — is there aught that you would will within
The little sway now left the Duke? or aught
Of fitting splendour, or of honest pleasure,
Social or lonely, that would glad your heart,
To compensate for many a dull hour, wasted 170
On an old man oft moved with many cares?
Speak, and 'tis done.

Ang. You're ever kind to me.
I have nothing to desire, or to request,
Except to see you oftener and calmer.

Doge. Calmer?

Ang. Aye, calmer, my good Lord. — Ah, why
Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,
And let such strong emotions stamp your brow,
As not betraying their full import, yet
Disclose too much?

Doge. Disclose too much! — of what?
What is there to disclose?

Ang. A heart so ill ¹⁸⁰
At ease.

Doge. 'Tis nothing, child. — But in the state
You know what daily cares oppress all those
Who govern this precarious commonwealth;
Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within — 'tis this which makes me
More pensive and less tranquil than my wont.

Ang. Yet this existed long before, and never
Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me; there is something at your heart
More than the mere discharge of public duties, ¹⁹⁰
Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have rendered light, nay, a necessity,
To keep your mind from stagnating. 'Tis not
In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you, —
You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
And climbed up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainted by the way, and stand
Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne'er feel dizzy.
Were Genoa's galleys riding in the port, ²⁰⁰
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark's,
You are not to be wrought on, but would fall,
As you have risen, with an unaltered brow:
Your feelings now are of a different kind;
Something has stung your pride, not patriotism.

Doge. Pride! Angiolina? Alas! none is left me.

Ang. Yes — the same sin that overthrew the angels,
And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature:
The vile are only vain; the great are proud. ²¹⁰

Doge. I *had* the pride of honour, of *your* honour,
Deep at my heart — But let us change the theme.

Ang. Ah no! — As I have ever shared your kindness
In all things else, let me not be shut out
From your distress: were it of public import,
You know I never sought, would never seek
To win a word from you; but feeling now
Your grief is private, it belongs to me
To lighten or divide it. Since the day
When foolish Steno's ribaldry detected ²²⁰
Unfixed your quiet, you are greatly changed,
And I would soothe you back to what you were.

Doge. To what I was! — have you heard Steno's sentence?

Ang. No.

Doge. A month's arrest.

Ang. Is it not enough?

Doge. Enough! — yes, for a drunken galley slave,
Who, stung by stripes, may murmur at his master;
But not for a deliberate, false, cool villain,
Who stains a Lady's and a Prince's honour
Even on the throne of his authority.

Ang. There seems to be enough in the conviction ²³⁰
Of a patrician guilty of a falsehood:
All other punishment were light unto
His loss of honour.

Doge. Such men have no honour;
They have but their vile lives — and these are spared.

Ang. You would not have him die for this offence?

Doge. Not *now*: — being still alive, I'd have him live

Long as *he* can; he has ceased to merit death;
The guilty saved hath damned his hundred judges,
And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.

Ang. Oh! had this false and flippant libeller ²⁴⁰
Shed his young blood for his absurd lampoon,
Ne'er from that moment could this breast have known
A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber more.

Doge. Does not the law of Heaven say blood for blood?
And he who *taints* kills more than he who sheds it.
Is it the *pain* of blows, or *shame* of blows,
That makes such deadly to the sense of man?
Do not the laws of man say blood for honour, —
And, less than honour, for a little gold?
Say not the laws of nations blood for treason? ²⁵⁰
Is't nothing to have filled these veins with poison
For their once healthful current? is it nothing
To have stained your name and mine — the noblest names?
Is't nothing to have brought into contempt
A Prince before his people? to have failed
In the respect accorded by Mankind
To youth in woman, and old age in man?
To virtue in your sex, and dignity
In ours? — But let them look to it who have saved him.

Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies. ²⁶⁰

Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is there not Hell
For wrath eternal?

Ang. Do not speak thus wildly —
Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.

Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive them!

Ang. And will you?

Doge. Yes, when they are in Heaven!

Ang. And not till then?

Doge. What matters my forgiveness? an old man's,
Worn out, scorned, spurned, abused; what matters then
My pardon more than my resentment, both
Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long;
But let us change the argument. — My child! ²⁷⁰
My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
The brave, the chivalrous, how little deemed
Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend,
That he was linking thee to shame! — Alas!
Shame without sin, for thou art faultless. Hadst thou
But had a different husband, *any* husband
In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this brand,
This blasphemy had never fallen upon thee.
So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure,
To suffer this, and yet be unavenged! ²⁸⁰

Ang. I am too well avenged, for you still love me,
And trust, and honour me; and all men know
That you are just, and I am true: what more
Could I require, or you command?

Doge. 'Tis well,
And may be better; but whate'er betide,
Be thou at least kind to my memory.

Ang. Why speak you thus?

Doge. It is no matter why;
But I would still, whatever others think,
Have your respect both now and in my grave.

Ang. Why should you doubt it? has it ever failed? ²⁹⁰

Doge. Come hither, child! I would a word with you.
Your father was my friend; unequal Fortune
Made him my debtor for some courtesies
Which bind the good more firmly: when, oppressed

With his last malady, he willed our union,
It was not to repay me, long repaid
Before by his great loyalty in friendship;
His object was to place your orphan beauty
In honourable safety from the perils,
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail ³⁰⁰
A lonely and undowered maid. I did not
Think with him, but would not oppose the thought
Which soothed his death-bed.

Ang. I have not forgotten
The nobleness with which you bade me speak
If my young heart held any preference
Which would have made me happier; nor your offer
To make my dowry equal to the rank
Of aught in Venice, and forego all claim
My father's last injunction gave you.

Doge. Thus,
'Twas not a foolish dotard's vile caprice, ³¹⁰
Nor the false edge of agéd appetite,
Which made me covetous of girlish beauty,
And a young bride: for in my fieriest youth
I swayed such passions; nor was this my age
Infected with that leprosy of lust
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,
Making them ransack to the very last
The dregs of pleasure for their vanished joys;
Or buy in selfish marriage some young victim,
Too helpless to refuse a state that's honest, ³²⁰
Too feeling not to know herself a wretch.
Our wedlock was not of this sort; you had
Freedom from me to choose, and urged in answer
Your father's choice.

Ang. I did so; I would do so
In face of earth and Heaven; for I have never
Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,
In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.

Doge. I knew my heart would never treat you harshly:
I knew my days could not disturb you long;
And then the daughter of my earliest friend, ³³⁰
His worthy daughter, free to choose again.
Wealthier and wiser, in the ripest bloom
Of womanhood, more skilful to select
By passing these probationary years,
Inheriting a Prince's name and riches,
Secured, by the short penance of enduring
An old man for some summers, against all
That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might
Have urged against her right; my best friend's child
Would choose more fitly in respect of years, ³⁴⁰
And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My Lord, I looked but to my father's wishes,
Hallowed by his last words, and to my heart
For doing all its duties, and replying
With faith to him with whom I was affianced.
Ambitious hopes ne'er crossed my dreams; and should
The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.

Doge. I do believe you; and I know you true:
For Love — romantic Love — which in my youth
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw ³⁵⁰
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been
No lure for me, in my most passionate days,
And could not be so now, did such exist.
But such respect, and mildly paid regard
As a true feeling for your welfare, and
A free compliance with all honest wishes, —
A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness
Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings
As Youth is apt in, so as not to check
Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew ³⁶⁰
You had been won, but thought the change your choice;
A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct;
A trust in you; a patriarchal love,
And not a doting homage; friendship, faith, —

Such estimation in your eyes as these
Might claim, I hoped for.

Ang. And have ever had.

Doge. I think so. For the difference in our years
You knew it choosing me, and chose; I trusted
Not to my qualities, nor would have faith
In such, nor outward ornaments of nature, ³⁷⁰
Were I still in my five and twentieth spring;
I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins; I trusted to the soul
God gave you — to the truths your father taught you —
To your belief in Heaven — to your mild virtues —
To your own faith and honour, for my own.

Ang. You have done well. — I thank you for that trust,
Which I have never for one moment ceased
To honour you the more for.

Doge. Where is Honour,
Innate and precept-strengthened, 'tis the rock ³⁸⁰
Of faith connubial: where it is not — where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although 'twere wed to him it covets most:
An incarnation of the poet's God
In all his marble-chiselled beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides, in ³⁹⁰
His majesty of superhuman Manhood,
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not;
It is consistency which forms and proves it:
Vice cannot fix, and Virtue cannot change.
The once fall'n woman must for ever fall;
For Vice must have variety, while Virtue
Stands like the Sun, and all which rolls around

Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect.

Ang. And seeing, feeling thus this truth in others,
(I pray you pardon me;) but wherefore yield you 400
To the most fierce of fatal passions, and
Disquiet your great thoughts with restless hate
Of such a thing as Steno?

Doge. You mistake me.
It is not Steno who could move me thus;
Had it been so, he should — but let that pass.

Ang. What is't you feel so deeply, then, even now?

Doge. The violated majesty of Venice,
At once insulted in her Lord and laws.

Ang. Alas! why will you thus consider it?

Doge. I have thought on't till — but let me lead you back 410
To what I urged; all these things being noted,
I wedded you; the world then did me justice
Upon the motive, and my conduct proved
They did me right, while yours was all to praise:
You had all freedom — all respect — all trust
From me and mine; and, born of those who made
Princes at home, and swept Kings from their thrones
On foreign shores, in all things you appeared
Worthy to be our first of native dames.

Ang. To what does this conduct?

Doge. To thus much — that 420
A miscreant's angry breath may blast it all —
A villain, whom for his unbridled bearing,
Even in the midst of our great festival,
I caused to be conducted forth, and taught
How to demean himself in ducal chambers;
A wretch like this may leave upon the wall

The blighting venom of his sweltering heart,
And this shall spread itself in general poison;
And woman's innocence, man's honour, pass
Into a by-word; and the doubly felon ⁴³⁰
(Who first insulted virgin modesty
By a gross affront to your attendant damsels
Amidst the noblest of our dames in public)
Requite himself for his most just expulsion
By blackening publicly his Sovereign's consort,
And be absolved by his upright compeers.

Ang. But he has been condemned into captivity.

Doge. For such as him a dungeon were acquittal;
And his brief term of mock-arrest will pass
Within a palace. But I've done with him; ⁴⁴⁰
The rest must be with you.

Ang. With me, my Lord?

Doge. Yes, Angiolina. Do not marvel; I
Have let this prey upon me till I feel
My life cannot be long; and fain would have you
Regard the injunctions you will find within
This scroll (*giving her a paper*)
— — Fear not; they are for your advantage:
Read them hereafter at the fitting hour.

Ang. My Lord, in life, and after life, you shall
Be honoured still by me: but may your days
Be many yet — and happier than the present! ⁴⁵⁰
This passion will give way, and you will be
Serene, and what you should be — what you were.

Doge. I will be what I should be, or be nothing;
But never more — oh! never, never more,
O'er the few days or hours which yet await
The blighted old age of Faliero, shall
Sweet Quiet shed her sunset! Never more

Those summer shadows rising from the past
Of a not ill-spent nor inglorious life,
Mellowing the last hours as the night approaches, 460
Shall soothe me to my moment of long rest.
I had but little more to ask, or hope,
Save the regards due to the blood and sweat,
And the soul's labour through which I had toiled
To make my country honoured. As her servant —
Her servant, though her chief — I would have gone
Down to my fathers with a name serene
And pure as theirs; but this has been denied me.
Would I had died at Zara!

Ang. There you saved
The state; then live to save her still. A day, 470
Another day like that would be the best
Reproof to them, and sole revenge for you.

Doge. But one such day occurs within an age;
My life is little less than one, and 'tis
Enough for Fortune to have granted *once*,
That which scarce one more favoured citizen
May win in many states and years. But why
Thus speak I? Venice has forgot that day —
Then why should I remember it? — Farewell,
Sweet Angiolina! I must to my cabinet; 480
There's much for me to do — and the hour hastens.

Ang. Remember what you were.

Doge. It were in vain!
Joy's recollection is no longer joy,
While Sorrow's memory is a sorrow still.

Ang. At least, whate'er may urge, let me implore
That you will take some little pause of rest:
Your sleep for many nights has been so turbid,
That it had been relief to have awaked you,
Had I not hoped that Nature would o'erpower

At length the thoughts which shook your slumbers thus. 490
An hour of rest will give you to your toils
With fitter thoughts and freshened strength.

Doge. I cannot —
I must not, if I could; for never was
Such reason to be watchful: yet a few —
Yet a few days and dream-perturbéd nights,
And I shall slumber well — but where? — no matter.
Adieu, my Angiolina.

Ang. Let me be
An instant — yet an instant your companion!
I cannot bear to leave you thus.

Doge. Come then,
My gentle child — forgive me: thou wert made 500
For better fortunes than to share in mine,
Now darkling in their close toward the deep vale
Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.
When I am gone — it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that stirring
Within — above — around, that in this city
Will make the cemeteries populous
As e'er they were by pestilence or war, —
When I *am* nothing, let that which I *was*
Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips, 510
A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remember.
Let us begone, my child — the time is pressing.

Scene II. — *A retired spot near the Arsenal.*

Israel Bertuccio *and* Philip Calendaro.

Cal. How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint?

I. Ber. Why, well.

Cal. Is't possible! will he be punished?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. With what? a mulct or an arrest?

I. Ber. With death!

Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,
Such as I counselled you, with your own hand.

I. Ber. Yes; and for one sole draught of hate, forego
The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of exile;
Leaving one scorpion crushed, and thousands stinging
My friends, my family, my countrymen! ¹⁰
No, Calendaro; these same drops of blood,
Shed shamefully, shall have the whole of his
For their requital — — But not only his;
We will not strike for private wrongs alone:
Such are for selfish passions and rash men,
But are unworthy a Tyrannicide.

Cal. You have more patience than I care to boast.
Had I been present when you bore this insult,
I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath. ²⁰

I. Ber. Thank Heaven you were not — all had else been marred:
As 'tis, our cause looks prosperous still.

Cal. You saw
The Doge — what answer gave he?

I. Ber. That there was
No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Cal. I told you so before, and that 'twas idle
To think of justice from such hands.

I. Ber. At least,
It lulled suspicion, showing confidence.
Had I been silent, not a Sbirro but
Had kept me in his eye, as meditating
A silent, solitary, deep revenge. 30

Cal. But wherefore not address you to the Council?
The Doge is a mere puppet, who can scarce
Obtain right for himself. Why speak to *him*?

I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal. Why not now?

I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight. Get your musters,
And bid our friends prepare their companies:
Set all in readiness to strike the blow,
Perhaps in a few hours: we have long waited
For a fit time — that hour is on the dial,
It may be, of to-morrow's sun: delay 40
Beyond may breed us double danger. See
That all be punctual at our place of meeting,
And armed, excepting those of the Sixteen,
Who will remain among the troops to wait
The signal.

Cal. These brave words have breathed new life
Into my veins; I am sick of these protracted
And hesitating councils: day on day
Crawled on, and added but another link
To our long fetters, and some fresher wrong
Inflicted on our brethren or ourselves, 50
Helping to swell our tyrants' bloated strength.
Let us but deal upon them, and I care not
For the result, which must be Death or Freedom!
I'm weary to the heart of finding neither.

I. Ber. We will be free in Life or Death! the grave
Is chainless. Have you all the musters ready?

And are the sixteen companies completed
To sixty?

Cal. All save two, in which there are
Twenty-five wanting to make up the number.

I. Ber. No matter; we can do without. Whose are they? 60

Cal. Bertram's and old Soranzo's, both of whom
Appear less forward in the cause than we are.

I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you deem all those
Who are not restless cold; but there exists
Oft in concentrated spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.

Cat. I do not doubt the elder; but in Bertram
There is a hesitating softness, fatal
To enterprise like ours: I've seen that man
Weep like an infant o'er the misery 70
Of others, heedless of his own, though greater;
And in a recent quarrel I beheld him
Turn sick at sight of blood, although a villain's.

I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes,
And feel for what their duty bids them do.
I have known Bertram long; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of honour.

Cal. It may be so:
I apprehend less treachery than weakness;
Yet as he has no mistress, and no wife
To work upon his milkiness of spirit, 80
He may go through the ordeal; it is well
He is an orphan, friendless save in us:
A woman or a child had made him less
Than either in resolve.

I. Ber. Such ties are not

For those who are called to the high destinies
Which purify corrupted commonwealths;
We must forget all feelings save the *one*,
We must resign all passions save our purpose,
We must behold no object save our country,
And only look on Death as beautiful, ⁹⁰
So that the sacrifice ascend to Heaven,
And draw down Freedom on her evermore.

Cal. But if we fail — —

I. Ber. They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore:
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls —
But still their Spirit walks abroad. Though years
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct ¹⁰⁰
The world at last to Freedom. What were we,
If Brutus had not lived? He died in giving
Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson —
A name which is a virtue, and a Soul
Which multiplies itself throughout all time,
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state
Turns servile. He and his high friend were styled
“The last of Romans!” Let us be the first
Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires.

Cal. Our fathers did not fly from Attila ¹¹⁰
Into these isles, where palaces have sprung
On banks redeemed from the rude ocean’s ooze,
To own a thousand despots in his place.
Better bow down before the Hun, and call
A Tartar lord, than these swoln silkworms masters!
The first at least was man, and used his sword
As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a word
As with a spell.

I. Ber. It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness; ¹²⁰
To-day I have not been the usual round,
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care: these orders
In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have
Lent a fair colour to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtained in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet. — Are all supplied with arms? ¹³⁰

Cal. All who were deemed trust-worthy: there are some
Whom it were well to keep in ignorance
Till it be time to strike, and then supply them;
When in the heat and hurry of the hour
They have no opportunity to pause,
But needs must on with those who will surround them.

I. Ber. You have said well. Have you remarked all such?

Cal. I've noted most; and caused the other chiefs
To use like caution in their companies.
As far as I have seen, we are enough ¹⁴⁰
To make the enterprise secure, if 'tis
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 'tis begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

I. Ber. Let the Sixteen meet at the wonted hour,
Except Soranzo, Nicoletto Blondo,
And Marco Giuda, who will keep their watch
Within the arsenal, and hold all ready,
Expectant of the signal we will fix on.

Cal. We will not fail.

I. Ber. Let all the rest be there;
I have a stranger to present to them. ¹⁵⁰

Cal. A stranger! doth he know the secret?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. And have you dared to peril your friends' lives
On a rash confidence in one we know not?

I. Ber. I have risked no man's life except my own —
Of that be certain: he is one who may
Make our assurance doubly sure, according
His aid; and if reluctant, he no less
Is in our power: he comes alone with me,
And cannot 'scape us; but he will not swerve.

Cal. I cannot judge of this until I know him: 160
Is he one of our order?

I. Ber. Aye, in spirit,
Although a child of Greatness; he is one
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one —
One who has done great deeds, and seen great changes;
No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;
Valiant in war, and sage in council; noble
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once stirred and baffled, as he has been
Upon the tenderest points, there is no Fury 170
In Grecian story like to that which wrings
His vitals with her burning hands, till he
Grows capable of all things for revenge;
And add too, that his mind is liberal,
He sees and feels the people are oppressed,
And shares their sufferings. Take him all in all,
We have need of such, and such have need of us.

Cal. And what part would you have him take with us?

I. Ber. It may be, that of Chief.

Cal. What! and resign
Your own command as leader?

I. Ber. Even so. ¹⁸⁰

My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had marked me out
To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear: if I have found such
As you yourselves shall own more worthy, think you
That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,
Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,
Rather than yield to one above me in ¹⁹⁰
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,
Know your friend better; but you all shall judge.
Away! and let us meet at the fixed hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.

Cal. Worthy Bertuccio, I have known you ever
Trusty and brave, with head and heart to plan
What I have still been prompt to execute.
For my own part, I seek no other Chief;
What the rest will decide, I know not, but
I am with you, as I have ever been, ²⁰⁰
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us meet. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

Scene I. — Scene, the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it. — A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.

Enter the Doge alone, disguised.

Doge (solus). I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,

And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee
A lazar-house of tyranny: the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not; 10
And therefore was I punished, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane!
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead,
Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,
Mouldered into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes, 20
When what is now a handful shook the earth —
Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house!
Vault where two Doges rest — my sires! who died
The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labours, wounds, and state
I have inherited, — let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,
And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me!
I call them up, and them and thee to witness 30
What it hath been which put me to this task —
Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,
Their mighty name dishonoured all *in* me,
Not *by* me, but by the ungrateful nobles
We fought to make our equals, not our lords:
And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
Who perished in the field, where I since conquered,
Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice' foes, there offered up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance? 40
Spirits! smile down upon me! for my cause
Is yours, in all life now can be of yours, —

Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,
And in the future fortunes of our race!
Let me but prosper, and I make this city
Free and immortal, and our House's name
Worthier of what you were — now and hereafter!

Enter Israel Bertuccio.

I. Ber. Who goes there?

Doge. A friend to Venice.

I. Ber. 'Tis he.
Welcome, my Lord, — you are before the time.

Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly. 50

I. Ber. Have with you. — I am proud and pleased to see
Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all dispelled?

Doge. Not so — but I have set my little left
Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
When I first listened to your treason. — Start not!
That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
Though I be wrought on to commit them. When
I heard you tempt your Sovereign, and forbore 60
To have you dragged to prison, I became
Your guiltiest accomplice: now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.

I. Ber. Strange words, my Lord, and most unmerited;
I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. *We* — *We!* — no matter — you have earned the right
To talk of *us*. — But to the point. — If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, rendered free
And flourishing, when we are in our graves,

Conducts her generations to our tombs, 70
And makes her children with their little hands
Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel; — thou
No less than he who was thy Sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel. 80

I. Ber. 'Tis not the moment to consider thus,
Else I could answer. — Let us to the meeting,
Or we may be observed in lingering here.

Doge. We *are* observed, and have been.

I. Ber. We observed!
Let me discover — and this steel — — -

Doge. Put up;
Here are no human witnesses: look there —
What see you?

I. Ber. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.

Doge. That Warrior was the sire
Of my sire's fathers, and that statue was 90
Decreed to him by the twice rescued city: —
Think you that he looks down on us or no?

I. Ber. My Lord, these are mere fantasies; there are
No eyes in marble.

Doge. But there are in Death.
I tell thee, man, there is a spirit in

Such things that acts and sees, unseen, though felt;
And, if there be a spell to stir the dead,
'Tis in such deeds as we are now upon.
Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as mine
Can rest, when he, their last descendant Chief, ¹⁰⁰
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves
With stung plebeians?

I. Ber. It had been as well
To have pondered this before, — ere you embarked
In our great enterprise. — Do you repent?

Doge. No — but I *feel*, and shall do to the last.
I cannot quench a glorious life at once,
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,
And take men's lives by stealth, without some pause:
Yet doubt me not; it is this very feeling,
And knowing *what* has wrung me to be thus, ¹¹⁰
Which is your best security. There's not
A roused mechanic in your busy plot
So wronged as I, so fall'n, so loudly called
To his redress: the very means I am forced
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,
That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.

I. Ber. Let us away — hark — the Hour strikes.

Doge. On — on —
It is our knell, or that of Venice. — On.

I. Ber. Say rather, 'tis her Freedom's rising peal ¹²⁰
Of Triumph. This way — we are near the place.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II. — *The House where the Conspirators meet.*

Dagolino, Doro, Bertram, Fedele Trevisano, Calendaro, Antonio Delle Bende,
etc., etc.

Cal. (*entering*). Are all here?

Dag. All with you; except the three
On duty, and our leader Israel,
Who is expected momentarily.

Cal. Where's Bertram?

Ber. Here!

Cal. Have you not been able to complete
The number wanting in your company?

Ber. I had marked out some: but I have not dared
To trust them with the secret, till assured
That they were worthy faith.

Cal. There is no need
Of trusting to their faith; *who*, save ourselves
And our more chosen comrades, is aware ¹⁰
Fully of our intent? they think themselves
Engaged in secret to the Signory,
To punish some more dissolute young nobles
Who have defied the law in their excesses;
But once drawn up, and their new swords well fleshed
In the rank hearts of the more odious Senators,
They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
The example of their chiefs, and I for one
Will set them such, that they for very shame ²⁰
And safety will not pause till all have perished.

Ber. How say you? *all!*

Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?

Ber. *I spare?*
I have no power to spare. I only questioned,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked men

There might be some, whose age and qualities
Might mark them out for pity.

Cal. Yes, such pity
As when the viper hath been cut to pieces,
The separate fragments quivering in the sun,
In the last energy of venomous life,
Deserve and have. Why, I should think as soon 30
Of pitying some particular fang which made
One in the jaw of the swoln serpent, as
Of saving one of these: they form but links
Of one long chain; one mass, one breath, one body;
They eat, and drink, and live, and breed together,
Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert, —
So let them die as *one*!

Dag. Should *one* survive,
He would be dangerous as the whole; it is not
Their number, be it tens or thousands, but
The spirit of this Aristocracy 40
Which must be rooted out; and if there were
A single shoot of the old tree in life,
‘Twould fasten in the soil, and spring again
To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm!

Cal. Look to it well
Bertram! I have an eye upon thee.

Ber. Who
Distrusts me?

Cal. Not I; for if I did so,
Thou wouldst not now be there to talk of trust:
It is thy softness, not thy want of faith,
Which makes thee to be doubted.

Ber. You should know 50
Who hear me, who and what I am; a man

Roused like yourselves to overthrow oppression;
A kind man, I am apt to think, as some
Of you have found me; and if brave or no,
You, Calendaro, can pronounce, who have seen me
Put to the proof; or, if you should have doubts,
I'll clear them on your person!

Cal. You are welcome,
When once our enterprise is o'er, which must not
Be interrupted by a private brawl.

Ber. I am no brawler; but can bear myself 60
As far among the foe as any he
Who hears me; else why have I been selected
To be of your chief comrades? but no less
I own my natural weakness; I have not
Yet learned to think of indiscriminate murder
Without some sense of shuddering; and the sight
Of blood which spouts through hoary scalps is not
To me a thing of triumph, nor the death
Of man surprised a glory. Well — too well
I know that we must do such things on those 70
Whose acts have raised up such avengers; but
If there were some of these who could be saved
From out this sweeping fate, for our own sakes
And for our honour, to take off some stain
Of massacre, which else pollutes it wholly,
I had been glad; and see no cause in this
For sneer, nor for suspicion!

Dag. Calm thee, Bertram,
For we suspect thee not, and take good heart.
It is the cause, and not our will, which asks
Such actions from our hands: we'll wash away 80
All stains in Freedom's fountain!

Enter Israel Bertuccio, and the Doge, disguised.

Dag. Welcome, Israel.

Consp. Most welcome. — Brave Bertuccio, thou art late —
Who is this stranger?

Cal. It is time to name him.
Our comrades are even now prepared to greet him
In brotherhood, as I have made it known
That thou wouldst add a brother to our cause,
Approved by thee, and thus approved by all,
Such is our trust in all thine actions. Now
Let him unfold himself.

I. Ber. Stranger, step forth!
[*The Doge discovers himself.*]

Consp. To arms! — we are betrayed — it is the Doge! 90
Down with them both! our traitorous captain, and
The tyrant he hath sold us to.

Cal. (*drawing his sword*). Hold! hold!
Who moves a step against them dies. Hold! hear
Bertuccio — What! are you appalled to see
A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you? — Israel, speak! what means this mystery?

I. Ber. Let them advance and strike at their own bosoms,
Ungrateful suicides! for on our lives
Depend their own, their fortunes, and their hopes.

Doge. Strike! — If I dreaded death, a death more fearful 100
Than any your rash weapons can inflict,
I should not now be here: Oh, noble Courage!
The eldest born of Fear, which makes you brave
Against this solitary hoary head!
See the bold chiefs, who would reform a state
And shake down senates, mad with wrath and dread
At sight of one patrician! Butcher me!
You can, I care not. — Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of? look upon them!

Cal. Faith! he hath shamed us, and deservedly, ¹¹⁰
Was this your trust in your true Chief Bertuccio,
To turn your swords against him and his guest?
Sheathe them, and hear him.

I. Ber. I disdain to speak.
They might and must have known a heart like mine
Incapable of treachery; and the power
They gave me to adopt all fitting means
To further their design was ne'er abused.
They might be certain that who e'er was brought
By me into this Council had been led
To take his choice — as brother, or as victim. ¹²⁰

Doge. And which am I to be? your actions leave
Some cause to doubt the freedom of the choice.

I. Ber. My Lord, we would have perished here together,
Had these rash men proceeded; but, behold,
They are ashamed of that mad moment's impulse,
And droop their heads; believe me, they are such
As I described them. — Speak to them.

Cal. Aye, speak;
We are all listening in wonder.

I. Ber. (*addressing the conspirators*). You are safe,
Nay, more, almost triumphant — listen then,
And know my words for truth.

Doge. You see me here, ¹³⁰
As one of you hath said, an old, unarmed,
Defenceless man; and yesterday you saw me
Presiding in the hall of ducal state,
Apparent Sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters — the patricians.
Why I was there you know, or think you know;

Why I am *here*, he who hath been most wronged,
He who among you hath been most insulted, ¹⁴⁰
Outraged and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him here?
You know my recent story, all men know it,
And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgement to heap scorn on scorn.
But spare me the recital — it is here,
Here at my heart the outrage — but my words,
Already spent in unavailing plaints,
Would only show my feebleness the more, ¹⁵⁰
And I come here to strengthen even the strong,
And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman's weapons; but I need not urge you.
Our private wrongs have sprung from public vices,
In this — I cannot call it commonwealth,
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state
Without its virtues — temperance and valour.
The Lords of Lacedæmon were true soldiers,
But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots, ¹⁶⁰
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved;
Although dressed out to head a pageant, as
The Greeks of yore made drunk their slaves to form
A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this Monster of a state,
This mockery of a Government, this spectre,
Which must be exorcised with blood, — and then
We will renew the times of Truth and Justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights, ¹⁷⁰
Proportioned like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
And making firm the whole with grace and beauty,
So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry.
In operating this great change, I claim
To be one of you — if you trust in me;

If not, strike home, — my life is compromised,
And I would rather fall by freemen's hands
Than live another day to act the tyrant 180
As delegate of tyrants: such I am not,
And never have been — read it in our annals;
I can appeal to my past government
In many lands and cities; they can tell you
If I were an oppressor, or a man
Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.
Haply had I been what the Senate sought,
A thing of robes and trinkets, dizen'd out
To sit in state as for a Sovereign's picture;
A popular scourge, a ready sentence-signer, 190
A stickler for the Senate and "the Forty,"
A sceptic of all measures which had not
The sanction of "the Ten," a council-fawner,
A tool — a fool — a puppet, — they had ne'er
Fostered the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reached me through my pity for the people;
That many know, and they who know not yet
Will one day learn: meantime I do devote,
Whate'er the issue, my last days of life —
My present power such as it is, not that 200
Of Doge, but of a man who has been great
Before he was degraded to a Doge,
And still has individual means and mind;
I stake my fame (and I had fame) — my breath —
(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh)
My heart — my hope — my soul — upon this cast!
Such as I am, I offer me to you
And to your chiefs; accept me or reject me, —
A Prince who fain would be a Citizen
Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so. 210

Cal. Long live Faliero! — Venice shall be free!

Consp. Long live Faliero!

I. Ber. Comrades! did I well?

Is not this man a host in such a cause?

Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you?

Cal. Aye, and the first among us, as thou hast been
Of Venice — be our General and Chief.

Doge. Chief! — General! — I was General at Zara,
And Chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, Prince in Venice:
I cannot stoop — that is, I am not fit ²²⁰
To lead a band of — patriots: when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
‘Tis not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows — but now to the point:
Israel has stated to me your whole plan —
‘Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.

Cal. E’en when thou wilt. Is it not so, my friends?
I have disposed all for a sudden blow;
When shall it be then?

Doge. At sunrise.

Ber. So soon? ²³⁰

Doge. So soon? — so late — each hour accumulates
Peril on peril, and the more so now
Since I have mingled with you; — know you not
The Council, and “the Ten?” the spies, the eyes
Of the patricians dubious of their slaves,
And now more dubious of the Prince they have made one?
I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly,
Full to the Hydra’s heart — its heads will follow.

Cal. With all my soul and sword, I yield assent;
Our companies are ready, sixty each, ²⁴⁰
And all now under arms by Israel’s order;

Each at their different place of rendezvous,
And vigilant, expectant of some blow;
Let each repair for action to his post!
And now, my Lord, the signal?

Doge. When you hear
The great bell of Saint Mark's, which may not be
Struck without special order of the Doge
(The last poor privilege they leave their Prince),
March on Saint Mark's!

I. Ber. And there? —

Doge. By different routes
Let your march be directed, every sixty ²⁵⁰
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of War
And of the Genoese Fleet, by the first dawn
Discerned before the port; form round the palace,
Within whose court will be drawn out in arms
My nephew and the clients of our house,
Many and martial; while the bell tolls on,
Shout ye, "Saint Mark! — the foe is on our waters!"

Cal. I see it now — but on, my noble Lord.

Doge. All the patricians flocking to the Council, ²⁶⁰
(Which they dare not refuse, at the dread signal
Pealing from out their Patron Saint's proud tower,)
Will then be gathered in unto the harvest,
And we will reap them with the sword for sickle.
If some few should be tardy or absent, them,
'Twill be but to be taken faint and single,
When the majority are put to rest.

Cal. Would that the hour were come! we will not scotch,
But kill.

Ber. Once more, sir, with your pardon, I

Would now repeat the question which I asked 270
Before Bertuccio added to our cause
This great ally who renders it more sure,
And therefore safer, and as such admits
Some dawn of mercy to a portion of
Our victims — must all perish in this slaughter?

Cal. All who encounter me and mine — be sure,
The mercy they have shown, I show.

Consp. All! all!
Is this a time to talk of pity? when
Have they e'er shown, or felt, or feigned it?

I. Ber. Bertram,
This false compassion is a folly, and 280
Injustice to thy comrades and thy cause!
Dost thou not see, that if we single out
Some for escape, they live but to avenge
The fallen? and how distinguish now the innocent
From out the guilty? all their acts are one —
A single emanation from one body,
Together knit for our oppression! 'Tis
Much that we let their children live; I doubt
If all of these even should be set apart:
The hunter may reserve some single cub 290
From out the tiger's litter, but who e'er
Would seek to save the spotted sire or dam,
Unless to perish by their fangs? however,
I will abide by Doge Faliero's counsel:
Let him decide if any should be saved.

Doge. Ask me not — tempt me not with such a question —
Decide yourselves.

I. Ber. You know their private virtues
Far better than we can, to whom alone
Their public vices, and most foul oppression,
Have made them deadly; if there be amongst them 300

One who deserves to be repealed, pronounce.

Doge. Dolfino's father was my friend, and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared
My Genoese embassy: I saved the life
Of Veniero — shall I save it twice?
Would that I could save them and Venice also!
All these men, or their fathers, were my friends
Till they became my subjects; then fell from me
As faithless leaves drop from the o'erblown flower,
And left me a lone blighted thorny stalk, ³¹⁰
Which, in its solitude, can shelter nothing;
So, as they let me wither, let them perish!

Cal. They cannot co-exist with Venice' freedom!

Doge. Ye, though you know and feel our mutual mass
Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant
What fatal poison to the springs of Life,
To human ties, and all that's good and dear,
Lurks in the present institutes of Venice:
All these men were my friends; I loved them, they
Requited honourably my regards; ³²⁰
We served and fought; we smiled and wept in concert;
We revelled or we sorrowed side by side;
We made alliances of blood and marriage;
We grew in years and honours fairly, — till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them choose me for their Prince, and then farewell!
Farewell all social memory! all thoughts
In common! and sweet bonds which link old friendships,
When the survivors of long years and actions,
Which now belong to history, soothe the days ³³⁰
Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
Of half a century on his brother's brow,
And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
Flit round them whispering of the days gone by,
And seeming not all dead, as long as two

Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble — — 340
Oimé Oimé! — and must I do this deed?

I. Ber. My Lord, you are much moved: it is not now
That such things must be dwelt upon.

Doge. Your patience
A moment — I recede not: mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour they made me Doge, the *Doge* they *made* me —
Farewell the past! I died to all that had been,
Or rather they to me: no friends, no kindness,
No privacy of life — all were cut off:
They came not near me — such approach gave umbrage; 350
They could not love me — such was not the law;
They thwarted me — 'twas the state's policy;
They baffled me — 'twas a patrician's duty;
They wronged me, for such was to right the state;
They could not right me — that would give suspicion;
So that I was a slave to my own subjects;
So that I was a foe to my own friends;
Begirt with spies for guards, with robes for power,
With pomp for freedom, gaolers for a council,
Inquisitors for friends, and Hell for life! 360
I had only one fount of quiet left,
And *that* they poisoned! My pure household gods
Were shivered on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
Sate grinning Ribaldry, and sneering Scorn.

I. Ber. You have been deeply wronged, and now shall be
Nobly avenged before another night.

Doge. I had borne all — it hurt me, but I bore it —
Till this last running over of the cup
Of bitterness — until this last loud insult,
Not only unredressed, but sanctioned; then, 370

And thus, I cast all further feelings from me —
The feelings which they crushed for me, long, long
Before, even in their oath of false allegiance!
Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured
Their friend and made a Sovereign, as boys make
Playthings, to do their pleasure — and be broken!
I from that hour have seen but Senators
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge,
Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear;
They dreading he should snatch the tyranny ³⁸⁰
From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants.
To me, then, these men have no *private* life,
Nor claim to ties they have cut off from others;
As Senators for arbitrary acts
Amenable, I look on them — as such
Let them be dealt upon.

Cal. And now to action!

Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be
The last night of mere words: I'd fain be doing!
Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me wakeful!

I. Ber. Disperse then to your posts: be firm and vigilant; ³⁹⁰
Think on the wrongs we bear, the rights we claim.
This day and night shall be the last of peril!
Watch for the signal, and then march. I go
To join my band; let each be prompt to marshal
His separate charge: the Doge will now return
To the palace to prepare all for the blow.
We part to meet in Freedom and in Glory!

Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage to you
Shall be the head of Steno on this sword!

Doge. No; let him be reserved unto the last, ⁴⁰⁰
Nor turn aside to strike at such a prey,
Till nobler game is quarried: his offence
Was a mere ebullition of the vice,
The general corruption generated

By the foul Aristocracy: he could not —
He dared not in more honourable days
Have risked it. I have merged all private wrath
Against him in the thought of our great purpose.
A slave insults me — I require his punishment
From his proud master's hands; if he refuse it, ⁴¹⁰
The offence grows his, and let him answer it.

Cal. Yet, as the immediate cause of the alliance
Which consecrates our undertaking more,
I owe him such deep gratitude, that fain
I would repay him as he merits; may I?

Doge. You would but lop the hand, and I the head;
You would but smite the scholar, I the master;
You would but punish Steno, I the Senate.
I cannot pause on individual hate,
In the absorbing, sweeping, whole revenge, ⁴²⁰
Which, like the sheeted fire from Heaven, must blast
Without distinction, as it fell of yore,
Where the Dead Sea hath quenched two Cities' ashes.

I. Ber. Away, then, to your posts! I but remain
A moment to accompany the Doge
To our late place of tryst, to see no spies
Have been upon the scout, and thence I hasten
To where my allotted band is under arms.

Cal. Farewell, then, — until dawn!

I. Ber. Success go with you!

Consp. We will not fail — Away! My Lord, farewell! ⁴³⁰

[*The Conspirators salute the Doge and Israel Bertuccio, and retire, headed by Philip Calendaro.*

The Doge and Israel Bertuccio remain.

I. Ber. We have them in the toil — it cannot fail!

Now thou'rt indeed a Sovereign, and wilt make
A name immortal greater than the greatest:
Free citizens have struck at Kings ere now;
Cæsars have fallen, and even patrician hands
Have crushed dictators, as the popular steel
Has reached patricians: but, until this hour,
What Prince has plotted for his people's freedom?
Or risked a life to liberate his subjects?
For ever, and for ever, they conspire ⁴⁴⁰
Against the people, to abuse their hands
To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
Against the fellow nations, so that yoke
On yoke, and slavery and death may whet,
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan!
Now, my Lord, to our enterprise; — 'tis great,
And greater the reward; why stand you rapt?
A moment back, and you were all impatience!

Doge. And is it then decided! must they die?

I. Ber. Who?

Doge. My own friends by blood and courtesy, ⁴⁵⁰
And many deeds and days — the Senators?

I. Ber. You passed their sentence, and it is a just one.

Doge. Aye, so it seems, and so it is to *you*;
You are a patriot, a plebeian Gracchus —
The rebel's oracle, the people's tribune —
I blame you not — you act in your vocation;
They smote you, and oppressed you, and despised you;
So they have *me*: but *you* ne'er spake with them;
You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt;
You never had their wine-cup at your lips: ⁴⁶⁰
You grew not up with them, nor laughed, nor wept,
Nor held a revel in their company;
Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claimed their smile
In social interchange for yours, nor trusted

Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have:
These hairs of mine are grey, and so are theirs,
The elders of the Council: I remember
When all our locks were like the raven's wing,
As we went forth to take our prey around
The isles wrung from the false Mahometan; ⁴⁷⁰
And can I see them dabbled o'er with blood?
Each stab to them will seem my suicide.

I. Ber. Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy
A child; if you are not in second childhood,
Call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor
Thus shame yourself and me. By Heavens! I'd rather
Forego even now, or fail in our intent,
Than see the man I venerate subside
From high resolves into such shallow weakness!
You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both ⁴⁸⁰
Your own and that of others; can you shrink then
From a few drops from veins of hoary vampires,
Who but give back what they have drained from millions?

Doge. Bear with me! Step by step, and blow on blow,
I will divide with you; think not I waver:
Ah! no; it is the *certainty* of all
Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.
But let these last and lingering thoughts have way,
To which you only and the night are conscious,
And both regardless; when the Hour arrives, ⁴⁹⁰
'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
Which shall unpeople many palaces,
And hew the highest genealogic trees
Down to the earth, strewed with their bleeding fruit,
And crush their blossoms into barrenness:
This will I — must I — have I sworn to do,
Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;
But still I quiver to behold what I
Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.

I. Ber. Re-man your breast; I feel no such remorse, ⁵⁰⁰

I understand it not: why should you change?
You acted, and you act, on your free will.

Doge. Aye, there it is — *you* feel not, nor do I,
Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
A thousand lives — and killing, do no murder;
You *feel* not — you go to this butcher-work
As if these high-born men were steers for shambles:
When all is over, you'll be free and merry,
And calmly wash those hands incarnadine;
But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows ⁵¹⁰
In this surpassing massacre, shall be,
Shall see and feel — oh God! oh God! 'tis true,
And thou dost well to answer that it was
“My own free will and act,” and yet you err,
For I will do this! Doubt not — fear not; I
Will be your most unmerciful accomplice!
And yet I act no more on my free will,
Nor my own feelings — both compel me back;
But there is *Hell* within me and around,
And like the Demon who believes and trembles ⁵²⁰
Must I abhor and do. Away! away!
Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
To gather the retainers of our house.
Doubt not, St. Mark's great bell shall wake all Venice,
Except her slaughtered Senate: ere the Sun
Be broad upon the Adriatic there
Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
The roar of waters in the cry of blood!
I am resolved — come on.

I. Ber. With all my soul!
Keep a firm rein upon these bursts of passion; ⁵³⁰
Remember what these men have dealt to thee,
And that this sacrifice will be succeeded
By ages of prosperity and freedom
To this unshackled city: a true tyrant
Would have depopulated empires, nor
Have felt the strange compunction which hath wrung you

To punish a few traitors to the people.
Trust me, such were a pity more misplaced
Than the late mercy of the state to Steno.

Doge. Man, thou hast struck upon the chord which jars ⁵⁴⁰
All nature from my heart. Hence to our task!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

Scene I. — *Palazzo of the Patrician Lioni. Lioni laying aside the mask and cloak which the Venetian Nobles wore in public, attended by a Domestic.*

Lioni. I will to rest, right weary of this revel,
The gayest we have held for many moons,
And yet — I know not why — it cheered me not;
There came a heaviness across my heart,
Which, in the lightest movement of the dance,
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united
Even with the Lady of my Love, oppressed me,
And through my spirit chilled my blood, until
A damp like Death rose o'er my brow; I strove
To laugh the thought away, but 'twould not be; ¹⁰
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
Rose o'er the City's murmur in the night,
Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark:
So that I left the festival before
It reached its zenith, and will woo my pillow
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light
The lamp within my chamber.

Ant. Yes, my Lord: ²⁰
Command you no refreshment?

Lioni. Nought, save sleep,
Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it,

[Exit Antonio.

Though my breast feels too anxious; I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits: 'tis
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad Moon hath brightened. What a stillness!

[Goes to an open lattice.

And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls, 30
Spread over the reluctant gloom which haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which showed all things, but nothing as they were.
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of Youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Pranked forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood 40
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,
Believed itself forgotten, and was fooled.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavished its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flushed and crowded wassailers, and wasted
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year. 50
The music, and the banquet, and the wine,
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers,
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments,
The white arms and the raven hair, the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself, yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze and heaven;
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,

Suggesting the more secret symmetry 60
Of the fair forms which terminate so well —
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments — Art and Nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of beauty as the parched pilgrim's
On Arab sands the false mirage, which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone. Around me are the stars and waters —
Worlds mirrored in the Ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass; 70
And the great Element, which is to space
What Ocean is to Earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high Moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the Orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed 80
Reared up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing 90
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,

And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse; 100
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding City —
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm!
I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate: and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,
Now will I to my couch, although to rest 110
Is almost wronging such a night as this, — —
[*A knocking is heard from without.*
Hark! what is that? or who at such a moment?

Enter Antonio.

Ant. My Lord, a man without, on urgent business,
Implores to be admitted.

Lioni. Is he a stranger?

Ant. His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
I craved his name, but this he seemed reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni. 'Tis a strange hour, and a suspicious bearing! 120
And yet there is slight peril: 'tis not in
Their houses noble men are struck at; still,
Although I know not that I have a foe
In Venice, 'twill be wise to use some caution.
Admit him, and retire; but call up quickly
Some of thy fellows, who may wait without. —
Who can this man be? —
[*Exit Antonio, and returns with Bertram muffled.*

Ber. My good Lord Lioni,
I have no time to lose, nor thou, — dismiss
This menial hence; I would be private with you.

Lioni. It seems the voice of Bertram — Go, Antonio. 130
[*Exit Antonio.*

Now, stranger, what would you at such an hour?

Ber. (*discovering himself*).
A boon, my noble patron; you have granted
Many to your poor client, Bertram; add
This one, and make him happy.

Lioni. Thou hast known me
From boyhood, ever ready to assist thee
In all fair objects of advancement, which
Beseem one of thy station; I would promise
Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,
Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode
Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit 140
Hath some mysterious import — but say on —
What has occurred, some rash and sudden broil? —
A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab?
Mere things of every day; so that thou hast not
Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;
But then thou must withdraw, for angry friends
And relatives, in the first burst of vengeance,
Are things in Venice deadlier than the laws.

Ber. My Lord, I thank you; but — —

Lioni. But what? You have not
Raised a rash hand against one of our order? 150
If so — withdraw and fly — and own it not;
I would not slay — but then I must not save thee!
He who has shed patrician blood — —

Ber. I come
To save patrician blood, and not to shed it!

And thereunto I must be speedy, for
Each minute lost may lose a life; since Time
Has changed his slow scythe for the two-edged sword,
And is about to take, instead of sand,
The dust from sepulchres to fill his hour-glass! —
Go not *thou* forth to-morrow!

Lioni. Wherefore not? — 160
What means this menace?

Ber. Do not seek its meaning,
But do as I implore thee; — stir not forth,
Whate'er be stirring; though the roar of crowds —
The cry of women, and the shrieks of babes —
The groans of men — the clash of arms — the sound
Of rolling drum, shrill trump, and hollow bell,
Peal in one wide alarum l — Go not forth,
Until the Tocsin's silent, nor even then
Till I return!

Lioni. Again, what does this mean?

Ber. Again, I tell thee, ask not; but by all 170
Thou holdest dear on earth or Heaven — by all
The Souls of thy great fathers, and thy hope
To emulate them, and to leave behind
Descendants worthy both of them and thee —
By all thou hast of blessed in hope or memory —
By all thou hast to fear here or hereafter —
By all the good deeds thou hast done to me,
Good I would now repay with greater good,
Remain within — trust to thy household gods,
And to my word for safety, if thou dost, 180
As I now counsel — but if not, thou art lost!

Lioni. I am indeed already lost in wonder;
Surely thou ravest! what have *I* to dread?
Who are my foes? or if there be such, *why*
Art *thou* leagued with them? — *thou!* or, if so leagued,

Why comest thou to tell me at this hour,
And not before?

Ber. I cannot answer this.
Wilt thou go forth despite of this true warning?

Lioni. I was not born to shrink from idle threats,
The cause of which I know not: at the hour ¹⁹⁰
Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
Be found among the absent.

Ber. Say not so!
Once more, art thou determined to go forth?

Lioni. I am. Nor is there aught which shall impede me!

Ber. Then, Heaven have mercy on thy soul! — Farewell!
[*Going.*

Lioni. Stay — there is more in this than my own safety
Which makes me call thee back; we must not part thus:
Bertram, I have known thee long.

Ber. From childhood, Signor,
You have been my protector: in the days
Of reckless infancy, when rank forgets, ²⁰⁰
Or, rather, is not yet taught to remember
Its cold prerogative, we played together;
Our sports, our smiles, our tears, were mingled oft;
My father was your father's client, I
His son's scarce less than foster-brother; years
Saw us together — happy, heart-full hours!
Oh God! the difference 'twixt those hours and this!

Lioni. Bertram, 'tis thou who hast forgotten them.

Ber. Nor now, nor ever; whatsoe'er betide,
I would have saved you: when to Manhood's growth ²¹⁰
We sprung, and you, devoted to the state,

As suits your station, the more humble Bertram
Was left unto the labours of the humble,
Still you forsook me not; and if my fortunes
Have not been towering, 'twas no fault of him
Who oftentimes rescued and supported me,
When struggling with the tides of Circumstance,
Which bear away the weaker: noble blood
Ne'er mantled in a nobler heart than thine
Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Bertram. 220
Would that thy fellow Senators were like thee!

Lioni. Why, what hast thou to say against the Senate?

Ber. Nothing.

Lioni. I know that there are angry spirits
And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason,
Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out
Muffled to whisper curses to the night;
Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians,
And desperate libertines who brawl in taverns;
Thou herdest not with such: 'tis true, of late
I have lost sight of thee, but thou wert wont 230
To lead a temperate life, and break thy bread
With honest mates, and bear a cheerful aspect.
What hath come to thee? in thy hollow eye
And hueless cheek, and thine unquiet motions,
Sorrow and Shame and Conscience seem at war
To waste thee.

Ber. Rather Shame and Sorrow light
On the accurséd tyranny which rides
The very air in Venice, and makes men
Madden as in the last hours of the plague
Which sweeps the soul deliriously from life! 240

Lioni. Some villains have been tampering with thee, Bertram;
This is not thy old language, nor own thoughts;
Some wretch has made thee drunk with disaffection:

But thou must not be lost so; thou wert good
And kind, and art not fit for such base acts
As Vice and Villany would put thee to:
Confess — confide in me — thou know'st my nature.
What is it thou and thine are bound to do,
Which should prevent thy friend, the only son
Of him who was a friend unto thy father, ²⁵⁰
So that our good-will is a heritage
We should bequeath to our posterity
Such as ourselves received it, or augmented;
I say, what is it thou must do, that I
Should deem thee dangerous, and keep the house
Like a sick girl?

Ber. Nay, question me no further:
I must be gone. — —

Lioni. And I be murdered! — say,
Was it not thus thou said'st, my gentle Bertram?

Ber. Who talks of murder? what said I of murder?
Tis false! I did not utter such a word. ²⁶⁰

Lioni. Thou didst not; but from out thy wolfish eye,
So changed from what I knew it, there glares forth
The gladiator. If *my* life's thine object,
Take it — I am unarmed, — and then away!
I would not hold my breath on such a tenure
As the capricious mercy of such things
As thou and those who have set thee to thy task-work.

Ber. Sooner than spill thy blood, I peril mine;
Sooner than harm a hair of thine, I place
In jeopardy a thousand heads, and some ²⁷⁰
As noble, nay, even nobler than thine own.

Lioni. Aye, is it even so? Excuse me, Bertram;
I am not worthy to be singled out
From such exalted hecatombs — who are they

That *are* in danger, and that *make* the danger?

Ber. Venice, and all that she inherits, are
Divided like a house against itself,
And so will perish ere to-morrow's twilight!

Lioni. More mysteries, and awful ones! But now,
Or thou, or I, or both, it may be, are ²⁸⁰
Upon the verge of ruin; speak once out,
And thou art safe and glorious: for 'tis more
Glorious to save than slay, and slay i' the dark too —
Fie, Bertram! that was not a craft for thee!
How would it look to see upon a spear
The head of him whose heart was open to thee!
Borne by thy hand before the shuddering people?
And such may be my doom; for here I swear,
Whate'er the peril or the penalty
Of thy denunciation, I go forth, ²⁹⁰
Unless thou dost detail the cause, and show
The consequence of all which led thee here!

Ber. Is there no way to save thee? minutes fly,
And thou art lost! — *thou!* my sole benefactor,
The only being who was constant to me
Through every change. Yet, make me not a traitor!
Let me save thee — but spare my honour!

Lioni. Where
Can lie the honour in a league of murder?
And who are traitors save unto the State?

Ber. A league is still a compact, and more binding ³⁰⁰
In honest hearts when words must stand for law;
And in my mind, there is no traitor like
He whose domestic treason plants the poniard
Within the breast which trusted to his truth.
Lioni. And who will strike the steel to mine?

Ber. Not I;

I could have wound my soul up to all things
Save this. *Thou* must not die! and think how dear
Thy life is, when I risk so many lives,
Nay, more, the Life of lives, the liberty
Of future generations, *not* to be 310
The assassin thou miscall'st me: — once, once more
I do adjure thee, pass not o'er thy threshold!

Lioni. It is in vain — this moment I go forth.

Ber. Then perish Venice rather than my friend!
I will disclose — ensnare — betray — destroy —
Oh, what a villain I become for thee!

Lioni. Say, rather thy friend's saviour and the State's! —
Speak — pause not — all rewards, all pledges for
Thy safety and thy welfare; wealth such as
The State accords her worthiest servants; nay, 330
Nobility itself I guarantee thee,
So that thou art sincere and penitent.

Ber. I have thought again: it must not be — I love thee —
Thou knowest it — that I stand here is the proof,
Not least though last; but having done my duty
By thee, I now must do it by my country!
Farewell — we meet no more in life! — farewell!

Lioni. What, ho! — Antonio — Pedro — to the door!
See that none pass — arrest this man! — —

Enter Antonio and other armed Domestics, who seize Bertram.

Lioni (continues). Take care
He hath no harm; bring me my sword and cloak, 330
And man the gondola with four oars — quick —
[Exit Antonio.
We will unto Giovanni Gradenigo's,
And send for Marc Cornaro: — fear not, Bertram;
This needful violence is for thy safety,

No less than for the general weal.

Ber. Where wouldst thou
Bear me a prisoner?

Lioni. Firstly to “the Ten;”
Next to the Doge.

Ber. To the Doge?

Lioni. Assuredly:
Is he not Chief of the State?

Ber. Perhaps at sunrise —

Lioni. What mean you? — but we’ll know anon.

Ber. Art sure?

Lioni. Sure as all gentle means can make; and if ³⁴⁰
They fail, you know “the Ten” and their tribunal,
And that St. Mark’s has dungeons, and the dungeons
A rack.

Ber. Apply it then before the dawn
Now hastening into heaven. — One more such word,
And you shall perish piecemeal, by the death
You think to doom to me.

Re-enter Antonio.

Ant. The bark is ready,
My Lord, and all prepared.

Lioni. Look to the prisoner.
Bertram, I’ll reason with thee as we go
To the Magnifico’s, sage Gradenigo. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. — *The Ducal Palace — The Doge’s Apartment.*

The Doge and his Nephew Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge. Are all the people of our house in muster?

Ber. F. They are arrayed, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo:
I come for your last orders.

Doge. It had been
As well had there been time to have got together,
From my own fief, Val di Marino, more
Of our retainers — but it is too late.

Ber. F. Methinks, my Lord, 'tis better as it is:
A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion; and, though fierce and trusty, ¹⁰
The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long maintained
The secret discipline we need for such
A service, till our foes are dealt upon.

Doge. True; but when once the signal has been given,
These are the men for such an enterprise;
These city slaves have all their private bias,
Their prejudice *against* or *for* this noble,
Which may induce them to o'erdo or spare
Where mercy may be madness; the fierce peasants, ²⁰
Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord without
Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,
A Gradenigo or a Foscari;
They are not used to start at those vain names,
Nor bow the knee before a civic Senate;
A chief in armour is their Suzerain,
And not a thing in robes.

Ber. F. We are enough;
And for the dispositions of our clients ³⁰

Against the Senate I will answer.

Doge. Well,

The die is thrown; but for a warlike service,
Done in the field, commend me to my peasants:
They made the sun shine through the host of Huns
When sallow burghers slunk back to their tents,
And cowered to hear their own victorious trumpet.
If there be small resistance, you will find
These Citizens all Lions, like their Standard;
But if there's much to do, you'll wish, with me,
A band of iron rustics at our backs. 40

Ber. Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolve
To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge. Such blows

Must be struck suddenly or never. When
I had o'er-mastered the weak false remorse
Which yearned about my heart, too fondly yielding
A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro, 50
I know not well the courage or the faith:
To-day might find 'mongst them a traitor to us,
As yesterday a thousand to the Senate;
But once in, with their hilts hot in their hands,
They must *on* for their own sakes; one stroke struck,
And the mere instinct of the first-born Cain,
Which ever lurks somewhere in human hearts,
Though Circumstance may keep it in abeyance,
Will urge the rest on like to wolves; the sight
Of blood to crowds begets the thirst of more, 60
As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel;
And you will find a harder task to quell
Than urge them when they *have* commenced, but *till*
That moment, a mere voice, a straw, a shadow,

Are capable of turning them aside. —
How goes the night?

Ber. F. Almost upon the dawn.

Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the bell.
Are the men posted?

Ber. F. By this time they are;
But they have orders not to strike, until
They have command from you through me in person. 70

Doge. 'Tis well. — Will the morn never put to rest
These stars which twinkle yet o'er all the heavens?
I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to
Resolve to cleanse this Commonwealth with fire,
Now leaves my mind more steady. I have wept,
And trembled at the thought of this dread duty;
But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,
As doth the pilot of an Admiral Galley: 80
Yet (wouldst thou think it, kinsman?) it hath been
A greater struggle to me, than when nations
Beheld their fate merged in the approaching fight,
Where I was leader of a phalanx, where
Thousands were sure to perish — Yes, to spill
The rank polluted current from the veins
Of a few bloated despots needed more
To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal, than to face
The toils and dangers of a life of war. 90

Ber. F. It gladdens me to see your former wisdom
Subdue the furies which so wrung you ere
You were decided.

Doge. It was ever thus
With me; the hour of agitation came

In the first glimmerings of a purpose, when
Passion had too much room to sway; but in
The hour of action I have stood as calm
As were the dead who lay around me: this
They knew who made me what I am, and trusted
To the subduing power which I preserved ¹⁰⁰
Over my mood, when its first burst was spent.
But they were not aware that there are things
Which make revenge a virtue by reflection,
And not an impulse of mere anger; though
The laws sleep, Justice wakes, and injured souls
Oft do a public right with private wrong,
And justify their deeds unto themselves. —
Methinks the day breaks — is it not so? look,
Thine eyes are clear with youth; — the air puts on
A morning freshness, and, at least to me, ¹¹⁰
The sea looks greyer through the lattice.

Ber. F. True,
The morn is dappling in the sky.

Doge. Away then!
See that they strike without delay, and with
The first toll from St. Mark's, march on the palace
With all our House's strength; here I will meet you;
The Sixteen and their companies will move
In separate columns at the self-same moment:
Be sure you post yourself at the great Gate:
I would not trust "the Ten" except to us —
The rest, the rabble of patricians, may ¹²⁰
Glut the more careless swords of those leagued with us.
Remember that the cry is still "Saint Mark!
The Genoese are come — ho! to the rescue!
Saint Mark and Liberty!" — Now — now to action!

Ber. F. Farewell then, noble Uncle! we will meet
In freedom and true sovereignty, or never!

Doge. Come hither, my Bertuccio — one embrace;

Speed, for the day grows broader; send me soon
A messenger to tell me how all goes
When you rejoin our troops, and then sound — sound 130
The storm-bell from St. Mark's!
[Exit Bertuccio Faliero.]

Doge (solus). He is gone,
And on each footstep moves a life. 'Tis done.
Now the destroying Angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey,
And for a moment, poised in middle air,
Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak. Thou Day!
That slowly walk'st the waters! march — march on —
I would not smite i' the dark, but rather see 140
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea waves!
I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply too,
With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flowed too, but victorious:
Now thou must wear an unmixed crimson; no
Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this?
I, who was named Preserver of the City? 150
I, at whose name the million's caps were flung
Into the air, and cries from tens of thousands
Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me blessings,
And fame, and length of days — to see this day?
But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their crown;
I will resign a crown, and make the State
Renew its freedom — but oh! by what means? 160
The noble end must justify them. What
Are a few drops of human blood? 'tis false,
The blood of tyrants is not human; they,

Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until 'tis time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous. — Oh World!
Oh Men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime?
And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword superfluous? 170
And I, upon the verge of th' unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me? —
I must not ponder this. [*A pause.*
Hark! was there not
A murmur as of distant voices, and
The tramp of feet in martial unison?
What phantoms even of sound our wishes raise!
It cannot be — the signal hath not rung —
Why pauses it? My nephew's messenger
Should be upon his way to me, and he
Himself perhaps even now draws grating back 180
Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower portal,
Where swings the sullen huge oracular bell,
Which never knells but for a princely death,
Or for a state in peril, pealing forth
Tremendous bodements; let it do its office,
And be this peal its awfulest and last
Sound till the strong tower rock! — What! silent still?
I would go forth, but that my post is here,
To be the centre of reunion to
The oft discordant elements which form 190
Leagues of this nature, and to keep compact
The wavering of the weak, in case of conflict;
For if they should do battle, 'twill be here,
Within the palace, that the strife will thicken:
Then here must be my station, as becomes
The master-mover. — Hark! he comes — he comes,
My nephew, brave Bertuccio's messenger. —
What tidings? Is he marching? hath he sped?
They here! -all's lost-yet will I make an effort.

Enter a Signor of the Night, with Guards, etc., etc.

Sig. Doge, I arrest thee of high treason!

Doge. Me! ²⁰⁰

Thy Prince, of treason? — Who are they that dare
Cloak their own treason under such an order?

Sig. (*showing his order*).

Behold my order from the assembled Ten.

Doge. And *where* are they, and *why* assembled? no
Such Council can be lawful, till the Prince
Preside there, and that duty's mine: on thine
I charge thee, give me way, or marshal me
To the Council chamber.

Sig. Duke! it may not be:

Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,
But sitting in the convent of Saint Saviour's. ²¹⁰

Doge. You dare to disobey me, then?

Sig. I serve

The State, and needs must serve it faithfully;
My warrant is the will of those who rule it.

Doge. And till that warrant has my signature
It is illegal, and, as *now* applied,
Rebellious. Hast thou weighed well thy life's worth,
That thus you dare assume a lawless function?

Sig. 'Tis not my office to reply, but act —

I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide. ²²⁰

Doge (*aside*).

I must gain time. So that the storm-bell sound,
All may be well yet. Kinsman, speed — speed — speed! —
Our fate is trembling in the balance, and
Woe to the vanquished! be they Prince and people,

Or slaves and Senate —
[*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*
Lo! it sounds — it tolls!

Doge (aloud).
Hark, Signor of the Night! and you, ye hirelings,
Who wield your mercenary staves in fear,
It is your knell. — Swell on, thou lusty peal!
Now, knaves, what ransom for your lives?

Sig. Confusion!
Stand to your arms, and guard the door — all's lost 230
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath missed his path or purpose,
Or met some unforeseen and hideous obstacle,
Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with me.
[*Exit part of the Guard.*

Doge. Wretch! if thou wouldst have thy vile life, implore it;
It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.
Aye, send thy miserable ruffians forth;
They never shall return.

Sig. So let it be!
They die then in their duty, as will I. 240

Doge. Fool! the high eagle flies at nobler game
Than thou and thy base myrmidons, — live on,
So thou provok'st not peril by resistance,
And learn (if souls so much obscured can bear
To gaze upon the sunbeams) to be free.

Sig. And learn thou to be captive. It hath ceased,
[*The bell ceases to toll.*
The traitorous signal, which was to have set
The bloodhound mob on their patrician prey —
The knell hath rung, but it is not the Senate's!

Doge (after a pause).
All's silent, and all's lost!

Sig. Now, Doge, denounce me ²⁵⁰
As rebel slave of a revolted Council!
Have I not done my duty?

Doge. Peace, thou thing!
Thou hast done a worthy deed, and earned the price
Of blood, and they who use thee will reward thee.
But thou wert sent to watch, and not to prate,
As thou said'st even now — then do thine office,
But let it be in silence, as behoves thee,
Since, though thy prisoner, I am thy Prince.

Sig. I did not mean to fail in the respect
Due to your rank: in this I shall obey you. ²⁶⁰

Doge (aside). There now is nothing left me save to die;
And yet how near success! I would have fallen,
And proudly, in the hour of triumph, but
To miss it thus! — —

Enter other Signors of the Night, with Bertuccio Faliero prisoner.

2nd Sig. We took him in the act
Of issuing from the tower, where, at his order,
As delegated from the Doge, the signal
Had thus begun to sound.

1st Sig. Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured?

2nd Sig. They are — besides, it matters not; the Chiefs
Are all in chains, and some even now on trial — ²⁷⁰
Their followers are dispersed, and many taken.

Ber. F. Uncle!

Doge. It is in vain to war with Fortune;
The glory hath departed from our house.

Ber. F. Who would have deemed it? — Ah! one moment sooner!

Doge. That moment would have changed the face of ages;
This gives us to Eternity — We'll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in all,
Equal to every fortune. Droop not, 'tis
But a brief passage — I would go alone, ²⁸⁰
Yet if they send us, as 'tis like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.

Ber. F. I shall not shame you, Uncle.

1st Sig. Lords, our orders
Are to keep guard on both in separate chambers,
Until the Council call ye to your trial.

Doge. Our trial! will they keep their mockery up
Even to the last? but let them deal upon us,
As we had dealt on them, but with less pomp.
'Tis but a game of mutual homicides,
Who have cast lots for the first death, and they ²⁹⁰
Have won with false dice. — Who hath been our Judas?

1st Sig. I am not warranted to answer that.

Ber. F. I'll answer for thee — 'tis a certain Bertram,
Even now deposing to the secret Giunta.

Doge. Bertram, the Bergamask! With what vile tools
We operate to slay or save! This creature,
Black with a double treason, now will earn
Rewards and honours, and be stamped in story
With the geese in the Capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph, ³⁰⁰
While Manlius, who hurled down the Gauls, was cast

From the Tarpeian.

1st Sig. He aspired to treason,
And sought to rule the State.

Doge. He saved the State,
And sought but to reform what he revived —
But this is idle — Come, sirs, do your work.

1st Sig. Noble Bertuccio, we must now remove you
Into an inner chamber.

Ber. F. Farewell, Uncle!
If we shall meet again in life I know not,
But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.

Doge. Yes, and our spirits, which shall yet go forth, ³¹⁰
And do what our frail clay, thus clogged, hath failed in!
They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurled them from their guilty thrones,
And such examples will find heirs, though distant.

ACT V

Scene 1. — *The Hall of the Council of Ten assembled with the additional Senators, who, on the Trials of the Conspirators for the Treason of Marino Faliero, composed what was called the Giunta, — Guards, Officers, etc., etc. Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro as Prisoners. Bertram, Lioni, and Witnesses, etc.*

The Chief of the Ten, Benintende.

Ben. There now rests, after such conviction of
Their manifold and manifest offences,
But to pronounce on these obdurate men
The sentence of the Law: — a grievous task
To those who hear, and those who speak. Alas!
That it should fall to me! and that my days
Of office should be stigmatised through all

The years of coming time, as bearing record
To this most foul and complicated treason
Against a just and free state, known to all ¹⁰
The earth as being the Christian bulwark 'gainst
The Saracen and the schismatic Greek,
The savage Hun, and not less barbarous Frank;
A City which has opened India's wealth
To Europe; the last Roman refuge from
O'erwhelming Attila; the Ocean's Queen;
Proud Genoa's prouder rival! 'Tis to sap
The throne of such a City, these lost men
Have risked and forfeited their worthless lives —
So let them die the death.

I. Ber. We are prepared; ²⁰
Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.

Ben. If ye have that to say which would obtain
Abatement of your punishment, the Giunta
Will hear you; if you have aught to confess,
Now is your time, — perhaps it may avail ye.

I. Ber. We stand to hear, and not to speak.

Ben. Your crimes
Are fully proved by your accomplices,
And all which Circumstance can add to aid them;
Yet we would hear from your own lips complete
Avowal of your treason: on the verge ³⁰
Of that dread gulf which none repass, the truth
Alone can profit you on earth or Heaven —
Say, then, what was your motive?

I. Ber. Justice!

Ben. What
Your object?

I. Ber. Freedom!

Ben. You are brief, sir.

I. Ber. So my life grows: I
Was bred a soldier, not a senator.

Ben. Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity
To brave your judges to postpone the sentence?

I. Ber. Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,
I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon. 40

Ben. Is this your sole reply to the Tribunal?

I. Ber. Go, ask your racks what they have wrung from us,
Or place us there again; we have still some blood left,
And some slight sense of pain in these wrenched limbs:
But this ye dare not do; for if we die there —
And you have left us little life to spend
Upon your engines, gorged with pangs already —
Ye lose the public spectacle, with which
You would appal your slaves to further slavery!
Groans are not words, nor agony assent, 50
Nor affirmation Truth, if Nature's sense
Should overcome the soul into a lie,
For a short respite — must we bear or die?

Ben. Say, who were your accomplices?

I. Ber. The Senate.

Ben. What do you mean?

I. Ber. Ask of the suffering people,
Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.

Ben. You know the Doge?

I. Ber. I served with him at Zara
In the field, when *you* were pleading here your way
To present office; we exposed our lives,

While you but hazarded the lives of others, 60
Alike by accusation or defence;
And for the rest, all Venice knows her Doge,
Through his great actions, and the Senate's insults.

Ben. You have held conference with him?

I. Ber. I am weary —
Even wearier of your questions than your tortures:
I pray you pass to judgment.

Ben. It is coming.
And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what
Have you to say why you should not be doomed?

Cal. I never was a man of many words,
And now have few left worth the utterance. 70

Ben. A further application of yon engine
May change your tone.

Cal. Most true, it *will* do so;
A former application did so; but
It will not change my words, or, if it did —

Ben. What then?

Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack
Stand good in law?

Ben. Assuredly.

Cal. Whoe'er
The culprit be whom I accuse of treason?

Ben. Without doubt, he will be brought up to trial.

Cal. And on this testimony would he perish?

Ben. So your confession be detailed and full, 80

He will stand here in peril of his life.

Cal. Then look well to thy proud self, President!
For by the Eternity which yawns before me,
I swear that *thou*, and only thou, shall be
The traitor I denounce upon that rack,
If I be stretched there for the second time.

One of the Giunta.
Lord President, 'twere best proceed to judgment;
There is no more to be drawn from these men.

Ben. Unhappy men! prepare for instant death.
The nature of your crime — our law — and peril ⁹⁰
The State now stands in, leave not an hour's respite.
Guards! lead them forth, and upon the balcony
Of the red columns, where, on festal Thursday,
The Doge stands to behold the chase of bulls,
Let them be justified: and leave exposed
Their wavering relics, in the place of judgment,
To the full view of the assembled people!
And Heaven have mercy on their souls!

The Giunta. Amen!

I. Ber. Signors, farewell! we shall not all again
Meet in one place.

Ben. And lest they should essay ¹⁰⁰
To stir up the distracted multitude —
Guards! let their mouths be gagged even in the act
Of execution. Lead them hence!

Cal. What! must we
Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
Nor leave a last word with our confessor?

Ben. A priest is waiting in the antechamber;
But, for your friends, such interviews would be

Painful to them, and useless all to you.

Cal. I knew that we were gagged in life; at least
All those who had not heart to risk their lives 110
Upon their open thoughts; but still I deemed
That in the last few moments, the same idle
Freedom of speech accorded to the dying,
Would not now be denied to us; but since — —

I. Ber. Even let them have their way, brave Calendaro!
What matter a few syllables? let's die
Without the slightest show of favour from them;
So shall our blood more readily arise
To Heaven against them, and more testify
To their atrocities, than could a volume 120
Spoken or written of our dying words!
They tremble at our voices — nay, they dread
Our very silence — let them live in fear!
Leave them unto their thoughts, and let us now
Address our own above! — Lead on; we are ready.

Cal. Israel, hadst thou but hearkened unto me
It had not now been thus; and yon pale villain,
The coward Bertram, would — —

I. Ber. Peace, Calendaro!
What brooks it now to ponder upon this?

Bert. Alas! I fain you died in peace with me: 130
I did not seek this task; 'twas forced upon me:
Say, you forgive me, though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness — frown not thus!

I. Ber. I die and pardon thee!

Cal. (*spitting at him*). I die and scorn thee!
[*Exeunt Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro, Guards, etc.*]

Ben. Now that these criminals have been disposed of,

'Tis time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero!
The proofs and process are complete; the time
And crime require a quick procedure: shall ¹⁴⁰
He now be called in to receive the award?

The Giunta. Aye, aye.

Ben. Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the Council.

One of the Giunta. And the rest,
When shall they be brought up?

Ben. When all the Chiefs
Have been disposed of. Some have fled to Chiozza;
But there are thousands in pursuit of them,
And such precaution ta'en on terra firma,
As well as in the islands, that we hope
None will escape to utter in strange lands
His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the Senate. ¹⁵⁰

Enter the Doge as Prisoner, with Guards, etc., etc.

Ben. Doge — for such still you are, and by the law
Must be considered, till the hour shall come
When you must doff the Ducal Bonnet from
That head, which could not wear a crown more noble
Than Empires can confer, in quiet honour,
But it must plot to overthrow your peers,
Who made you what you are, and quench in blood
A City's glory — we have laid already
Before you in your chamber at full length,
By the Avogadori, all the proofs ¹⁶⁰
Which have appeared against you; and more ample
Ne'er reared their sanguinary shadows to
Confront a traitor. What have you to say
In your defence?

Doge. What shall I say to ye,
Since my defence must be your condemnation?
You are at once offenders and accusers,
Judges and Executioners! — Proceed
Upon your power.

Ben. Your chief accomplices
Having confessed, there is no hope for you.

Doge. And who be they?

Ben. In number many; but ¹⁷⁰
The first now stands before you in the court,
Bertram of Bergamo, — would you question him?

Doge (*looking at him contemptuously*). No.

Ben. And two others, Israel Bertuccio,
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted
Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!

Doge. And where are they?

Ben. Gone to their place, and now
Answering to Heaven for what they did on earth.

Doge. Ah! the plebeian Brutus, is he gone?
And the quick Cassius of the arsenal? —
How did they meet their doom?

Ben. Think of your own: ¹⁸⁰
It is approaching. You decline to plead, then?

Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor
Can recognise your legal power to try me.
Show me the law!

Ben. On great emergencies,
The law must be remodelled or amended:
Our fathers had not fixed the punishment

Of such a crime, as on the old Roman tables
The sentence against parricide was left
In pure forgetfulness; they could not render
That penal, which had neither name nor thought 190
In their great bosoms; who would have foreseen
That Nature could be filed to such a crime
As sons 'gainst sires, and princes 'gainst their realms?
Your sin hath made us make a law which will
Become a precedent 'gainst such haught traitors,
As would with treason mount to tyranny;
Not even contented with a sceptre, till
They can convert it to a two-edged sword!
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?
What's nobler than the signory of Venice? 200

Doge. The signory of Venice! You betrayed me —
You — *you*, who sit there, traitors as ye are!
From my equality with you in birth,
And my superiority in action,
You drew me from my honourable toils
In distant lands — on flood, in field, in cities —
You singled me out like a victim to
Stand crowned, but bound and helpless, at the altar
Where you alone could minister. I knew not,
I sought not, wished not, dreamed not the election, 210
Which reached me first at Rome, and I obeyed;
But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you
To mock and mar your Sovereign's best intents,
You had, even in the interregnum of
My journey to the capital, curtailed
And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the Duke: all this I bore, and would
Have borne, until my very hearth was stained
By the pollution of your ribaldry, 220
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you —
Fit judge in such tribunal! — —

Ben. (interrupting him). Michel Steno

Is here in virtue of his office, as
One of the Forty; “the Ten” having craved
A Giunta of patricians from the Senate
To aid our judgment in a trial arduous
And novel as the present: he was set
Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the law,
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim ²³⁰
No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates!

Doge. His punishment! I rather see him *there*,
Where he now sits, to glut him with my death,
Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show of justice
Decreed as sentence! Base as was his crime,
‘Twas purity compared with your protection.

Ben. And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years ²⁴⁰
And honours on his head, could thus allow
His fury, like an angry boy’s, to master
All Feeling, Wisdom, Faith and Fear, on such
A provocation as a young man’s petulance?

Doge. A spark creates the flame — ’tis the last drop
Which makes the cup run o’er, and mine was full
Already: you oppressed the Prince and people;
I would have freed both, and have failed in both:
The price of such success would have been glory,
Vengeance, and victory, and such a name ²⁵⁰
As would have made Venetian history
Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourished ages after,
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus:
Failing, I know the penalty of failure
Is present infamy and death — the future
Will judge, when Venice is no more, or free;
Till then, the truth is in abeyance. Pause not;

I would have shown no mercy, and I seek none;
My life was staked upon a mighty hazard, ²⁶⁰
And being lost, take what I would have taken!
I would have stood alone amidst your tombs:
Now you may flock round mine, and trample on it,
As you have done upon my heart while living.

Ben. You do confess then, and admit the justice
Of our Tribunal?

Doge. I confess to have failed;
Fortune is female: from my youth her favours
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope
Her former smiles again at this late hour.

Ben. You do not then in aught arraign our equity? ²⁷⁰

Doge. Noble Venetians! stir me not with questions.
I am resigned to the worst; but in me still
Have something of the blood of brighter days,
And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me
Further interrogation, which boots nothing,
Except to turn a trial to debate.
I shall but answer that which will offend you,
And please your enemies — a host already;
'Tis true, these sullen walls should yield no echo:
But walls have ears — nay, more, they have tongues; and if ²⁸⁰
There were no other way for Truth to o'erleap them,
You who condemn me, you who fear and slay me,
Yet could not bear in silence to your graves
What you would hear from me of Good or Evil;
The secret were too mighty for your souls:
Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court
A danger which would double that you escape.
Such my defence would be, had I full scope
To make it famous; for true *words* are *things*,
And dying men's are things which long outlive, ²⁹⁰
And oftentimes avenge them; bury mine,
If ye would fain survive me: take this counsel,

And though too oft ye make me live in wrath,
Let me die calmly; you may grant me this;
I deny nothing — defend nothing — nothing
I ask of you, but silence for myself,
And sentence from the Court!

Ben. This full admission
Spares us the harsh necessity of ordering
The torture to elicit the whole truth.

Doge. The torture! you have put me there already, 300
Daily since I was Doge; but if you will
Add the corporeal rack, you may: these limbs
Will yield with age to crushing iron; but
There's that within my heart shall strain your engines.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Noble Venetians! Duchess Faliero
Requests admission to the Giunta's presence.

Ben. Say, Conscript Fathers, shall she be admitted?

One of the Giunta. She may have revelations of importance
Unto the state, to justify compliance
With her request.

Ben. Is this the general will? 310

All. It is.

Doge. Oh, admirable laws of Venice!
Which would admit the wife, in the full hope
That she might testify against the husband.
What glory to the chaste Venetian dames!
But such blasphemers 'gainst all Honour, as
Sit here, do well to act in their vocation.
Now, villain Steno! if this woman fail,
I'll pardon thee thy lie, and thy escape,

And my own violent death, and thy vile life.

The Duchess enters.

Ben. Lady! this just Tribunal has resolved, ³²⁰
Though the request be strange, to grant it, and
Whatever be its purport, to accord
A patient hearing with the due respect
Which fits your ancestry, your rank, and virtues:
But you turn pale — ho! there, look to the Lady!
Place a chair instantly.

Ang. A moment's faintness —
'Tis past; I pray you pardon me, — I sit not
In presence of my Prince and of my husband,
While he is on his feet.

Ben. Your pleasure, Lady?

Ang. Strange rumours, but most true, if all I hear ³³⁰
And see be sooth, have reached me, and I come
To know the worst, even at the worst; forgive
The abruptness of my entrance and my bearing.
Is it — I cannot speak — I cannot shape
The question — but you answer it ere spoken,
With eyes averted, and with gloomy brows —
Oh God! this is the silence of the grave!

Ben. (after a pause). Spare us, and spare thyself the repetition
Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to Heaven and man!

Ang. Yet speak; I cannot — ³⁴⁰
I cannot — no — even now believe these things.
Is *he* condemned?

Ben. Alas!

Ang. And was he guilty?

Ben. Lady! the natural distraction of
Thy thoughts at such a moment makes the question
Merit forgiveness; else a doubt like this
Against a just and paramount tribunal
Were deep offence. But question even the Doge,
And if he can deny the proofs, believe him
Guiltless as thy own bosom.

Ang. Is it so?
My Lord, my Sovereign, my poor father's friend, ³⁵⁰
The mighty in the field, the sage in Council,
Unsay the words of this man! — thou art silent!

Ben. He hath already owned to his own guilt,
Nor, as thou see'st, doth he deny it now.

Ang. Aye, but he must not die! Spare his few years,
Which Grief and Shame will soon cut down to days!
One day of baffled crime must not efface
Near sixteen lustres crowned with brave acts.

Ben. His doom must be fulfilled without remission
Of time or penalty — 'tis a decree. ³⁶⁰

Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.

Ben. Not in this case with justice.

Ang. Alas! Signor,
He who is only just is cruel; who
Upon the earth would live were all judged justly?

Ben. His punishment is safety to the State.

Ang. He was a subject, and hath served the State;
He was your General, and hath saved the State;
He is your Sovereign, and hath ruled the State.

One of the Council. He is a traitor, and betrayed the State.

Ang. And, but for him, there now had been no State 370
To save or to destroy; and you, who sit
There to pronounce the death of your deliverer,
Had now been groaning at a Moslem oar,
Or digging in the Hunnish mines in fetters!

One of the Council. No, Lady, there are others who would die
Rather than breathe in slavery!

Ang. If there are so
Within *these* walls, *thou* art not of the number:
The truly brave are generous to the fallen! —
Is there no hope?

Ben. Lady, it cannot be.

Ang. (turning to the Doge).
Then die, Faliero! since it must be so; 380
But with the spirit of my father's friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half cancelled by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them, have prayed to them.
Have begged as famished mendicants for bread,
Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answered as they answer, —
Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes
Had not announced the heartless wrath within. 390
Then, as a Prince, address thee to thy doom!

Doge. I have lived too long not to know how to die!
Thy suing to these men were but the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge: I would not take
A life eternal, granted at the hands
Of wretches, from whose monstrous villanies
I sought to free the groaning nations!

Michel Steno. Doge,

A word with thee, and with this noble lady,
Whom I have grievously offended. Would 400
Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part,
Could cancel the inexorable past!
But since that cannot be, as Christians let us
Say farewell, and in peace: with full contrition
I crave, not pardon, but compassion from you,
And give, however weak, my prayers for both.

Ang. Sage Benintende, now chief Judge of Venice,
I speak to thee in answer to yon Signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words
Ne'er weighed in mind with Loredano's daughter, 410
Further than to create a moment's pity
For such as he is: would that others had
Despised him as I pity! I prefer
My honour to a thousand lives, could such
Be multiplied in mine, but would not have
A single life of others lost for that
Which nothing human can impugn — the sense
Of Virtue, looking not to what is called
A good name for reward, but to itself.
To me the scorner's words were as the wind 420
Unto the rock: but as there are — alas!
Spirits more sensitive, on which such things
Light as the Whirlwind on the waters; souls
To whom Dishonour's shadow is a substance
More terrible than Death, here and hereafter;
Men whose vice is to start at Vice's scoffing,
And who, though proof against all blandishments
Of pleasure, and all pangs of Pain, are feeble
When the proud name on which they pinnacled
Their hopes is breathed on, jealous as the eagle 430
Of her high airy; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson
To wretches how they tamper in their spleen
With beings of a higher order. Insects
Have made the lion mad ere now; a shaft
I' the heel o'erthrew the bravest of the brave;

A wife's Dishonour was the bane of Troy;
A wife's Dishonour unkinged Rome for ever;
An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,
And thence to Rome, which perished for a time; 440
An obscene gesture cost Caligula
His life, while Earth yet bore his cruelties;
A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish province;
And Steno's lie, couched in two worthless lines,
Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
A Senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
Discrowned a Prince, cut off his crownless head,
And forged new fetters for a groaning people!
Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this, 450
If it so please him — 'twere a pride fit for him!
But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate'er he now is, was a Hero,
By the intrusion of his very prayers;
Nothing of good can come from such a source,
Nor would we aught with him, nor now, nor ever:
We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,
And not for reptiles — we have none for Steno,
And no resentment: things like him must sting, 460
And higher beings suffer; 'tis the charter
Of Life. The man who dies by the adder's fang
May have the crawler crushed, but feels no anger:
'Twas the worm's nature; and some men are worms
In soul, more than the living things of tombs.

Doge (to Ben.).

Signor! complete that which you deem your duty.

Ben. Before we can proceed upon that duty,
We would request the Princess to withdraw;
'Twill move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must endure it, 470
For 'tis a part of mine — I will not quit,

Except by force, my husband's side — Proceed!
Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear;
Though my heart burst, it shall be silent. — Speak!
I have that within which shall o'ermaster all.

Ben. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
Count of Val di Marino, Senator,
And some time General of the Fleet and Army,
Noble Venetian, many times and oft
Intrusted by the state with high employments, 480
Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.
Convict by many witnesses and proofs,
And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of Treachery and Treason, yet unheard of
Until this trial — the decree is Death —
Thy goods are confiscate unto the State,
Thy name is razed from out her records, save
Upon a public day of thanksgiving
For this our most miraculous deliverance,
When thou art noted in our calendars 490
With earthquakes, pestilence, and foreign foes,
And the great Enemy of man, as subject
Of grateful masses for Heaven's grace in snatching
Our lives and country from thy wickedness.
The place wherein as Doge thou shouldst be painted
With thine illustrious predecessors, is
To be left vacant, with a death-black veil
Flung over these dim words engraved beneath, —
“This place is of Marino Faliero,
Decapitated for his crimes.”

Doge. “His crimes!” 500
But let it be so: — it will be in vain.
The veil which blackens o'er this blighted name,
And hides, or seems to hide, these lineaments,
Shall draw more gazers than the thousand portraits
Which glitter round it in their pictured trappings —
Your delegated slaves — the people's tyrants!
“Decapitated for his crimes!” — *What* crimes?

Were it not better to record the facts,
So that the contemplator might approve,
Or at the least learn *whence* the crimes arose? 510
When the beholder knows a Doge conspired,
Let him be told the cause — it is your history.

Ben. Time must reply to that; our sons will judge
Their fathers' judgment, which I now pronounce.
As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and Cap,
Thou shalt be led hence to the Giants' Staircase,
Where thou and all our Princes are invested;
And there, the Ducal Crown being first resumed
Upon the spot where it was first assumed,
Thy head shall be struck off; and Heaven have mercy 520
Upon thy soul!

Doge. Is this the Giunta's sentence?

Ben. It is.

Doge. I can endure it. — And the time?

Ben. Must be immediate. — Make thy peace with God:
Within an hour thou must be in His presence.

Doge. I am *already*; and my blood will rise
To Heaven before the souls of those who shed it.
Are all my lands confiscated?

Ben. They are;
And goods, and jewels, and all kind of treasure,
Except two thousand ducats — these dispose of.

Doge. That's harsh. — I would have fain reserved the lands 530
Near to Treviso, which I hold by investment
From Laurence the Count-bishop of Ceneda,
In fief perpetual to myself and heirs,
To portion them (leaving my city spoil,
My palace and my treasures, to your forfeit)

Between my consort and my kinsmen.

Ben. These

Lie under the state's ban — their Chief, thy nephew,
In peril of his own life; but the Council
Postpones his trial for the present. If
Thou wilt st a state unto thy widowed Princess, ⁵⁴⁰
Fear not, for we will do her justice.

Ang. Signors,

I share not in your spoil! From henceforth, know
I am devoted unto God alone,
And take my refuge in the cloister.

Doge. Come!

The hour may be a hard one, but 'twill end.
Have I aught else to undergo save Death?

Ben. You have nought to do, except confess and die.

The priest is robed, the scimitar is bare,
And both await without. — But, above all,
Think not to speak unto the people; they ⁵⁵⁰
Are now by thousands swarming at the gates,
But these are closed: the Ten, the Avogadori,
The Giunta, and the chief men of the Forty,
Alone will be beholders of thy doom,
And they are ready to attend the Doge.

Doge. The Doge!

Ben. Yes, Doge, thou hast lived and thou shalt die

A Sovereign; till the moment which precedes
The separation of that head and trunk,
That ducal crown and head shall be united.
Thou hast forgot thy dignity in deigning ⁵⁶⁰
To plot with petty traitors; not so we,
Who in the very punishment acknowledge
The Prince. Thy vile accomplices have died
The dog's death, and the wolf's; but them shall fall

As falls the lion by the hunters, girt
By those who feel a proud compassion for thee,
And mourn even the inevitable death
Provoked by thy wild wrath, and regal fierceness.
Now we remit thee to thy preparation:
Let it be brief, and we ourselves will be ⁵⁷⁰
Thy guides unto the place where first we were
United to thee as thy subjects, and
Thy Senate; and must now be parted from thee
As such for ever, on the self-same spot.
Guards! form the Doge's escort to his chamber.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II. — *The Doge's Apartment.*

The Doge as Prisoner, and the Duchess attending him.

Doge. Now, that the priest is gone, 'twere useless all
To linger out the miserable minutes;
But one pang more, the pang of parting from thee,
And I will leave the few last grains of sand,
Which yet remain of the accorded hour,
Still falling — I have done with Time.

Ang. Alas!

And I have been the cause, the unconscious cause;
And for this funeral marriage, this black union,
Which thou, compliant with my father's wish,
Didst promise at *his* death, thou hast sealed thine own. ¹⁰

Doge. Not so: there was that in my spirit ever
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse;
The marvel is, it came not until now —
And yet it was foretold me.

Ang. How foretold you?

Doge. Long years ago — so long, they are a doubt
In memory, and yet they live in annals:

When I was in my youth, and served the Senate
And Signory as Podesta and Captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day
Of festival, the sluggish Bishop who ²⁰
Conveyed the Host aroused my rash young anger,
By strange delay, and arrogant reply
To my reproof: I raised my hand and smote him,
Until he reeled beneath his holy burthen;
And as he rose from earth again, he raised
His tremulous hands in pious wrath towards Heaven.
Thence pointing to the Host, which had fallen from him,
He turned to me, and said, "The Hour will come
When he thou hast o'erthrown shall overthrow thee:
The Glory shall depart from out thy house, ³⁰
The Wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,
And in thy best maturity of Mind
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease
In other men, or mellow into virtues;
And Majesty which decks all other heads,
Shall crown to leave thee headless; honours shall
But prove to thee the heralds of Destruction,
And hoary hairs of Shame, and both of Death,
But not such death as fits an agéd man." ⁴⁰
Thus saying, he passed on. — That Hour is come.

Ang. And with this warning couldst thou not have striven
To avert the fatal moment, and atone,
By penitence, for that which thou hadst done?

Doge. I own the words went to my heart, so much
That I remembered them amid the maze
Of Life, as if they formed a spectral voice,
Which shook me in a supernatural dream;
And I repented; but 'twas not for me
To pull in resolution: what must be ⁵⁰
I could not change, and would not fear. — Nay more,
Thou can'st not have forgot, what all remember,
That on my day of landing here as Doge,

On my return from Rome, a mist of such
Unwonted density went on before
The Bucentaur, like the columnar cloud
Which ushered Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembarked us
Between the Pillars of Saint Mark's, where 'tis
The custom of the state to put to death ⁶⁰
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is, —
So that all Venice shuddered at the omen.

Ang. Ah! little boots it now to recollect
Such things.

Doge. And yet I find a comfort in
The thought, that these things are the work of Fate;
For I would rather yield to Gods than men,
Or cling to any creed of destiny,
Rather than deem these mortals, most of whom
I know to be as worthless as the dust, ⁷⁰
And weak as worthless, more than instruments
Of an o'er-ruling Power; they in themselves
Were all incapable — they could not be
Vistors of him who oft had conquered for them.

Ang. Employ the minutes left in aspirations
Of a more healing nature, and in peace
Even with these wretches take thy flight to Heaven.

Doge. I *am* at peace: the peace of certainty
That a sure Hour will come, when their sons' sons,
And this proud city, and these azure waters, ⁸⁰
And all which makes them eminent and bright,
Shall be a desolation and a curse,
A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel.

Ang. Speak not thus now: the surge of Passion still
Sweeps o'er thee to the last; thou dost deceive

Thyself, and canst not injure them — be calmer.

Doge. I stand within Eternity, and see
Into Eternity, and I behold —
Aye, palpable as I see thy sweet face ⁹⁰
For the last time — the days which I denounce
Unto all time against these wave-girt walls,
And they who are indwellers.

Guard (coming forward). Doge of Venice,
The Ten are in attendance on your Highness.

Doge. Then farewell, Angiolina! — one embrace —
Forgive the old man who hath been to thee
A fond but fatal husband — love my memory —
I would not ask so much for me still living,
But thou canst judge of me more kindly now,
Seeing my evil feelings are at rest. ¹⁰⁰
Besides, of all the fruit of these long years,
Glory, and Wealth, and Power, and Fame, and Name,
Which generally leave some flowers to bloom
Even o'er the grave, I have nothing left, not even
A little love, or friendship, or esteem,
No, not enough to extract an epitaph
From ostentatious kinsmen; in one hour
I have uprooted all my former life,
And outlived everything, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will oft ¹¹⁰
With unimpaired but not a clamorous grief
Still keep — — Thou turn'st so pale! — Alas! she faints,
She has no breath, no pulse! — Guards! lend your aid —
I cannot leave her thus, and yet 'tis better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal. — Call her women —
One look! — how cold her hand! — as cold as mine
Shall be ere she recovers. — Gently tend her,
And take my last thanks — I am ready now. ¹²⁰

[The Attendants of Angiolina enter, and surround their Mistress, who has fainted. — Exeunt the Doge, Guards, etc., etc.]

Scene III. — The Court of the Ducal Palace; the outer gates are shut against the people. — The Doge enters in his ducal robes, in procession with the Council of Ten and other Patricians, attended by the Guards, till they arrive at the top of the “Giants’ Staircase” (where the Doges took the oaths); the Executioner is stationed there with his sword. — On arriving, a Chief of the Ten takes off the ducal cap from the Doge’s head.

Doge. So now the Doge is nothing, and at last
I am again Marino Faliero:
‘Tis well to be so, though but for a moment,
Here was I crowned, and here, bear witness, Heaven!
With how much more contentment I resign
That shining mockery, the ducal bauble,
Than I received the fatal ornament.

One of the Ten. Thou tremblest, Faliero!

Doge. ‘Tis with age, then.

Ben. Faliero! hast thou aught further to commend,
Compatible with justice, to the Senate? ¹⁰

Doge. I would commend my nephew to their mercy,
My consort to their justice; for methinks
My death, and such a death, might settle all
Between the State and me.

Ben. They shall be cared for;
Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime.

Doge. Unheard of! aye, there’s not a history
But shows a thousand crowned conspirators
Against the people; but to set them free,
One Sovereign only died, and one is dying.

Ben. And who were they who fell in such a cause? ²⁰

Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge of Venice —
Agis and Faliero!

Ben. Hast thou more
To utter or to do?

Doge. May I speak?

Ben. Thou may'st;
But recollect the people are without,
Beyond the compass of the human voice.

Doge. I speak to Time and to Eternity,
Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
Ye Elements! in which to be resolved
I hasten, let my voice be as a Spirit
Upon you! Ye blue waves! which bore my banner. 30
Ye winds! which fluttered o'er as if you loved it,
And filled my swelling sails as they were wafted
To many a triumph! Thou, my native earth,
Which I have bled for! and thou, foreign earth,
Which drank this willing blood from many a wound!
Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
Reek up to Heaven! Ye skies, which will receive it!
Thou Sun! which shinest on these things, and Thou!
Who kindlest and who quenchest suns! — Attest!
I am not innocent — but are these guiltless? 40
I perish, but not unavenged; far ages
Float up from the abyss of Time to be,
And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
Of this proud City, and I leave my curse
On her and hers for ever! — -- Yes, the hours
Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield,
Unto a bastard Attila, without
Shedding so much blood in her last defence, 50
As these old veins, oft drained in shielding her,
Shall pour in sacrifice. — She shall be bought

And sold, and be an appanage to those
Who shall despise her! — She shall stoop to be
A province for an Empire, petty town
In lieu of Capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, panders for a people!
Then when the Hebrew's in thy palaces,
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his; 60
When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
Make their nobility a plea for pity;
Then, when the few who still retain a wreck
Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-gerent,
Even in the Palace where they swayed as Sovereigns,
Even in the Palace where they slew their Sovereign,
Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
From an adulteress boastful of her guilt 70
With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation; — when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turned o'er to the vanquished by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorned even by the vicious for such vices
As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
Defy all codes to image or to name them;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom, 80
All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entailed on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
A wider proverb for worse prostitution; —
When all the ills of conquered states shall cling thee,
Vice without splendour, Sin without relief
Even from the gloss of Love to smooth it o'er,
But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,
Prurient yet passionless, cold studied lewdness,
Depraving Nature's frailty to an art; —
When these and more are heavy on thee, when 90
Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without Pleasure,

Youth without Honour, Age without respect,
Meanness and Weakness, and a sense of woe
‘Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar’st not murmur,
Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
Amidst thy many murders, think of *mine*!
Thou den of drunkards with the blood of Princes!
Gehenna of the waters! thou Sea-Sodom!
Thus I devote thee to the Infernal Gods! 100
Thee and thy serpent seed!
[*Here the Doge turns and addresses the Executioner.*
Slave, do thine office!
Strike as I struck the foe! Strike as I would
Have struck those tyrants! Strike deep as my curse!
Strike — and but once!

[*The Doge throws himself upon his knees, and as the Executioner raises his sword the scene closes.*

Scene IV. — *The Piazza and Piazzetta of St. Mark’s. — The people in crowds gathered round the grated gates of the Ducal Palace, which are shut.*

First Citizen. I have gained the Gate, and can discern the Ten,
Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge.

Second Cit. I cannot reach thee with mine utmost effort.
How is it? let us hear at least, since sight
Is thus prohibited unto the people,
Except the occupiers of those bars.

First Cit. One has approached the Doge, and now they strip
The ducal bonnet from his head — and now
He raises his keen eyes to Heaven; I see
Them glitter, and his lips move — Hush! hush! — no, 10
‘Twas but a murmur — Curse upon the distance!
His words are inarticulate, but the voice
Swells up like muttered thunder; would we could
But gather a sole sentence!

Second Cit. Hush! we perhaps may catch the sound.

First Cit. 'Tis vain.

I cannot hear him. — How his hoary hair
Streams on the wind like foam upon the wave!
Now — now — he kneels — and now they form a circle
Round him, and all is hidden — but I see
The lifted sword in air — — Ah! hark! it falls! 20

[The people murmur.]

Third Cit. Then they have murdered him who would have freed us.

Fourth Cit. He was a kind man to the commons ever.

Fifth Cit. Wisely they did to keep their portals barred.
Would we had known the work they were preparing
Ere we were summoned here — we would have brought
Weapons, and forced them!

Sixth Cit. Are you sure he's dead?

First Cit. I saw the sword fall — Lo! what have we here?

Enter on the Balcony of the Palace which fronts St. Mark's Place a Chief of the Ten, with a bloody sword. He waves it thrice before the People, and exclaims,

“Justice hath dealt upon the mighty Traitor!”

[The gates are opened; the populace rush in towards the “Giants’ Staircase,” where the execution has taken place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,

“The gory head rolls down the Giants’ Steps!”

[The curtain falls.]

SARDANAPALUS

A TRAGEDY.

Sardanapalus, a Tragedy, was played for the first time at Drury Lane Theatre, April 10, 1834, and (for the twenty-second time) June 5, 1834. Macready appeared as “Sardanapalus,” Miss Phillips as “Zarina,” and Miss Ellen Tree as “Myrrha.” [In his diary for April 11, 1834 (see *Reminiscences*, 1875, i. 414, 415) Macready wrote, “On arriving at my chambers ... I found a letter without a signature; the seal was the head of Byron, and in the envelope was a folded sheet with merely the words, ‘Werner, Nov., 1830. Byron, Ravenna, 1821,’ and ‘Sardanapalus, April 10th, 1834.’ Encircling the name of Byron, etc., was a lock of grey hair fastened by a gold thread, which I am sure was Byron’s, ... it surprised and pleased me.”]

Sardanapalus, King of Assyria, was produced at the Princess’s Theatre, June 13, 1853, and played till September 2, 1853. Charles Kean appeared as “Sardanapalus,” Miss Heath as “Zarina,” and Mrs. Charles Kean as “Myrrha.”

Sardanapale, Opéra en Trois Actes, par M. Henry Becque, Musique de M. Victorin Joncières, was performed for the first time at the Théâtre Impérial-Lyrique, February 8, 1867.

Lord Byron’s Tragedy of Sardanapalus, in four acts, was performed at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, March 31-April 28, 1877. Charles Calvert (the adapter) played “Sardanapalus,” Miss Hathaway “Zarina,” and Miss Fanny Ensor “Myrrha;” and June 26-July 27, 1877, at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool. Calvert’s adaptation was also performed at Booth’s Theatre, New York.]



'La Mort de Sardanapale' by Eugène Delacroix, 1827

INTRODUCTION

Byron's passion or infatuation for the regular drama lasted a little over a year. *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, and the *Two Foscari*, were the fruits of his "self-denying ordinance to dramatize, like the Greeks ... striking passages of history" (letter to Murray, July 14, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 323). The mood was destined to pass, but for a while the neophyte was spell-bound.

Sardanapalus, a Tragedy, the second and, perhaps, the most successful of these studies in the poetry of history, was begun at Ravenna, January 13, 1821, "with all deliberate speed;" but, for a time, from laziness or depression of spirits, or, perhaps, from the counter-excitement of "the poetry of politics" (*Letters*, 1901, v. 205), that is, the revolutionary drama which had begun to run its course, a month went by before he had finished the first act (February 15). Three months later (May 28) he announces the completion of the drama, the last act having been "dashed off" in two or three days (*Letters*, 1901, v. 300).

For the story of *Sardanapalus*, which had excited his interest as a schoolboy, Byron consulted the pages of Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliothecæ Historicæ*, lib. ii. pp. 78, sq., ed. 1604), and, possibly to ward off and neutralize the distracting influence of Shakespeare and other barbarian dramatists, he "turned over" the tragedies of Seneca (*Letters*, 1901, v. 173). It is hardly necessary to remind the modern reader that the *Sardanapalus* of history is an unverified if not an unverifiable personage. Diodorus the Sicilian, who was contemporary with Cicero, derived his knowledge of Assyrian history from the *Persica* of Ctesias of Cnidos, who was private physician at the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon (B.C. 405-359), and is said to have had access to, and to have consulted, the "Persian authorities" (διφθέραι Βασιλικαί).

The character which Ctesias depicted or invented, an effeminate debauchee, sunk in luxury and sloth, who at the last was driven to take up arms, and, after a prolonged but ineffectual resistance, avoided capture by suicide, cannot be identified. Asurbanipal (Ašur-bāni-apli), the son of Esarhaddon and grandson of Sennacherib, who ascended the throne B.C. 668, and reigned for about forty years, was, as the cuneiform records and the friezes of his palace testify, a bold hunter and a mighty warrior. He vanquished Tarku (Tirhakah) of Ethiopia, and his successor, Urdamane. Ba'al King of Tyre, Yakinlū King of the island-city of Arvad, Sandāsarmū of Cilicia, Teumman of Elam, and other potentates, suffered defeat at his hands. "The land of Elam," writes the king or his "Historiographer Royal," "through its extent I covered as when a mighty storm approaches; I cut

off the head of Teumman, their king.... Beyond number I slew his warriors; alive in my hands I took his fighting men; with their corpses, as with thorns and thistles, I filled the vicinity of Susa; their blood I caused to flow in the Eulæus, and I stained its waters like wool.” Clearly the Sardanapalus who painted his face and carded purple wool in the *penetralia* of his seraglio does not bear even a traditional resemblance to Ašur-bāni-apli the Conqueror.

All that can be affirmed with any certainty is that within twenty years of the death of Asurbanipal, the Assyrian Empire passed into the hands of the Medes; but there is nothing to show whether the period of decay had already set in before the close of his reign, or under which of his two successors, Āsur-etil-ilāni or Sin-šar-iškun, the final catastrophe (B.C. 606) took place (*Encyclopedia Biblica*, art. “Assyria,” art. “Āsur-bani-pal,” by Leonard W. King).

“I have made,” writes Byron (May 25, 1821), “Sardanapalus brave though voluptuous (as history represents him), and as amiable as my poor pen could make him.” Diodorus, or rather Ctesias, who may have drawn upon personal reminiscences of his patron, Artaxerxes Mnemon (see Plutarch’s *Artaxerxes*, *passim*), does not enlarge upon his amiability, and credits him only with the courage of despair. Byron’s Sardanapalus, with his sudden transition from voluptuous abandonment to heroic chivalry, his remorseful recognition of the sanctities of wedlock, his general good nature, his “sly, insinuating sarcasms” (Moore’s Diary, September 30, 1821, *Memoirs*, iii. 282), “all made out of the carver’s brain,” resembles *history* as little as *history* resembles the Assyrian record. Fortunately, the genius of the poet escaped from the meshes which he had woven round himself, and, in spite of himself, he was constrained to “beat his music out,” regardless of his authorities.

The character of Myrrha, which bears some resemblance to Aspasia, “a native of Phoea in Ionia — the favourite mistress of Cyrus” (see Plutarch’s *Artaxerxes*, Langhorne’s Translation, 1838, p. 699), was introduced partly to pacify the Countess Guiccioli, who had quarrelled with him for maintaining that “love was not the loftiest theme for true tragedy,” and, in part, to prove that he was not a slave to his own ideals, and could imagine and delineate a woman who was both passionate and high-minded. Diodorus (*Bibl. Hist.*, lib. iii. p. 130) records the exploits of Myrina, Queen of the Amazons, but it is probable that Byron named his Ionian slave after Mirra, who gives her name to Alfieri’s tragedy, which brought on a convulsive fit of tears and shuddering when he first saw it played at Bologna in August, 1819 (*Letters*, 1900, iv. 339).

Sardanapalus, a Tragedy, was published together with *The Two Foscari*, a Tragedy, and *Cain*, a Mystery, December 19, 1821.

The three plays were reviewed by Heber in the *Quarterly Review*, July, 1822, vol. xxvii. pp. 476-524; by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, February, 1822, vol. 36, pp. 413-452; in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, February, 1822, vol. xi. pp. 212-217; and in the *Portfolio* (Philadelphia), December, 1822, vol. xiv. pp. 487-492.

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE
A STRANGER
PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE
OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,
THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED
THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.
THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM
IS ENTITLED
SARDANAPALUS.

PREFACE

In publishing the following Tragedies I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the “unities;” conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised parts of it. But “*nous avons changé tout cela*,” and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect, — and not in the art.

In this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Sardanapalus, king of Nineveh and Assyria, *etc.*

Arbaces, the Mede who aspired to the Throne.

Beleses, a Chaldean and Soothsayer.

Salemenes, the King's Brother-in-Law.

Altada, an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.

Pania.

Zames.

Sfero.

Balea.

WOMEN.

Zarina, the Queen.

Myrrha, an Ionian female Slave, and the Favourite Mistress of Sardanapalus.

Women composing the Harem of Sardanapalus, Guards, Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, *etc.*, *etc.*

Scene. — A Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

SARDANAPALUS

ACT I

Scene I. — A Hall in the Palace.

Salemenes (solus). He hath wronged his queen, but still he is her lord;
He hath wronged my sister — still he is my brother;
He hath wronged his people — still he is their sovereign —
And I must be his friend as well as subject:
He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
Of Empire ending like a shepherd's tale;
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage which Corruption 10
Has not all quenched, and latent energies,
Repressed by circumstance, but not destroyed —
Steeped, but not drowned, in deep voluptuousness.
If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reached an empire: to an empire born,
He will bequeath none; nothing but a name,
Which his sons will not prize in heritage: —
Yet — not all lost — even yet — he may redeem
His sloth and shame, by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing 20
He should not be and is. Were it less toil
To sway his nations than consume his life?
To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul,
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield not
Health like the chase, nor glory like the war —
He must be roused. Alas! there is no sound
[Sound of soft music heard from within.
To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the lute —
The lyre — the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices 30
Of women, and of beings less than women,

Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great King of all we know of earth
Lolls crowned with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up
By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
And see the bright gems of the glittering girls,
At once his Chorus and his Council, flash 40
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garbed, and scarce less female,
The grandson of Semiramis, the Man-Queen. —
He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and front him,
And tell him what all good men tell each other,
Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves
Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.
Scene II.

Enter Sardanapalus effeminately dressed, his Head crowned with Flowers, and his Robe negligently flowing, attended by a Train of Women and young Slaves.

Sar. (speaking to some of his attendants). Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnished forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought wanting,
And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad clear river:
We will embark anon. Fair Nymphs, who deign
To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above us, 10
And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs;
Till then, let each be mistress of her time,
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha, choose;
Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr. My Lord —

Sar. My Lord! — my Life! why answerest thou so coldly?

It is the curse of kings to be so answered.
Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine — say, wouldst thou
Accompany our guests, or charm away
The moments from me?

Myr. The King's choice is mine.

Sar. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest joy 20
Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine; for thou art still
Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.

Myr. I would remain: I have no happiness
Save in beholding thine; yet — —

Sar. Yet! what yet?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.

Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council; it were better I retire. 30

Sal. (*comes forward and says*) The Ionian slave says well: let her retire.

Sar. Who answers? How now, brother?

Sal. The *Queen's* brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal Lord.

Sar. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all dispose their hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence.
[The court retiring.
(*To Myrrha, who is going.*) Myrrha! I thought *thou* wouldst remain.

Myr. Great King,
Thou didst not say so.

Sar. But *thou* looked'st it:

I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.

Myr. Sire! your brother — —

Sal. His *Consort*'s brother, minion of Ionia! 40
How darest *thou* name *me* and not blush?

Sar. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her crimson
Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness,
Which will not see it. What! in tears, my Myrrha?

Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.

Sar. Curséd be he who caused those tears to flow!

Sal. Curse not thyself — millions do that already. 50

Sar. Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
I am a monarch.

Sal. Would thou couldst!

Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou, too, Prince, permit my absence.

Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has checked
Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect
That we must forthwith meet: I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence. [*Exit Myrrha.*

Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both — and both for ever!

Sar. Brother!

I can at least command myself, who listen
To language such as this: yet urge me not 60
Beyond my easy nature.

Sal. 'Tis beyond
That easy — far too easy — idle nature,
Which I would urge thee. O that I could rouse thee!
Though 'twere against myself.

Sar. By the god Baal!
The man would make me tyrant.

Sal. So thou art.
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice,
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,
The negligence, the apathy, the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants, 70
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power
And those who should sustain it; so that whether
A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer; 80
The last they rather would assist than vanquish.

Sar. Why, what makes thee the mouth-piece of the people?

Sal. Forgiveness of the Queen, my sister wrongs;
A natural love unto my infant nephews;
Faith to the King, a faith he may need shortly,
In more than words; respect for Nimrod's line;
Also, another thing thou knowest not.

Sar. What's that?

Sal. To thee an unknown word.

Sar. Yet speak it;
I love to learn.

Sal. Virtue.

Sar. Not know the word!
Never was word yet rung so in my ears — 90
Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet:
I've heard thy sister talk of nothing else.

Sal. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of vice.

Sar. From whom?

Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
Unto the echoes of the Nation's voice.

Sar. Come, I'm indulgent, as thou knowest, patient,
As thou hast often proved — speak out, what moves thee?

Sal. Thy peril.

Sar. Say on.

Sal. Thus, then: all the nations,
For they are many, whom thy father left
In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee. 100

Sar. 'Gainst *me!!* What would the slaves?

Sal. A king.

Sar. And what
Am I then?

Sal. In their eyes a nothing; but
In mine a man who might be something still.

Sar. The railing drunkards! why, what would they have?
Have they not peace and plenty?

Sal. Of the first
More than is glorious: of the last, far less
Than the King reckes of.

Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps, who provide no better?

Sal. And somewhat in the Monarch who ne'er looks
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs ¹¹⁰
Beyond them, 'tis but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal!
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A God, or at the least shimest like a God
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril!
For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion. ¹²⁰

Sar. I understand thee — thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read — the restless slaves
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.

Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis — a woman only — led
These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.

Sar. Tis most true. And *how* returned?

Sal. Why, like a *man* — a hero; baffled, but
Not vanquished. With but twenty guards, she made ¹³⁰
Good her retreat to Bactria.

Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?

Sal. Our annals say not.

Sar. Then I will say for them —
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men — the fiercer of the three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* Glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.

Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate. 140
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she failed in India,
Brought Persia — Media — Bactria — to the realm
Which she once swayed — and thou *mightst* sway.
Sar. I sway them —
She but subdued them.

Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than your sceptre.

Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such — they say
He was a God, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship, 150
Who conquered this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquished.

Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou perceiv'st
That he is deemed a God for what he did.

Sar. And in his godship I will honour him —
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!

Sal. What means the King?

Sar. To worship your new God
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.
Enter Cupbearer.
Sar. (addressing the Cupbearer).
Bring me the golden goblet thick with gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence, 160
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. Is this moment
A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?
Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.
Sar. (taking the cup from him). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus
Conquered the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deemed a Deity.

Sar. Not so: — of all his conquests a few columns.
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are 170
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here — here in this goblet is his title
To immortality — the immortal grape
From which he first expressed the soul, and gave
To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave;
And, like my ancestor Semiramis, 180
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
Here's that which deified him — let it now
Humanise thee; my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek God!

Sal. For all thy realms

I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.

Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans; and no God,
Because he turned a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires
The young, makes Weariness forget his toil, 190
And Fear her danger; opens a new world
When this, the present, palls. Well, then *I* pledge thee
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind. [*Drinks.*

Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?

Sar. And if I did, 'twere better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not
My present purpose: since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest.
(To the Cupbearer.) Boy, retire. [*Exit Cupbearer.*

Sal. I would but have recalled thee from thy dream; 200
Better by me awakened than rebellion.

Sar. Who should rebel? or why? what cause? pretext?
I am the lawful King, descended from
A race of Kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me?

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.

Sar. But
Thou think'st that I have wronged the Queen: is't not so?

Sal. *Think!* Thou hast wronged her!

Sar. Patience, Prince, and hear me.
She has all power and splendour of her station, 210
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,

The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her as monarchs wed — for state,
And loved her as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposedst I could link me
Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me — nor monarchs — nor mankind.

Sal. I pray thee, change the theme: my blood disdains
Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord! ²²⁰
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The Queen is silent.

Sar. And why not her brother?

Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.

Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they murmur
Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges;
Nor decimated them with savage laws, ²³⁰
Nor sweated them to build up Pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.

Sal. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavished treasures, and contemnéd virtues.

Sar. Or for my trophies I have founded cities:
There's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day — what could that blood-loving beldame,
My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more, except destroy them?

Sal. 'Tis most true; ²⁴⁰

I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.

Sar. Shame me! By Baal, the cities, though well built,
Are not more goodly than the verse! Say what
Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or rule,
But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.
Why, those few lines contain the history
Of all things human: hear — "Sardanapalus,
The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes, ²⁵⁰
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love; the rest's not worth a fillip."

Sal. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,
For a king to put up before his subjects!

Sar. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up edicts —
"Obey the king — contribute to his treasure —
Recruit his phalanx — spill your blood at bidding —
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil."
Or thus — "Sardanapalus on this spot
Slew fifty thousand of his enemies. ²⁶⁰
These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy."
I leave such things to conquerors; enough
For me, if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less, and glide
Ungroaning to the tomb: I take no license
Which I deny to them. We all are men.

Sal. Thy Sires have been revered as Gods —

Sar. In dust
And death, where they are neither Gods nor men.
Talk not of such to me! the worms are Gods;
At least they banqueted upon your Gods, ²⁷⁰
And died for lack of farther nutriment.
Those Gods were merely men; look to their issue —
I feel a thousand mortal things about me,

But nothing godlike, — unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a disposition
To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that's human)
To be indulgent to my own.

Sal. Alas!
The doom of Nineveh is sealed. — Woe — woe
To the unrivalled city!

Sar. What dost dread? 280

Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a few hours
The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee,
And thine and mine; and in another day
What is shall be the past of Belus' race.

Sar. What must we dread?

Sal. Ambitious treachery,
Which has environed thee with snares; but yet
There is resource: empower me with thy signet
To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.

Sar. The heads — how many?

Sal. Must I stay to number 290
When even thine own's in peril? Let me go;
Give me thy signet — trust me with the rest.

Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.
When we take those from others, we nor know
What we have taken, nor the thing we give.

Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek for thine?

Sar. That's a hard question — But I answer, Yes.
Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they

Whom thou suspectest? — Let them be arrested.

Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next moment 300
Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all. —
Trust me.

Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever;
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*]

Sal. I have one more request.

Sar. Name it.

Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.

Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them; 310
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.

Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not, if needful?

Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper, and a bow,
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth:
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on't, 'tis long since I've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother? 320

Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling? —
If need be, wilt thou wear them?

Sar. Will I not?
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves

Will not be ruled with less, I'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turned into a distaff.

Sal. They say thy Sceptre's turned to that already.

Sar. That's false! but let them say so: the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou seest 330
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.

Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.

Sar. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat;
And never changed their chains but for their armour:
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues 340
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour?

Sal. You have said they are men;
As such their hearts are something.

Sar. So my dogs' are;
And better, as more faithful: — but, proceed;
Thou hast my signet: — since they are tumultuous,
Let them be tempered, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch, 350
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,

The fatal penalties imposed on life:
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe them:
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st ³⁶⁰
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sar. They lie. — Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be so.

Sar. What mean'st thou! — 'tis thy secret; thou desirest
Few questions, and I'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er ³⁷⁰
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only: if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
"The Mighty Hunter!" I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie; *that which*
They yet may find me — shall defy their wish
To speak it worse; and let them thank themselves.

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?

Sar. Feel! who feels not ³⁸⁰
Ingratitude?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy

Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell! [*Exit Salemenes.*]

Sar. (solus). Farewell!

He's gone; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not: he hath found it, let him quell it. 390
Must I consume my life — this little life —
In guarding against all may make it less?
It is not worth so much! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,
Because they are near; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so —
If they should sweep me off from Earth and Empire,
Why, what is Earth or Empire of the Earth?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image; 400
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay! 'Tis true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of Death —
A terror and a trophy. But for this
I feel no penitence; my life is love:
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flowed for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavished 410
On objects which could cost her sons a tear:
If then they hate me, 'tis because I hate not:
If they rebel, 'tis because I oppress not.
Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mowed down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility. —

I'll think no more. — Within there, ho!
Enter an Attendant.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence. 420

Attend. King, she is here.
Myrrha enters.

Sar. (apart to Attendant). Away!
(*Addressing Myrrha.*) Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throbbed for thee, and here thou comest: let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet oracle,
Communicates between us, though unseen,
In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sar. I know there doth, but not its name:
What is it?

Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 'tis only mortal; 430
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy —
That is, it would be happy; but — — [*Myrrha pauses.*]

Sar. There comes
For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness: let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is sealed.

Myr. My Lord! —

Sar. My Lord — my King — Sire — Sovereign; thus it is —
For ever thus, addressed with awe. I ne'er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons 440

Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaffed me down to their abasement.
Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
Lord — King — Sire — Monarch — nay, time was I prized them;
That is, I suffered them — from slaves and nobles;
But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been pressed to mine, a chill
Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me 450
Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee — and wear no crowns but those of flowers.

Myr. Would that we could!

Sar. And dost *thou* feel this? — Why?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst never know.

Sar. And that is — —

Myr. The true value of a heart;
At least, a woman's.

Sar. I have proved a thousand — A
thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts?

Sar. I think so.

Myr. Not one! the time may come thou may'st.

Sar. It will.
Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared — 460
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I —
But Salemenes hath declared my throne

In peril.

Myr. He did well.

Sar. And say'st *thou* so?

Thou whom he spurned so harshly, and now dared
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?

Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril
Peril to thee — —

Sar. Aye, from dark plots and snares 470
From Medes — and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what — a labyrinth of things —
A maze of muttered threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man — it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't —
But of the midnight festival.

Myr. 'Tis time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurned his sage cautions?

Sar. What? — and dost thou fear?

Myr. Fear! — I'm a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom? 480

Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?

Myr. I love.

Sar. And do not I? I love thee far — far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced; — yet I blench not.

Myr. That means thou lovest nor thyself nor me;
For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost.

Sar. Lost! — why, who is the aspiring chief who dared
Assume to win them?

Myr. Who is he should dread ⁴⁹⁰
To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself — will they remember him?

Sar. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur. — King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you! —
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs —
A slave, and hating fetters — an Ionian, ⁵⁰⁰
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sar. Save me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love — not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells security?

Sar. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast, ⁵¹⁰
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quenched by her, and your last sighs

Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sar. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music:
The very chorus of the tragic song
I have heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not — calm thee.

Myr. I weep not. — But I pray thee, do not speak 520
About my fathers or their land.

Sar. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.

Myr. True — true: constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;
But when another speaks of Greeks, it wounds me.

Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as thou saidst?

Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
The rage of the worst war — the war of brethren.

Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war, and warriors;
I live in peace and pleasure: what can man 530
Do more?

Myr. Alas! my Lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep
The substance of sweet peace; and, for a king,
'Tis sometimes better to be feared than loved.

Sar. And I have never sought but for the last.

Myr. And now art neither.

Sar. Dost *thou* say so, Myrrha?

Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self-love*,
Which means that men are kept in awe and law,
Yet not oppressed — at least they must not think so,
Or, if they think so, deem it necessary, 540
To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
A King of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
And love, and mirth, was never King of Glory.

Sar. Glory! what's that?

Myr. Ask of the Gods thy fathers.

Sar. They cannot answer; when the priests speak for them,
'Tis for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine Empire's founders.

Sar. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I cannot.
But what wouldst have? the Empire *has been* founded.
I cannot go on multiplying empires. 550

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.
Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Euphrates:
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, decked for our return,
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crowned with fresh flowers like —

Myr. Victims.

Sar. No, like sovereigns,
The Shepherd Kings of patriarchal times, 560
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths,
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter Pania.

Pan. May the King live for ever!

Sar. Not an hour
Longer than he can love. How my soul hates
This language, which makes life itself a lie,
Flattering dust with eternity. Well, Pania!
Be brief.

Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the King,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace: when the General returns, ⁵⁷⁰
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

Sar. What! am I then cooped?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pan. I must obey, and yet — —

Myr. Oh, Monarch, listen. —
How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
Within these palace walls in silken dalliance, ⁵⁸⁰
And never shown thee to thy people's longing;
Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontrolled, the Gods unworshipped,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumbered through the realm!
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day, —
A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou not
Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past fathers' race,
And for thy sons' inheritance?

Pan. 'Tis true! 590

From the deep urgency with which the Prince
Despatched me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.

Sar. No, it must not be.

Myr. For the sake of thy realm!

Sar. Away!

Pan. For that
Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.

Sar. These are mere fantasies:
There is no peril: — 'tis a sullen scheme
Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,
And show himself more necessary to us. 600

Myr. By all that's good and glorious take this counsel.

Sar. Business to-morrow.

Myr. Aye — or death to-night.

Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly,
'Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love;
So let me fall like the plucked rose! — far better
Thus than be withered.

Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
Even for the sake of all that ever stirred
A monarch into action, to forego
A trifling revel.

Sar. No.

Myr. Then yield for *mine*;
For my sake!

Sar. Thine, my Myrrha!

Myr. 'Tis the first ⁶¹⁰
Boon which I ever asked Assyria's king.

Sar. That's true, and, wer't my kingdom, must be granted.
Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence!
Thou hear'st me.

Pan. And obey. [*Exit Pania.*

Sar. I marvel at thee.
What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me?

Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the Prince thy kinsman to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.

Sar. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou?

Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee*. ⁶²⁰

Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou?

Sar. I shall be King, as heretofore.

Myr. Where?

Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am — may make me nothing —
But either that or nothing must I be:

I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee. 630

Sar. And who will do so now?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none?

Sar. Suspect! — that's a spy's office. Oh! we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there! — ye slaves, deck
The Hall of Nimrod for the evening revel;
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we'll wear our fetters jocundly;
If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer-dwelling on its beauteous border,
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within there! 640
[Exit Sardanapalus.]

Myr. (solus).

Why do I love this man? My country's daughters
Love none but heroes. But I have no country!
The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him;
And that's the heaviest link of the long chain —
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so:
The hour is coming when he'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabbed him on his throne when highest
Would have been noble in my country's creed:
I was not made for either. Could I save him, 650
I should not love *him* better, but myself;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen
In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger:
And yet, methinks, I love him more, perceiving
That he is hated of his own barbarians,
The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
Could I but wake a single thought like those
Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long

'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and triumph. 660
He loves me, and I love him; the slave loves
Her master, and would free him from his vices.
If not, I have a means of freedom still,
And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
May show him how alone a King can leave
His throne. I must not lose him from my sight. [*Exit.*

ACT II

Scene I. — The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.

Beleses (solus).

The Sun goes down: methinks he sets more slowly,
Taking his last look of Assyria's Empire.
How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
Like the blood he predicts. If not in vain,
Thou Sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,
I have outwatched ye, reading ray by ray
The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble
For what he brings the nations, 'tis the furthest
Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm!
An earthquake should announce so great a fall — 10
A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,
To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon
Its everlasting page the end of what
Seemed everlasting; but oh! thou true Sun!
The burning oracle of all that live,
As fountain of all life, and symbol of
Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit
Thy lore unto calamity? Why not
Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine
All-glorious burst from ocean? why not dart 20
A beam of hope athwart the future years,
As of wrath to its days? Hear me! oh, hear me!
I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant —
I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
And bowed my head beneath thy mid-day beams,
When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watched
For thee, and after thee, and prayed to thee,
And sacrificed to thee, and read, and feared thee,
And asked of thee, and thou hast answered — but
Only to thus much: while I speak, he sinks — 30
Is gone — and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted West, which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is

Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The Gods but in decay.
Enter Arbaces by an inner door.

Arb. Beleses, why
So wrapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand
Gazing to trace thy disappearing God
Into some realm of undiscovered day?
Our business is with night — 'tis come.

Bel. But not 40
Gone.

Arb. Let it roll on — we are ready.

Bel. Yes.
Would it were over!

Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
To whom the very stars shine Victory?

Bel. I do not doubt of Victory — but the Victor.

Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Meantime
I have prepared as many glittering spears
As will out-sparkle our allies — your planets.
There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
That less than woman, is even now upon
The waters with his female mates. The order 50
Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
The first cup which he drains will be the last
Quaffed by the line of Nimrod.

Bel. 'Twas a brave one.

Arb. And is a weak one — 'tis worn out — we'll mend it.

Bel. Art sure of that?

Arb. Its founder was a hunter —
I am a soldier — what is there to fear?

Bel. The soldier.

Arb. And the priest, it may be: but
If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
Why spur me to this enterprise? your own 60
No less than mine?

Bel. Look to the sky!

Arb. I look.

Bel. What seest thou?

Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.

Bel. And midst them, mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers,
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.

Arb. Well?

Bel. 'Tis thy natal ruler — thy birth planet.

Arb. (touching his scabbard).

My star is in this scabbard: when it shines,
It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
Of what is to be done to justify
Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer, 70
They shall have temples — aye, and priests — and thou
Shalt be the pontiff of — what Gods thou wilt;
For I observe that they are ever just,
And own the bravest for the most devout.

Bel. Aye, and the most devout for brave — thou hast not
Seen me turn back from battle.

Arb. No; I own thee
As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
As skilful in Chaldea's worship: now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?

Bel. Why not both?

Arb. The better; 80
And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
So little to effect. This woman's warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have plucked
A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,
That were heroic or to win or fall;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be — —

Bel. Do not deem it:
He has that in him which may make you strife yet;
And were he all you think, his guards are hardy, 90
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.

Arb. They'll not resist.

Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.

Arb. True,
And therefore need a soldier to command them.

Bel. That Salemenes is.

Arb. But not their King.
Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the Queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels?

Bel. But
Not from the council — there he is ever constant.

Arb. And ever thwarted: what would you have more
To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning, 100
His blood dishonoured, and himself disdained:
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.

Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so: this I doubt of.

Arb. What, if we sound him?

Bel. Yes — if the time served.
Enter Balea.

Bal. Satraps! The king commands your presence at
The feast to-night.

Bel. To hear is to obey.
In the pavilion?

Bal. No; here in the palace.

Arb. How! in the palace? it was not thus ordered.

Bal. It is so ordered now.

Arb. And why?

Bal. I know not.
May I retire?

Arb. Stay.

Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush! let him go his way. 110
(*Alternately to Bal.*) Yes, Balea, thank the Monarch, kiss the hem
Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour — was't midnight?

Bal. It was: the place, the hall of Nimrod. Lords,

I humble me before you, and depart. [*Exit* Balea.

Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place;
There is some mystery: wherefore should he change it?

Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful — 120
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault. — Why dost thou muse?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion, — it was ever
His summer dotage.

Bel. And he loved his Queen —
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides —
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and Glory.

Arb. Still — I like it not.
If he has changed — why, so must we: the attack
Were easy in the isolated bower, 130
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers;
But in the hall of Nimrod — —

Bel. Is it so?
Methought the haughty soldier feared to mount
A throne too easily — does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on?

Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shall perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake — and gaily played for:
But here is more upon the die — a kingdom.

Bel. I have foretold already — thou wilt win it: 140
Then on, and prosper.

Arb. Now were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obeyed — I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's here?
Enter Salemenes.

Sal. Satraps!

Bel. My Prince!

Sal. Well met — I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.

Arb. Wherefore so?

Sal. 'Tis not the hour.

Arb. The hour! — what hour?

Sal. Of midnight.

Bel. Midnight, my Lord!

Sal. What, are you not invited?

Bel. Oh! yes — we had forgotten.

Sal. Is it usual
Thus to forget a Sovereign's invitation?

Arb. Why — we but now received it. 150

Sal. Then why here?

Arb. On duty.

Sal. On what duty?

Bel. On the state's.
We have the privilege to approach the presence;

But found the Monarch absent.

Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.

Arb. May we crave its purport?

Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards! Within there!
Enter Guards.

Sal. (continuing). Satraps,
Your swords.

Bel. (delivering his). My lord, behold my scimitar.
Arb. (drawing his sword). Take mine.

Sal. (advancing). I will.

Arb. But in your heart the blade —
The hilt quits not this hand.

Sal. (drawing). How! dost thou brave me?
Tis well — this saves a trial, and false mercy. 160
Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

Arb. Soldiers! Aye —
Alone, you dare not.

Sal. Alone! foolish slave —
What is there in thee that a Prince should shrink from
Of open force? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its venom —
The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.

Bel. (interposing). Arbaces! Are you mad? Have I not rendered
My sword? Then trust like me our Sovereign's justice.

Arb. No — I will sooner trust the stars thou prat'st of,
And this slight arm, and die a king at least 170

Of my own breath and body — so far that
None else shall chain them.

Sal. (to the Guards). You hear *him* and *me*.
Take him not, — kill.

[The Guards attack Arbaces, who defends himself valiantly and dexterously till they waver.

Sal. Is it even so; and must
I do the hangman's office? Recreants! see
How you should fell a traitor.
[Salemenes attacks Arbaces.
Enter Sardanapalus and Train.

Sar. Hold your hands —
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken?
My sword! O fool, I wear no sword: here, fellow,
Give me thy weapon. [*To a Guard*.
[Sardanapalus snatches a sword from one of the soldiers, and rushes between the
combatants — they separate.

Sar. In my very palace!
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers?

Bel. Sire, your justice.

Sal. Or — 180
Your weakness.

Sar. (raising the sword). How?

Sal. Strike! so the blow's repeated
Upon yon traitor — whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture — I'm content.

Sar. What — him!
Who dares assail Arbaces?

Sal. I!

Sar. Indeed!

Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant?

Sal. (showing the signet). Thine.

Arb. (*confused*). The King's!

Sal. Yes! and let the King confirm it.

Sar. I parted not from this for such a purpose.

Sal. You parted with it for your safety — I
Employed it for the best. Pronounce in person.

Here I am but your slave — a moment past 190
I was your representative.

Sar. Then sheathe

Your swords.

[Arbaces and Salemenes return their swords to the scabbards.]

Sal. Mine's sheathed: I pray you sheathe *not* yours:
Tis the sole sceptre left you now with safety.

Sar. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.

(*To a Guard.*) Here, fellow, take thy weapon back. Well, sirs,
What doth this mean?

Bel. The Prince must answer that.

Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.

Sar. Treason — Arbaces! treachery and Beleses!
That were an union I will not believe.

Bel. Where is the proof?

Sal. I'll answer that, if once 200
The king demands your fellow-traitor's sword.

Arb. (*to Sal.*). A sword which hath been drawn as oft as thine

Against his foes.

Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.

Sar. That is not possible: he dared not; no —
No — I'll not hear of such things. These vain bickerings
Are spawned in courts by base intrigues, and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.

Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and ²¹⁰
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.

Sar. Why, if I thought so —
But no, it cannot be: the Mede Arbaces —
The trusty, rough, true soldier — the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations — — No,
I'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.
Sal. (delivering back the signet).
Monarch, take back your signet.

Sar. No, retain it;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire, ²⁰⁰
I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sar. So I should:
He never asked it.

Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,
Without that hollow semblance of respect.

Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced the Prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless soldier! thou
Unit'st in thy own person the worst vices ²³⁰
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin
Is, at the least, a bold one, and not tempered
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,
My liege — the son of Belus! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the knee
Before your fathers.

Sar. Oh! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men; feeling that I ²⁴⁰
Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are — what I see them — ashes.

Bel. King! Do not deem so: they are with the stars,
And — —

Sar. You shall join them ere they will rise,
If you preach farther — Why, *this* is rank treason.

Sal. My lord!

Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols! Let him be released —
Give him his sword.

Sal. My Lord, and King, and Brother,
I pray ye pause.

Sar. Yes, and be sermonised,

And dinned, and deafened with dead men and Baal, 250
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.

Bel. Monarch! respect them.

Sar. Oh! for that — I love them;
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes;
I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks: but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of Gods, 260
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds — or the lights of Worlds — I know nor care not.
There's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it — nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty —
When they shine on my grave I shall know neither.

Bel. For *neither*, Sire, say *better*.

Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, Pontiff, for that knowledge. 270
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry — not loving either.

Sal. (*aside*). His lusts have made him mad. Then must I save him,
Spite of himself.

Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier; and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace — I'll not say pardon — which must be

Earned by the guilty; this I'll not pronounce ye, 280
Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not — for that I am soft, not fearful —
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attained gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crowned to reign o'er — let that pass.
As I have said, I will not *deem* ye guilty, 290
Nor *doom* ye guiltless. Albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you;
And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatsoe'er they now are, were
Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.

Arb. Sire, this clemency — —

Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself; and, although innocent,
We thank — —

Sar. Priest! keep your thanksgivings for Belus;
His offspring needs none.

Bel. But being innocent — —

Sar. Be silent. — Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal, 300
Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.

Bel. So we should be, were justice always done
By earthly power omnipotent; but Innocence
Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.

Sar. That's a good sentence for a homily,
Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
To plead thy Sovereign's cause before his people.

Bel. I trust there is no cause.

Sar. No *cause*, perhaps;
But many causers: — if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function 310
On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth and heaven
Than him who ruleth many and slays none;
And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
Enough to spare even those who would not spare him
Were they once masters — but that's doubtful. Satraps!
Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will — but from this hour 320
I have no call for either. Salemenes!
Follow me.

[*Exeunt Sardanapalus, Salemenes, and the Train, etc., leaving Arbaces and Beleses.*

Arb. Beleses!

Bel. Now, what think you?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What? thus suspected — with the sword slung o'er us
But by a single hair, and that still wavering,
To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us — why, I know not.

Bel. Seek not why;
But let us profit by the interval.
The hour is still our own — our power the same —
The night the same we destined. He hath changed 330
Nothing except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty

As must make madness of delay.

Arb. And yet —

Bel. What, doubting still?

Arb. He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salemenes.

Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly;
Gave royally what we had forfeited
Basely — —

Bel. Say bravely.

Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps —
But it has touched me, and, whate'er betide, 340
I will no further on.

Bel. And lose the world!

Arb. Lose any thing except my own esteem.

Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such
A king of distaffs!

Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the grantor's!

Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou wilt — the stars
Have written otherwise.

Arb. Though they came down,
And marshalled me the way in all their brightness,
I would not follow.

Bel. This is weakness — worse

Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead, 350
And waking in the dark. — Go to — go to.

Arb. Methought he looked like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.

Bel. I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him — What
then? he is the nobler foe.

Arb. But we
The meaner. — Would he had not spared us!

Bel. So —
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily? 360

Arb. No — but it had been better to have died
Than live ungrateful.

Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery — and, behold, upon the sudden,
Because for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,
'Twixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turned
Into — what shall I say? — Sardanapalus!
I know no name more ignominious.

Arb. But
An hour ago, who dared to term me such 370
Had held his life but lightly — as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us —
Semiramis herself would not have done it.

Bel. No — the Queen liked no sharers of the kingdom,
Not even a husband.

Arb. I must serve him truly — —

Bel. And humbly?

Arb. No, sir, proudly — being honest.
I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;
And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.
You may do your own deeming — you have codes,
And mysteries, and corollaries of 380
Right and wrong, which I lack for my direction,
And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.
And now you know me.

Bel. Have you finished?

Arb. Yes —
With you.

Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?

Arb. That's a sacerdotal thought,
And not a soldier's.

Bel. Be it what you will —
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.

Arb. No —
There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.

Bel. If it must be so —
I'll on alone.

Arb. Alone!

Bel. Thrones hold but one. 390

Arb. But this is filled.

Bel. With worse than vacancy —
A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces:
I have still aided, cherished, loved, and urged you;
Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seemed to consent, and all events were friendly,
Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness; but now, rather
Than see my country languish, I will be
Her saviour or the victim of her tyrant — 400
Or one or both — for sometimes both are one;
And if I win — Arbaces is my servant.

Arb. Your servant!

Bel. Why not? better than be slave,
The *pardoned* slave of *she* Sardanapalus!
Enter Pania.

Pan. My Lords, I bear an order from the king.

Arb. It is obeyed ere spoken.

Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let's hear it.

Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,
Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.

Bel. With our troops?

Pan. My order is unto the Satraps and 410
Their household train.

Arb. But — —

Bel. It must be obeyed:
Say, we depart.

Pan. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.

Bel. (aside). Aye!
Well, Sir — we will accompany you hence.

Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.
[Exit Pania.

Bel. Now then obey!

Arb. Doubtless.

Bel. Yes, to the gates
That grate the palace, which is now our prison —
No further.

Arb. Thou hast harped the truth indeed! 420
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.

Bel. Graves!

Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.

Bel. It shall have work enough.
Let me hope better than thou augurest;
At present, let us hence as best we may.
Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?

Arb. Why, what other
Interpretation should it bear? it is
The very policy of Orient monarchs — 430
Pardon and poison — favours and a sword —
A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.

How many Satraps in his father's time —
For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless —

Bel. But *will* not — *can* not be so now.

Arb. I doubt it.
How many Satraps have I seen set out
In his Sire's day for mighty Vice-royalties,
Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
But they all sickened by the way, it was
So long and heavy.

Bel. Let us but regain ⁴⁴⁰
The free air of the city, and we'll shorten
The journey.

Arb. 'Twill be shortened at the gates,
It may be.

Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
They mean us to die privately, but not
Within the palace or the city walls,
Where we are known, and may have partisans:
If they had meant to slay us here, we were
No longer with the living. Let us hence.

Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my life —

Bel. Fool! hence — what else should despotism alarmed ⁴⁵⁰
Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and march.

Arb. Towards our provinces?

Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
There's time — there's heart, and hope, and power, and means —
Which their half measures leave us in full scope. —
Away!

Arb. And I even yet repenting must

Relapse to guilt!

Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
Sole bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
Let's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
And the walls have a scent of night-shade — hence!
Let us not leave them time for further council. 460
Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
The worthy Pania, from anticipating
The orders of some parasangs from hence:
Nay, there's no other choice, but — — hence, I say.
[Exit with Arbaces, who follows reluctantly.
Enter Sardanapalus and Salemenes.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy;
We are now secure by these men's exile.

Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.

Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do? 470

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sar. Revoke my pardon?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your temples.

Sar. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sar. We are so.
What danger can they work upon the frontier?

Sal. They are not there yet — never should they be so,

Were I well listened to.

Sar. Nay, I *have* listened
Impartially to thee — why not to them?

Sal. You may know that hereafter; as it is,
I take my leave to order forth the guard.

Sar. And you will join us at the banquet?

Sal. Sire, ⁴⁸⁰
Dispense with me — I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the Bacchant's.

Sar. Nay, but 'tis fit to revel now and then.

Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who revel
Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?

Sar. Yes — — Stay a moment, my good Salemenes,
My brother — my best subject — better Prince
Than I am King. You should have been the monarch,
And I — I know not what, and care not; but
Think not I am insensible to all ⁴⁹⁰
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,
Though oft-reproving sufferance of my follies.
If I have spared these men against thy counsel,
That is, their lives — it is not that I doubt
The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not
Cavil about their lives — so let them mend them.
Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,
Which their death had not left me.

Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors —
A moment's pang now changed for years of crime. ⁵⁰⁰
Still let them be made quiet.

Sar. Tempt me not;

My word is past.

Sal. But it may be recalled.

Sar. 'Tis royal.

Sal. And should therefore be decisive.
This half-indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke — a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.

Sar. And who persuaded me
After I had repealed them, or at least
Only dismissed them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?

Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, Sire, ⁵¹⁰
If they e'er reached their Satrapies — why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.

Sar. And if
They do not reach them — look to it! — in safety,
In safety, mark me — and security —
Look to thine own.

Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.

Sar. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.

Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign.
[Exit Salemenes.]

Sar. (*solus*). That man is of a temper too severe;
Hard but as lofty as the rock, and free ⁵²⁰
From all the taints of common earth — while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers:
But as our mould is, must the produce be.

If I have erred this time, 'tis on the side
Where Error sits most lightly on that sense,
I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me oftentimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me, 530
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity —
Albeit his marble face majestic
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.
Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous —
And here comes Joy's true herald.
Enter Myrrha.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
In forkéd flashes a commanding tempest. 540
Will you then quit the palace?

Sar. Tempest, say'st thou?

Myr. Aye, my good lord.

Sar. For my own part, I should be
Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
And watch the warring elements; but this
Would little suit the silken garments and
Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
As auguries of Jove.

Sar. Jove! — aye, your Baal —
Ours also has a property in thunder, 550
And ever and anon some falling bolt

Proves his divinity, — and yet sometimes
Strikes his own altars.

Myr. That were a dread omen.

Sar. Yes — for the priests. Well, we will not go forth
Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
Our feast within.

Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he
Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The Gods
Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
To shield thee from them.

Sar. Child, if there be peril, ⁵⁶⁰
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.

Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason has
To penetrate through many a winding way,
And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.

Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be:
Even as the arrow finds the airy king, ⁵⁷⁰
The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm;
The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banished, and far upon their way.

Myr. They live, then?

Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*

Myr. I would not shrink

From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life: were't otherwise,
I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.

Sar. This is strange;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.

Myr. 'Tis a Greek virtue. 580

Sar. But not a kingly one — I'll none on't; or
If ever I indulge in't, it shall be
With kings — my equals.

Myr. These men sought to be so.

Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear — —

Myr. For you.

Sar. No matter, still 'tis fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance, which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women. 590

Myr. My Lord, I am no boaster of my love,
Nor of my attributes; I have shared your splendour,
And will partake your fortunes. You may live
To find one slave more true than subject myriads:
But this the Gods avert! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs,
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect love exists,

Except to heighten it, and vanish from 600
That which it could not scare away. Let's in —
The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our feast.
[Exeunt.]

ACT III

Scene I. — The Hall of the Palace illuminated — Sardanapalus and his Guests at Table. — A storm without, and Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.

Sar. Fill full! why this is as it should be: here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.

Zam. Nor elsewhere — where the King is, pleasure sparkles.

Sar. Is not this better now than Nimrod's huntings,
Or my wild Grandam's chase in search of kingdoms
She could not keep when conquered?

Alt. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reached
The acme of Sardanapalus, who ¹⁰
Has placed his joy in peace — the sole true glory.

Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.

Zam. No;
All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The King of peace — who holds a world in jubilee.

Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.

Zam. Traitors they ²⁰
Who dare to say so! — 'Tis impossible.
What cause?

Sar. What cause? true, — fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.

Alt. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the King — the monarch, say I?
The God Sardanapalus!
[Zames and the Guests kneel, and exclaim —
Mightier than
His father Baal, the God Sardanapalus!
[It thunders as they kneel; some start up in confusion.

Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong peal
His father gods consented.

Myr. Menaced, rather. 30
King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?

Sar. Impiety! — nay, if the sires who reigned
Before me can be Gods, I'll not disgrace
Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends;
Hoard your devotion for the Thunderer there:
I seek but to be loved, not worshipped.

Alt. Both —
Both you must ever be by all true subjects.

Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase: it is
An awful night.

Myr. Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers. 40

Sar. That's true, my Myrrha; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I'd do it.

Myr. Thou'rt no God, then — not to be

Able to work a will so good and general,
As thy wish would imply.

Sar. And your Gods, then,
Who can, and do not?

Myr. Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.

Sar. True — , they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me:
Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air worshippers? that is, when it is angry, ⁵⁰
And pelting as even now.

Myr. The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.

Sar. Yes, when the Sun shines.

Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were
Unroofed and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the King lay low?

Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their King's,
And homage is their pride.

Sar. Nay, pardon, guests,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.

Alt. Pardon! sire: ⁶⁰
We honour her of all things next to thee.
Hark! what was that?

Zam. That! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

Alt. It sounded like the clash of — hark again!

Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.

Sar. No more.

Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?

Sing me a song of Sappho; her, thou know'st,

Who in thy country threw — —

Enter Pania, with his sword and garments bloody, and disordered. The guests rise in confusion.

Pan. (to the Guards). Look to the portals;

And with your best speed to the walls without.

Your arms! To arms! The King's in danger. Monarch 70

Excuse this haste, — 'tis faith.

Sar. Speak on.

Pan. It is

As Salemenes feared; the faithless Satraps — —

Sar. You are wounded — give some wine. Take breath, good Pania.

Pan. 'Tis nothing — a mere flesh wound. I am worn

More with my speed to warn my sovereign,

Than hurt in his defence.

Myr. Well, Sir, the rebels?

Pan. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reached

Their stations in the city, they refused

To march; and on my attempt to use the power

Which I was delegated with, they called 80

Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.

Myr. All?

Pan. Too many.

Sar. Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears — the truth.

Pan. My own slight guard
Were faithful, and what's left of it is still so.

Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?

Pan. No —
The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,
Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming 90
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force, and save the King.
(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to — —

Myr. 'Tis no time for hesitation.

Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the King
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.

Sar. What, ho!
My armour there.

Myr. And wilt thou?

Sar. Will I not?
Ho, there! — but seek not for the buckler: 'tis 100
Too heavy: — a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?

Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest conflict rages.

Sar. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out. — There is space enough
Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.
[Exit Sfero for the armour.]

Myr. How I do love thee!

Sar. I ne'er doubted it.

Myr. But now I know thee.

Sar. (to his Attendant). Bring down my spear too —
Where's Salemenes?

Pan. Where a soldier should be, 110
In the thick of the fight.

Sar. Then hasten to him — — Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?

Pan. 'Twas
When I late left him, and I have no fear;
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx formed.

Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own — and say,
I come.

Pan. There's victory in the very word. [Exit Pania.]

Sar. Altada — Zames — forth, and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armoury. 120
See that the women are bestowed in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives — command it, Zames.
Altada, arm yourself, and return here;

Your post is near our person.
[*Exeunt Zames, Altada, and all save Myrrha.*
Enter Sfero and others with the King's Arms, etc.

Sfe. King! your armour.

Sar. (*arming himself*). Give me the cuirass — so: my baldric; now
My sword: I had forgot the helm — where is it?
That's well — no, 'tis too heavy; you mistake, too —
It was not this I meant, but that which bears 130
A diadem around it.

Sfe. Sire, I deemed
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath — and trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich.

Sar. You deemed! Are you too turned a rebel? Fellow!
Your part is to obey: return, and — no —
It is too late — I will go forth without it.

Sfe. At least, wear this.

Sar. Wear Caucasus! why, 'tis
A mountain on my temples.

Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle. 140
All men will recognise you — for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her brightness.

Sar. I go forth to be recognised, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now — my spear! I'm armed.
[In going stops short, and turns to Sfero.
Sfero — I had forgotten — bring the mirror.

Sfe. The mirror, Sire?

Sar. Yes, sir, of polished brass,

Brought from the spoils of India — but be speedy.
[Exit Sfero.

Sar. Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?

Myr. Because my place is here.

Sar. And when I am gone — — 150

Myr. I follow.

Sar. *You!* to battle?

Myr. If it were so,
‘Twere not the first Greek girl had trod the path.
I will await here your *return*.

Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it be so,
And I return not — —

Myr. Still we meet again.

Sar. How?

Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last —
In Hades! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx; and if there be not,
In ashes.

Sar. Darest thou so much?

Myr. I dare all things 160
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel’s booty: forth, and do your bravest.
Re-enter Sfero with the mirror.

Sar. (looking at himself).

This cuirass fits me well, the baldric better,
And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem
[Flings away the helmet after trying it again.
Passing well in these toys; and now to prove them.
Altada! Where's Altada?

Sfe. Waiting, Sire,
Without: he has your shield in readiness.

Sar. True — I forgot — he is my shield-bearer
By right of blood, derived from age to age.
Myrrha, embrace me; — yet once more — once more — 170
Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory
Shall be to make me worthier of your love.

Myr. Go forth, and conquer!
[*Exeunt Sardanapalus and Sfero.*
Now, I am alone:
All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return! Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish! If he vanquish not, I perish;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is King; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns 180
To yield him no more of it than a grave;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty Jove!
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympus! yes, I love him
Now — now — far more than — — Hark — to the war shout!
Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,
[She draws forth a small vial.
This cunning Colchian poison, which my father
Learned to compound on Euxine shores, and taught me
How to preserve, shall free me! It had freed me
Long ere this hour, but that I loved until 190
I half forgot I was a slave: — where all
Are slaves save One, and proud of servitude,

So they are served in turn by something lower
In the degree of bondage: we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less
Are chains. Again that shout! and now the clash
Of arms — and now — and now — —
Enter Altada.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho!

Myr. He is not here; what wouldst thou with him? How
Goes on the conflict?

Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the King?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero, ²⁰⁰
And bring him a new spear with his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.

Myr. Ye Gods,
Who fulminate o'er my father's land, protect him!
Were you sent by the King?

Alt. By Salemenes, ²¹⁰
Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign.
The King! the King fights as he revels! ho!
What, Sfero! I will seek the armoury —
He must be there. [*Exit Altada.*]

Myr. 'Tis no dishonour — no —
'Tis no dishonour to have loved this man.

I almost wish now, what I never wished
Before — that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff; surely 220
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle,
As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
And a Greek bard his minstrel — a Greek tomb
His monument. How goes the strife, sir?
Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost,
Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where
Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed
To watch before the apartment of the women. 230
[Exit Officer.

Myr. (sola). He's gone; and told no more than that all's lost!
What need have I to know more? In those words,
Those little words, a kingdom and a king,
A line of thirteen ages, and the lives
Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
With life, are merged; and I, too, with the great,
Like a small bubble breaking with the wave
Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least,
My fate is in my keeping: no proud victor
Shall count me with his spoils.
Enter Pania.

Pan. Away with me, 240
Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose
A moment — all that's left us now.

Myr. The King?

Pan. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond
The river, by a secret passage.

Myr. Then
He lives — —

Pan. And charged me to secure your life,
And beg you to live on for his sake, till
He can rejoin you.

Myr. Will he then give way?

Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
Despair can do; and step by step disputes
The very palace.

Myr. They are here, then: — aye, ²⁵⁰
Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line!
Farewell to all of Nimrod! Even the name
Is now no more.

Pan. Away with me — away!

Myr. No: I'll die here! — Away, and tell your King
I loved him to the last.
Enter Sardanapalus and Salemenes with Soldiers. Pania quits Myrrha, and ranges
himself with them.

Sar. Since it is thus,
We'll die where we were born — in our own halls
Serry your ranks — stand firm. I have despatched
A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful; they'll be here anon.
All is not over, — Pania, look to Myrrha.
[*Pania returns towards Myrrha.*]

Sal. We have breathing time; yet once more charge, my friends —

One for Assyria!

Sar. Rather say for Bactria!

My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold together
This realm as province.

Sal. Hark! they come — they come.

Enter Beleses and Arbaces with the Rebels.

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil. Charge! Charge!

Bel. On! on! — Heaven fights for us, and with us — On!

[They charge the King and Salemenes with their troops, who defend themselves till the arrival of Zames with the Guard before mentioned. The Rebels are then driven off, and pursued by Salemenes, etc. As the King is going to join the pursuit, Beleses crosses him.]

Bel. Ho! tyrant — *I* will end this war.

Sar. Even so, ²⁷⁰

My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject: yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.

Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sar. No, thine. — I've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crushed.

Bel. But not by thee.

[They fight; Beleses is wounded and disarmed.]

Sar. (raising his sword to despatch him, exclaims) —

Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot ²⁸⁰
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?

[A party of Rebels enter and rescue Beleses. They assail the King, who in turn, is rescued by a Party of his Soldiers, who drive the Rebels off.

The villain was a prophet after all.

Upon them — ho! there — victory is ours.

[Exit in pursuit.

Myr. (to *Pan.*) Pursue! Why stand'st thou here, and leavest the ranks
Of fellow-soldiers conquering without thee?

Pan. The King's command was not to quit thee.

Myr. Me!

Think not of me — a single soldier's arm

Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,

I need no guard: what, with a world at stake,

Keep watch upon a woman? Hence, I say, ²⁹⁰

Or thou art shamed! Nay, then, *I* will go forth,

A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,

And bid thee guard me *there* — where thou shouldst shield

Thy sovereign. [*Exit Myrrha.*

Pan. Yet stay, damsel! — She's gone.

If aught of ill betide her, better I

Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her

Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights

For that too; and can I do less than he,

Who never flashed a scimitar till now?

Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though ³⁰⁰

In disobedience to the monarch. [*Exit Pania.*

Enter Altada and Sfero by an opposite door.

Alt. Myrrha!

What, gone? yet she was here when the fight raged,

And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them?

Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled;

They probably are but retired to make

Their way back to the harem.

Alt. If the King

Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doomed
To worse than captive rebels.

Sfe. Let us trace them:
She cannot be fled far; and, found, she makes 310
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recovered kingdom.

Alt. Baal himself
Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than
His silken son to save it: he defies
All augury of foes or friends; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man's inscrutable.

Sfe. Not more than others.
All are the sons of circumstance: away — 320
Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortured for his infatuation, and
Condemned without a crime. [*Exeunt.*
Enter Salemenes and Soldiers, etc.

Sal. The triumph is
Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have opened regular access
To the troops stationed on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where
Is the chief victor? where's the King?
Enter Sardanapalus, cum suis, etc., and Myrrha.

Sar. Here, brother.

Sal. Unhurt, I hope.

Sar. Not quite; but let it pass. 330

We've cleared the palace — —

Sal. And I trust the city.

Our numbers gather; and I've ordered onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,
All fresh and fiery, to be poured upon them
In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.

Sar. It is already, or at least they marched
Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent: give me a seat.

Sal. There stands the throne, Sire.

Sar. Tis no place to rest on,
For mind nor body: let me have a couch, 340
[They place a seat.
A peasant's stool, I care not what: so — now
I breathe more freely.

Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.

Sar. And the most tiresome. Where's my cupbearer?
Bring me some water.

Sal. (smiling) 'Tis the first time he
Ever had such an order: even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.

Sar. Blood — doubtless.
But there's enough of that shed; as for wine,
I have learned to-night the price of the pure element: 350
Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renewed,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet?
One of the Guards. Slain, Sire!

An arrow pierced his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.

Sar. Slain! unrewarded!
And slain to serve my thirst: that's hard, poor slave!
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay ³⁶⁰
The pleasure of that draught; for I was parched
As I am now. [They bring water — he drinks.
I live again — from henceforth
The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, Sire,
Which girds your arm?

Sar. A scratch from brave Beleses.

Myr. Oh! he is wounded!

Sar. Not too much of that;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with — —

Sar. The fillet of my diadem: the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me, ³⁷⁰
Save an incumbrance.

Myr. (to the Attendants). Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire:
I will unbind your wound and tend it.

Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore do I ask?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on

This minion?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frightened antelopes.

Sar. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging
(And femininely meaneth furiously, 380
Because all passions in excess are female,)
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers,
In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed!

Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes, that flashed through her long hair
As it streamed o'er her; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril 390
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarred but not drowned by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness
Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp; — all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself,
Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. (aside). This is too much. 400
Again the love-fit's on him, and all's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts. (*Aloud.*) But pray thee, Sire,
Think of your wound — you said even now 'twas painful.

Sar. That's true, too; but I must not think of it.

Sal. I have looked to all things needful, and will now
Receive reports of progress made in such
Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.

Sar. Be it so.

Sal. (in retiring). Myrrha!

Myr. Prince!

Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord — — But now 410
I have no time: thou lovest the King?

Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.

Sal. But wouldst have him King still?

Myr. I would not have him less than what he should be.

Sal. Well then, to have him King, and yours, and all
He should, or should not be; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without: look well that he relapse not.

Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes 420
To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can — —

Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:
Exert it wisely. [*Exit Salemenes.*]

Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous.

Myr. (smiling). You have cause, Sire; for on the earth there breathes not
A man more worthy of a woman's love,
A soldier's trust, a subject's reverence,
A king's esteem — the whole world's admiration!

Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not 430
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into shade; yet you speak truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your wound looked to,
Pray lean on me.

Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.
[Exeunt omnes.]

ACT IV

Scene I. — Sardanapalus discovered sleeping upon a Couch, and occasionally disturbed in his slumbers, with Myrrha watching.

Myr. (sola, gazing). I have stolen upon his rest, if rest it be,
Which thus convulses slumber: shall I wake him?
No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of Quiet!
Whose reign is o'er sealed eyelids and soft dreams,
Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathomed,
Look like thy brother, Death, — so still, so stirless —
For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm
Of thy stern, silent, and unawakening Twin.
Again he moves — again the play of pain 10
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm
Beneath the mountain shadow; or the blast
Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
I must awake him — yet not yet; who knows
From what I rouse him? It seems pain; but if
I quicken him to heavier pain? The fever
Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of
His wound, though slight, may cause all this, and shake 20
Me more to see than him to suffer. No:
Let Nature use her own maternal means,
And I await to second, not disturb her.

Sar. (awakening). Not so — although he multiplied the stars,
And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you! I would not so purchase
The empire of Eternity. Hence — hence —
Old Hunter of the earliest brutes! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes!
Once bloody mortals — and now bloodier idols, 30
If your priests lie not! And thou, ghastly Beldame!
Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on

The carcasses of Inde — away! away!
Where am I? Where the spectres? Where — No — that
Is no false phantom: I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living. Myrrha!

Myr. Alas! thou art pale, and on thy brow the drops
Gather like night dew. My beloved, hush —
Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world, 40
And thou art lord of this. Be of good cheer;
All will go well.

Sar. Thy *hand* — so — 'tis thy hand;
'Tis flesh; grasp — clasp — yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be — thine.

Sar. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha! I have been where we shall be.

Myr. My lord!

Sar. I've been i' the grave — where worms are lords
And kings are — — But I did not deem it so;
I thought 'twas nothing.

Myr. So it is; except 50
Unto the timid, who anticipate
That which may never be.

Sar. Oh, Myrrha! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not Death disclose?

Myr. I know no evil Death can show, which Life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore where Mind survives, 'twill be as Mind

All unincorporate: or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay.
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and heaven, 60
And fetters us to earth — at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear Death.

Sar. I fear it not; but I have felt — have seen —
A legion of the dead.

Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed: what hast thou seen?
Speak it, 'twill lighten thy dimmed mind.

Sar. Methought — —

Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired — in pain — exhausted; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit: seek
Rather to sleep again.

Sar. Not now — I would not 70
Dream; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt: — and canst thou bear to hear it?

Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.

Sar. And this looked real,
I tell you: after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight — for then they fled.

Myr. Say on.

Sar. I saw, that is, I dreamed myself
Here — here — even where we are, guests as we were,
Myself a host that deemed himself but guest, 80
Willing to equal all in social freedom;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead

Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face; I could not recognise it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where:
The features were a Giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted; his long locks curled down
On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feathered from the eagle's wing, 90
That peeped up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answered not; I filled it;
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fixed glare of his eye:
I frowned upon him as a king should frown;
He frowned not in his turn, but looked upon me
With the same aspect, which appalled me more,
Because it changed not; and I turned for refuge
To milder guests, and sought them on the right, 100
Where thou wert wont to be. But — — [*He pauses.*

Myr. What instead?

Sar. In thy own chair — thy own place in the banquet —
I sought thy sweet face in the circle — but
Instead — a grey-haired, withered, bloody-eyed,
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,
Female in garb, and crowned upon the brow,
Furrowed with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate: — my veins curdled.

Myr. Is this all?

Sar. Upon
Her right hand — her lank, bird-like, right hand — stood 110
A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood; and on
Her left, another, filled with — what I saw not,
But turned from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crownéd wretches,

Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision?

Sar. No:

It was so palpable, I could have touched them.
I turned from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew
Ere I saw theirs: but no — all turned upon me, 120
And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared,
Till I grew stone, as they seemed half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
And life in me: there was a horrid kind
Of sympathy between us, as if they
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.
We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth — — And rather let me see
Death all than such a being!

Myr. And the end? 130

Sar. At last I sate, marble, as they, when rose
The Hunter and the Crone; and smiling on me —
Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The Hunter smiled upon me — I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not — and the woman's
Thin lips relaxed to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crowned figures on each hand
Rose also, as if aping their chief shades —
Mere mimics even in death — but I sate still:
A desperate courage crept through every limb, 140
And at the last I feared them not, but laughed
Full in their phantom faces. But then — then
The Hunter laid his hand on mine: I took it,
And grasped it — but it melted from my own;
While he too vanished, and left nothing but
The memory of a hero, for he looked so.

Myr. And was: the ancestor of heroes, too,
And thine no less.

Sar. Aye, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female who remained, she flew upon me,
And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses; 150
And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
Methought their poisons flowed around us, till
Each formed a hideous river. Still she clung;
The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her, as if,
In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
Then — then — a chaos of all loathsome things
Thronged thick and shapeless: I was dead, yet feeling — 160
Buried, and raised again — consumed by worms,
Purged by the flames, and withered in the air!
I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I longed for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies, — and woke and found thee.

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things — the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused by toil, yet over-wrought by toil — 170
Such as might try the sternest.

Sar. I am better.
Now that I see thee once more, *what was seen*
Seems nothing.
Enter Salemenes.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?

Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.

My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer, 180
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew, who still
Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quelled.

Sar. How wears the night?

Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.

Sar. No, not to-night, if 'tis not gone: methought
I passed hours in that vision.

Myr. Scarcely one;
I watched by you: it was a heavy hour, 190
But an hour only.

Sar. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.

Sar. 'Tis granted.

Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and 'tis
For *your* ear only.

Myr. Prince, I take my leave.
[Exit Myrrha.]

Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.

Sar. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.

Sal. Your patience —
‘Tis not yet vacant, and ‘tis of its partner
I come to speak with you.

Sar. How! of the Queen?

Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety, 200
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta
Governs; and there, at all events, secure
My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them
Their just pretensions to the crown in case — —

Sar. I perish — as is probable: well thought —
Let them set forth with a sure escort.

Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates; but ere they
Depart, will you not see — —

Sar. My sons? It may 210
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep;
And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles?
You know I cannot feign.

Sal. But you can feel!
At least, I trust so: in a word, the Queen
Requests to see you ere you part — for ever.

Sar. Unto what end? what purpose? I will grant
Aught — all that she can ask — but such a meeting.

Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of women,
Since you have studied them so steadily, 220
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy, than the whole external world.
I think as you do of my sister's wish;
But 'twas her wish — she is my sister — you
Her husband — will you grant it?

Sar. 'Twill be useless:
But let her come.

Sal. I go. [*Exit Salemenes.*]

Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again — and *now* to meet!
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows, 230
Who have ceased to mingle love?
Re-enter Salemenes and Zarina.

Sal. My sister! Courage:
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. The Queen is present, Sire.

Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.

Sal. Since you ask it.
[*Exit Salemenes.*]

Zar. Alone with him! How many a year has passed,
Though we are still so young, since we have met,
Which I have worn in widowhood of heart.
He loved me not: yet he seems little changed —
Changed to me only — would the change were mutual!
He speaks not — scarce regards me — not a word, 240
Nor look — yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect,
Indifferent, not austere. My Lord!

Sar. Zarina!

Zar. No, *not* Zarina — do not say Zarina.
That tone — That word — annihilate long years,
And things which make them longer.

Sar. 'Tis too late
To think of these past dreams. Let's not reproach —
That is, reproach me not — for the *last* time — —

Zar. And *first*, I ne'er reproached you.

Sar. 'Tis most true;
And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
Than — — But our hearts are not in our own power. 250

Zar. Nor hands; but I gave both.

Sar. Your brother said
It was your will to see me, ere you went
From Nineveh with — — (*He hesitates.*)

Zar. Our children: it is true.
I wish to thank you that you have not divided
My heart from all that's left it now to love —
Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
And look upon me as you looked upon me
Once — — but *they* have not changed.

Sar. Nor ever will.
I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish
Those infants, not alone from the blind love 260
Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
They are now the only tie between us.

Sar. Deem not
I have not done you justice: rather make them

Resemble your own line than their own Sire.
I trust them with you — to you: fit them for
A throne, or, if that be denied — — You have heard
Of this night's tumults?

Zar. I had half forgotten,
And could have welcomed any grief save yours,
Which gave me to behold your face again.

Sar. The throne — I say it not in fear — but 'tis 270
In peril: they perhaps may never mount it:
But let them not for this lose sight of it.
I will dare all things to bequeath it them;
But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely — and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.

Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honour
Their father's memory.

Sar. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they'll learn 280
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless Princes,
And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys! — I could have borne it were I childless.

Zar. Oh! do not say so — do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,
And honour him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if — —

Sar. 'Tis lost, all Earth will cry out, "thank your father!"
And they will swell the echo with a curse. 290

Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour
The name of him, who, dying like a king,

In his last hours did more for his own memory
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.

Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;
But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning — memorable.

Zar. Yet, be not rash — be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.

Sar. And who are they? 300
A slave, who loves from passion — I'll not say
Ambition — she has seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends who have revelled till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured — children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse — —

Zar. Who loves.

Sar. And pardons?

Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemned.

Sar. My wife!

Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
I never thought to hear it more — from thee. 310

Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects. Yes —
These slaves whom I have nurtured, pampered, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till
They reign themselves — all monarchs in their mansions —
Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand
His death, who made their lives a jubilee;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful! This is true, yet monstrous.

Zar. 'Tis

Perhaps too natural; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.

Sar. And good ones make 320

Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar. Then reap

The honey, nor inquire whence 'tis derived.
Be satisfied — you are not all abandoned.

Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink you,
Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal;
That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my — that is,
Your children's sake!

Sar. My gentle, wronged Zarina!

I am the very slave of Circumstance 330

And Impulse — borne away with every breath!
Misplaced upon the throne — misplaced in life.

I know not what I could have been, but feel

I am not what I should be — let it end.

But take this with thee: if I was not formed

To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,

Nor dote even on thy beauty — as I've doted

On lesser charms, for no cause save that such

Devotion was a duty, and I hated

All that looked like a chain for me or others 340

(This even Rebellion must avouch); yet hear

These words, perhaps among my last — that none

E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not

To profit by them — as the miner lights

Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering

That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,

But 'tis not his — but some superior's, who

Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth

Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning 350
The sullen earth.

Zar. Oh! if thou hast at length
Discovered that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more — but let us hence together,
And *I* — let me say *we* — shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth — we'll find
A world out of our own — and be more blessed
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.
Enter Salemenes.

Sal. I must part ye —
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.

Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out 360
Instants so high and blest?

Sal. Blest!

Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me, that I cannot think
Of quitting.

Sal. So — this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.
I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be?

Sal. Remain, and perish — —

Zar. With my husband — —

Sal. And children.

Zar. Alas!

Sal. Hear me, sister, like

My sister: — all's prepared to make your safety

Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes; 370

'Tis not a single question of mere feeling,

Though that were much — but 'tis a point of state:

The rebels would do more to seize upon

The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush — —

Zar. Ah! do not name it.

Sal. Well, then, mark me: when

They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels

Have missed their chief aim — the extinction of

The line of Nimrod. Though the present King

Fall, his sons live — for victory and vengeance.

Zar. But could not I remain, alone?

Sal. What! leave 380

Your children, with two parents and yet orphans —

In a strange land — so young, so distant?

Zar. No —

My heart will break.

Sal. Now you know all — decide.

Sar. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we

Must yield awhile to this necessity.

Remaining here, you may lose all; departing,

You save the better part of what is left,

To both of us, and to such loyal hearts

As yet beat in these kingdoms.

Sal. The time presses.

Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps 390

I may be worthier of you — and, if not,
Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
Are *ended*. Yet, I dread thy nature will
Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
Which once were mightiest in Assyria — than — —
But I grow womanish again, and must not;
I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
Been of the softer order — — *hide* thy tears —
I do not bid thee *not* to shed them — 'twere
Easier to stop Euphrates at its source 400
Than one tear of a true and tender heart —
But let me not behold them; they unman me
Here when I had remanned myself. My brother,
Lead her away.

Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
Behold him more!
Sal. (striving to conduct her).
Nay, sister, I *must* be obeyed.

Zar. I must remain — away! you shall not hold me.
What, shall he die alone? — *I* live alone?

Sal. He shall *not die alone*; but lonely you
Have lived for years.

Zar. That's false! I knew *he* lived,
And lived upon his image — let me go! 410
Sal. (conducting her off the stage).
Nay, then, I must use some fraternal force,
Which you will pardon.

Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
Torn from thee?

Sal. Nay — then all is lost again,
If that this moment is not gained.

Zar. My brain turns —
My eyes fail — where is he? [*She faints.*

Sar. (*advancing*). No — set her down;
She's dead — and you have slain her.

Sal. 'Tis the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back. — [*Aside.*] I must
Avail myself of this sole moment to 420
Bear her to where her children are embarked,
I' the royal galley on the river.
[Salemenes bears her off.

Sar. (*solus*). This, too —
And this too must I suffer — I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang! But that is false —
She loved me, and I loved her. — Fatal passion!
Why dost thou not expire at *once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once? Zarina!
I must pay dearly for the desolation
Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved 430
But thee, I should have been an unopposed
Monarch of honouring nations. To what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!
Enter Myrrha.

Sar. *You* here! Who called you?

Myr. No one — but I heard
Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
And thought — —

Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
To enter here till sought for.

Myr. Though I might, 440
Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours
(Although they *too were chiding*), which reproved me,
Because I ever dreaded to intrude;
Resisting my own wish and your injunction
To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
Uncalled for: — I retire.

Sar. Yet stay — being here.
I pray you pardon me: events have soured me
Till I wax peevish — heed it not: I shall
Soon be myself again.

Myr. I wait with patience,
What I shall see with pleasure.

Sar. Scarce a moment 450
Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
Queen of Assyria, departed hence.

Myr. Ah!

Sar. Wherefore do you start?

Myr. Did I do so?

Sar. 'Twas well you entered by another portal,
Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her!

Myr. I know to feel for her.

Sar. That is too much,
And beyond nature — 'tis nor mutual
Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
Nor she aught but — —

Myr. Despise the favourite slave?
Not more than I have ever scorned myself. 460

Sar. Scorned! what, to be the envy of your sex,
And lord it o'er the heart of the World's lord?

Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand worlds —
As you are like to lose the one you swayed —
I did abase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant —
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.

Sar. You talk it well — —

Myr. And truly.

Sar. In the hour
Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not ⁴⁷⁰
Quite fall'n, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.

Myr. Part!

Sar. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part?

Myr. Why?

Sar. For your safety, which I will have looked to,
With a strong escort to your native land;
And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A Queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.

Myr. I pray you talk not thus.

Sar. The Queen is gone: ⁴⁸⁰
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone — I seek no partners but in pleasure.

Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.

You shall not force me from you.

Sar. Think well of it —
It soon may be too late.

Myr. So let it be;
For then you cannot separate me from you.

Sar. And will not; but I thought you wished it.

Myr. I!

Sar. You spoke of your abasement.

Myr. And I feel it
Deeply — more deeply than all things but love.

Sar. Then fly from it.

Myr. 'Twill not recall the past — 490
'Twill not restore my honour, nor my heart.
No — here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph: should
Your lot be different, I'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.

Sar. Your courage never — nor your love till now;
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words — —

Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise
This very night, and in my further bearing, 500
Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.

Sar. I am content: and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace — the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory — conquest no

Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others. 510
I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the Future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love — the breath
Of friends for truth — the lips of woman for 520
My only guerdon — so they are, my Myrrha: [*He kisses her.*
Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life!
They shall have both, but never *thee!*

Myr. No, never!
Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering — kingdoms fall, hosts yield,
Friends fail — slaves fly — and all betray — and, more
Than all, the most indebted — but a heart
That loves without self-love! 'Tis here — now prove it.
Enter Salemenes.

Sal. I sought you — How! *she* here again?

Sar. Return not
Now to reproof: methinks your aspect speaks 530
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.

Sal. The only woman whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence —
The Queen's embarked.

Sar. And well? say that much.

Sal. Yes.

Her transient weakness has passed o'er; at least,
It settled into tearless silence: her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fixed
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the starlight; 540
But she said nothing.

Sar. Would I felt no more
Than she has said!

Sal. 'Tis now too late to feel.
Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang:
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshalled
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack: they have apparently
Been joined by other Satraps.

Sar. What! more rebels?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent 550
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are joined by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Aye, and pursuit too; but, till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.

Sar. I detest
That waiting; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes
Strewed to receive them, still I like it not — 560
My soul seems lukewarm; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would have

A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood! —
Let me then charge.

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sar. I am no soldier, but a man: speak not
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily; 'tis not
Like mine or any other subject's breath: 570
The whole war turns upon it — with it; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it —
Prolong it — end it.

Sar. Then let us end both!
'Twere better thus, perhaps, than prolong either;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.
[A trumpet sounds without.

Sal. Hark!

Sar. Let us
Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound!

Sar. 'Tis bound —
'Tis healed — I had forgotten it. Away!
A leech's lancet would have scratched me deeper;
The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour 580
Strike with a better aim!

Sar. Aye, if we conquer;

But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king. Upon them!
[Trumpet sounds again.

Sal. I am with you.

Sar. Ho, my arms! again, my arms!
[Exeunt.

ACT V

Scene I.-The same Hall in the Palace.

Myrrha *and* Balea.

Myr. (at a window)

The day at last has broken. What a night
Hath ushered it! How beautiful in heaven!
Though varied with a transitory storm,
More beautiful in that variety!
How hideous upon earth! where Peace and Hope,
And Love and Revel, in an hour were trampled
By human passions to a human chaos,
Not yet resolved to separate elements —
'Tis warring still! And can the sun so rise,
So bright, so rolling back the clouds into 10
Vapours more lovely than the unclouded sky,
With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,
And billows purpler than the Ocean's, making
In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
So like we almost deem it permanent;
So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught
Beyond a vision, 'tis so transiently
Scattered along the eternal vault: and yet
It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
And blends itself into the soul, until 20
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
Of Sorrow and of Love; which they who mark not,
Know not the realms where those twin genii
(Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
The air with clamour) build the palaces
Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
Briefly; — but in that brief cool calm inhale
Enough of heaven to enable them to bear 30
The rest of common, heavy, human hours,

And dream them through in placid sufferance,
Though seemingly employed like all the rest
Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks
Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,
Which our internal, restless agony
Would vary in the sound, although the sense
Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Bal. You muse right calmly: and can you so watch
The sunrise which may be our last?

Myr. It is ⁴⁰
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having looked upon it oft, too oft,
Without the reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's God, which, when I gaze upon,
I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
He swayed.

Myr. He sways it now far more, then; never ⁵⁰
Had earthly monarch half the power and glory
Which centres in a single ray of his.

Bal. Surely he is a God!

Myr. So we Greeks deem too;
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
Must rather be the abode of Gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
That shuts the world out. I can look no more.

Bal. Hark! heard you not a sound?

Myr. No, 'twas mere fancy;
They battle it beyond the wall, and not 60
As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers: the palace has become a fortress
Since that insidious hour; and here, within
The very centre, girded by vast courts
And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
Which must be carried one by one before
They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.

Bal. But they reached
Thus far before.

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were 70
Beat back by valour: now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.

Bal. May they
Prosper!

Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas!
How vainly!

Bal. It is said the King's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appalled
The rebels than astonished his true subjects.

Myr. 'Tis easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves; 80
But he did bravely.

Bal. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.

Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to

Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquished him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril;
And by that heedless pity risked a crown.

Bal. Hark!

Myr. You are right; some steps approach, but slowly.
Enter Soldiers, bearing in Salemenes wounded, with a broken javelin in his side:
they seat him upon one of the couches which furnish the Apartment.

Myr. Oh, Jove!

Bal. Then all is over.

Sal. That is false.
Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.

Myr. Spare him — he's none: a mere court butterfly, 90
That flutter in the pageant of a monarch.

Sal. Let him live on, then.

Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.

Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?

Sol. By the King's order. When the javelin struck you,
You fell and fainted: 'twas his strict command
To bear you to this hall.

Sal. 'Twas not ill done:
For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers — but — 'tis vain,
I feel it ebbing!

Myr. Let me see the wound; 100
I am not quite skillless: in my native land
'Tis part of our instruction. War being constant,

We are nerved to look on such things.

Sol. Best extract
The javelin.

Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.

Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must follow
The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.

Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the King when you
Conveyed me from the spot where I was stricken?

Sol. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops 110
Who had seen you fall, and faltered back.

Sal. Whom heard ye
Named next to the command?

Sol. I did not hear.

Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 'twas my last request
That Zames take my post until the junction,
So hoped for, yet delayed, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops
Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.

Sol. But Prince — —

Sal. Hence, I say! Here's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.
As you would not permit me to expire 120
Upon the field, I'll have no idle soldiers
About my sick couch. Hence! and do my bidding!
[Exeunt the Soldiers.]

Myr. Gallant and glorious Spirit! must the earth
So soon resign thee?

Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 'tis
The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this;
As 'tis, I have not outlived them.

Myr. You wax paler.

Sal. Your hand; this broken weapon but prolongs
My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful: I would draw it forth 130
And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.
Enter Sardanapalus and Soldiers.

Sar. My best brother!

Sal. And the battle
Is lost?
Sar. (despondingly). You see me here.

Sal. I'd rather see you *thus!*
[He draws out the weapon from the wound, and dies.

Sar. And *thus* I will be seen; unless the succour,
The last frail reed of our beleagured hopes,
Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not
Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?

Sar. I did.

Myr. Where's Zames?

Sar. Dead.

Myr. And Altada?

Sar. Dying.

Myr. Pania? Sfero?

Sar. Pania yet lives; but Sfero's fled or captive. 140
I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost?

Sar. Our walls,
Though thinly manned, may still hold out against
Their present force, or aught save treachery:
But i' the field — —

Myr. I thought 'twas the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally
Till ye were strengthened by the expected succours.

Sar. I over-ruled him.

Myr. Well, the *fault's* a brave one.

Sar. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming honour, 150
To call back — — But I will not weep for thee;
Thou shall be mourned for as thou wouldst be mourned.
It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life
Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for — our long royalty of race.
If I redeem it, I will give thee blood
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement,
(The tears of all the good are thine already).
If not, we meet again soon, — if the spirit
Within us lives beyond: — thou readest mine, 160
And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp
That yet warm hand, and fold that throbless heart

[Embraces the body.
To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.

Sol. Where?

Sar. To my proper chamber.
Place it beneath my canopy, as though
The King lay there: when this is done, we will
Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.
[Exeunt Soldiers with the body of Salemenes.
Enter Pania.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and issued
The orders fixed on?

Pan. Sire, I have obeyed.

Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pan. Sire? 170

Sar. I am answered! When a king asks twice, and has
A question as an answer to *his* question,
It is a portent. What! they are disheartened?

Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
Have made them — —

Sar. *Rage* — not droop — it should have been.
We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pan. Such a loss
Might sadden even a victory.

Sar. Alas!
Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet,
Though cooped within these walls, they are strong, and we 180

Have those without will break their way through hosts,
To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was —
A palace, not a prison — nor a fortress.
Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!

Offi. I dare not.

Sar. Dare not?
While millions dare revolt with sword in hand!
That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
Which loathes to shock its sovereign; we can hear
Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pan. Proceed — thou hearest.

Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
Is thrown down by the sudden inundation 190
Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln
From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroyed the bulwark.

Pan. That's a black augury! it has been said
For ages, "That the City ne'er should yield
To man, until the River grew its foe."

Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall?

Offi. About
Some twenty stadia.

Sar. And all this is left 200
Pervious to the assailants?

Offi. For the present
The River's fury must impede the assault;

But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be crossed by the accustomed barks,
The palace is their own.

Sar. That shall be never.
Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,
My father's house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.

Pan. With your sanction,
I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures 210
For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.

Sar. About it straight,
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [Exeunt Pania and the Officer.

Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.

Sar. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardoned, since they can't be punished.

Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

Sar. I am past the fear of portents: they can tell me 220
Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:
Despair anticipates such things.

Myr. Despair!

Sar. No; not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble
Word than this is to give it utterance.

But what are words to us? we have well nigh done
With them and all things.

Myr. Save *one deed* — the last
And greatest to all mortals; crowning act
Of all that was, or is, or is to be — 230
The only thing common to all mankind,
So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,
Without one point of union save in this —
To which we tend, for which we're born, and thread
The labyrinth of mystery, called life.

Sar. Our clue being well nigh wound out, let's be cheerful.
They who have nothing more to fear may well
Indulge a smile at that which once appalled;
As children at discovered bugbears.
Re-enter Pania.

Pan. 'Tis 240
As was reported: I have ordered there
A double guard, withdrawing from the wall,
Where it was strongest, the required addition
To watch the breach occasioned by the waters.

Sar. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
My worthy Pania! further ties between us
Draw near a close — I pray you take this key:
[Gives a key.
It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber — (Now
Pressed by a nobler weight than e'er it bore — 250
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
Along its golden frame — as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes.) — Search
The secret covert to which this will lead you;
'Tis full of treasure; take it for yourself
And your companions: there's enough to load ye,
Though ye be many. Let the slaves be freed, too;

And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.
Thence launch the regal barks, once formed for pleasure, 260
And now to serve for safety, and embark.
The river's broad and swoln, and uncommanded,
(More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
Fly! and be happy!

Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get thee hence,
And leave me to my fate.

Pan. 'Tis the first time
I ever disobeyed: but now — —

Sar. So all men
Dare beard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no further; 270
'Tis my command, my last command. Wilt *thou*
Oppose it? *thou!*

Pan. But yet — not yet.

Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.

Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.

Sar. 'Tis enough. Now order here
Faggots, pine-nuts, and withered leaves, and such
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for it is 280
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre!

And heap them round yon throne.

Pan. My Lord!

Sar. I have said it,
And *you* have sworn.

Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [*Exit Pania.*

Myr. What mean you?

Sar. You shall know
Anon — what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.
Pania, returning with a Herald.

Pan. My King, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.

Sar. Let him speak.

Her. The *King* Arbaces — —

Sar. What, crowned already? — But, proceed.

Her. Beleses,
The anointed High-priest — —

Sar. Of what god or demon? 290
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.

Her. And Satrap Ofratanes — —

Sar. Why, *he* is *ours*.

Her. (*showing a ring*). Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors; behold

His signet ring.

Sar. 'Tis his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.

Her. They offer thee thy life, and freedom 300
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watched, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages.

Sar. (ironically). The generous Victors!

Her. I wait the answer.

Sar. Answer, slave! How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?

Her. Since they were free.

Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny!
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty 310
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania!
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him! [Pania and the Guards seizing him.]

Pan. I never yet obeyed
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore;
Put him to rest without.

Her. A single word:

My office, King, is sacred.

Sar. And what's *mine*?

That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me 320
To lay it down?

Her. I but obeyed my orders,
At the same peril if refused, as now
Incurred by my obedience.

Sar. So there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood!

Her. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly) — but it may be — yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent:
Would it then suit the last hours of a line
Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy 330
A peaceful herald, unarmed, in his office;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man — but that
More holy tie which links us with the Gods?

Sar. He's right. — Let him go free. — My life's last act
Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take
[Gives him a golden cup from a table near.
This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me*; or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.

Her. I thank you doubly for my life, and this 340
Most gorgeous gift, which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer?

Sar. Yes, — I ask
An hour's truce to consider.

Her. But an hour's?

Sar. An hour's: if at the expiration of
That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.

Her. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.

Sar. And hark! a word more.

Her. I shall not forget it,
Whate'er it be.

Sar. Commend me to Beleses; 350
And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.

Her. Where?

Sar. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.

Her. I shall obey you to the letter. [*Exit Herald.*

Sar. Pania! —
Now, my good Pania! — quick — with what I ordered.

Pan. My Lord, — the soldiers are already charged.
And see! they enter.
Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about the Throne, etc.

Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quenched 360
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not

Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'Twere to enkindle the strong tower of our
Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect!
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a King's obsequies?

Pan. Aye, for a kingdom's.
I understand you, now.

Sar. And blame me?

Pan. No —
Let me but fire the pile, and share it with you. 370

Myr. That *duty's* mine.

Pan. A woman's!

Myr. 'Tis the soldier's
Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not
The woman's with her lover?

Pan. 'Tis most strange!

Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou think'st it.
In the mean time, live thou. — Farewell! the pile
Is ready.

Pan. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.

Sar. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust already. Get thee hence;
Enrich thee.

Pan. And live wretched!

Sar. Think upon 380

Thy vow: — 'tis sacred and irrevocable.

Pan. Since it is so, farewell.

Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold;
Remember, what you leave you leave the slaves
Who slew me: and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly, — 390
And as you sail, turn back; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates: if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the Queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.

Pan. That royal hand!

Let me then once more press it to my lips;
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you!
The Soldiers and Pania throng round him, kissing his hand and the hem of his
robe.

Sar. My best! my last friends! 400

Let's not unman each other: part at once:
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy: trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied; or far more for what
Is past than present; — for the future, 'tis
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be: I shall know soon. Farewell — Farewell.

[Exeunt Pania and Soldiers.

Myr. These men were honest: it is comfort still 410
That our last looks should be on loving faces.

Sar. And *lovely* ones, my beautiful! — but hear me!
If at this moment, — for we now are on
The brink, — thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
This leap through flame into the future, say it:
I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature: and there's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.

Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heaped beneath
The ever-burning lamp that burns without, 420
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?

Sar. Do so. Is that thy answer?

Myr. Thou shalt see.
[Exit Myrrha.

Sar. (*solus*). She's firm. My fathers! whom I will rejoin,
It may be, purified by death from some
Of the gross stains of too material being,
I would not leave your ancient first abode
To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
If I have not kept your inheritance
As ye bequeathed it, this bright part of it,
Your treasure — your abode — your sacred relics 430
Of arms, and records — monuments, and spoils,
In which *they* would have revelled, I bear with me
To you in that absorbing element,
Which most personifies the soul as leaving
The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings: — and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar formed of cloud and flame,

A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mount of ashes — but a light 440
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
A people's records, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise — but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.
Myrrha returns with a lighted Torch in one Hand, and a Cup in the other.

Myr. Lo!
I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars. 450

Sar. And the cup?

Myr. 'Tis my country's custom to
Make a libation to the Gods.

Sar. And mine
To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.
Sardanapalus takes the cup, and after drinking and tinkling the reversed cup, as a
drop falls, exclaims —
And this libation
Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villany?

Sar. The other
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind 460
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet;

But I dismiss them from my mind. — Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom?

Sar. Then
We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long
In sounding.

Sar. Now, farewell; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one more. 470

Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.

Sar. Say it.

Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.

Sar. The better:
Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scattered into air,
Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace, 480
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er dead kings,
Or *kine* — for none know whether those proud piles
Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis:

So much for monuments that have forgotten
Their very record!

Myr. Then farewell, thou earth!
And loveliest spot of earth! farewell, Ionia!
Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation! My last prayer ⁴⁹⁰
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of thee!

Sar. And that?

Myr. Is yours.
[The trumpet of Pania sounds without.

Sar. Hark!
Myr. Now!

Sar. Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*
Now, Myrrha!

Myr. Art thou ready?

Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.
[Myrrha fires the pile.

Myr. 'Tis fired! I come.
As Myrrha springs forward to throw herself into the flames, the Curtain falls.

THE TWO FOSCARI

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

“The *father* softens, but the *governor’s* resolved.” — *Critic*.

[*The Two Foscari* was produced at Drury Lane Theatre April 7, and again on April 18 and April 25, 1838. Macready played “Frances Foscari,” Mr. Anderson “Jacopo Foscari,” and Miss Helen Faucit “Marina.”

According to the *Times*, April 9, 1838, “Miss Faucit’s Marina, the most energetic part of the whole, was clever, and showed a careful attention to the points which might be made.”

Macready notes in his diary, April 7, 1838 (*Reminiscences*, 1875, ii. 106): “Acted Foscari very well. Was very warmly received ... was called for at the end of the tragedy, and received by the whole house standing up and waving handkerchiefs with great enthusiasm. Dickens, Forster, Procter, Browning, Talfourd, all came into my room.”]

INTRODUCTION

The *Two Foscari* was begun on June 12, and finished, within the month, on July 9, 1821. Byron was still in the vein of the historic drama, though less concerned with “ancient chroniclers” and original “authorities” (*vide ante*, Preface to *Marino Faliero*, vol. iv. p. 332) than heretofore. “The Venetian play,” he tells Murray, July 14, 1821, is “rigidly historical;” but he seems to have depended for his facts, not on Sanudo or Navagero, but on Daru’s *Histoire de la République de Vénise* (1821, ii. 520-537), and on Sismondi’s *Histoire des Républiques ... du Moyen Age* (1815, x. 36-46). The story of the Two Doges, so far as it concerns the characters and action of Byron’s play, may be briefly re-told. It will be found to differ in some important particulars from the extracts from Daru and Sismondi which Byron printed in his “Appendix to the *Two Foscari*” (*Sardanapalus, etc.*, 1821, pp. 305-324), and no less from a passage in Smedley’s *Sketches from Venetian History* (1832, ii. 93-105), which was substituted for the French “Pièces justificatives,” in the collected edition of 1832-1835, xiii. 198-202, and the octavo edition of 1837, etc., pp. 790, 791.

Francesco, son of Nicolò Foscari, was born in 1373. He was nominated a member of the Council of Ten in 1399, and, after holding various offices of state, elected Doge in 1423. His dukedom, the longest on record, lasted till 1457. He was married, in 1395, to Maria, daughter of Andrea Priuli, and, *en secondes nocces*, to Maria, or Marina, daughter of Bartolommeo Nani. By his two wives he was the father of ten children — five sons and five daughters. Of the five sons, four died of the plague, and the fifth, Jacopo, lived to be the cause, if not the hero, of a tragedy.

The younger of the “Two Foscari” was a man of some cultivation, a collector and student of Greek manuscripts, well-mannered, and of ready wit, a child and lover of Venice, but indifferent to her ideals and regardless of her prejudices and restrictions. He seems to have begun life in a blaze of popularity, the admired of all admirers. His wedding with Lucrezia Contarini (January, 1441) was celebrated with a novel and peculiar splendour. Gorgeous youths, Companions of the Hose (*della calza*), in jackets of crimson velvet, with slashed sleeves lined with squirrel fur, preceded and followed the bridegroom’s train. A hundred bridesmaids accompanied the bride. Her dowry exceeded 16,000 ducats, and her jewels, which included a necklace worn by a Queen of Cyprus, were “rich and rare.” And the maiden herself was a pearl of great price. “She behaved,” writes her brother, “and does behave, so well beyond what could have been looked for.

I believe she is inspired by God!"

Jacopo had everything which fortune could bestow, but he lacked a capacity for right conduct. Four years after his marriage (February 17, 1445) an accusation was laid before the Ten (Romanin, *Storia*, etc., iv. 266) that, contrary to the law embodied in the Ducal *Promissione*, he had accepted gifts of jewels and money, not only from his fellow-citizens, but from his country's bitterest enemy, Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan. Jacopo fled to Trieste, and in his absence the Ten, supported by a giunta of ten, on their own authority and independently of the Doge, sentenced him to perpetual banishment at Nauplia, in Roumania. One of the three *Capi di' dieci* was Ermolao (or *Venetice* Almorò) Donato, of whom more hereafter. It is to be noted that this sentence was never carried into effect. At the end of four months, thanks to the intervention of five members of the Ten, he was removed from Trieste to Treviso, and, two years later (September 13, 1447), out of consideration to the Doge, who pleaded that the exile of his only son prevented him from giving his whole heart and soul to the Republic, permitted to return to Venice. So ends the first chapter of Jacopo's misadventures. He stands charged with unlawful, if not criminal, appropriation of gifts and moneys. He had been punished, but less than he deserved, and, for his father's sake, the sentence of exile had been altogether remitted.

Three years went by, and once again, January, 1451, a charge was preferred against Jacopo Foscari, and on this occasion he was arrested and brought before the Ten. He was accused of being implicated in the murder of Ermolao Donato, who was assassinated November 5, 1450, on leaving the Ducal Palace, where he had been attending the Council of the Pregadi. On the morning after the murder Benedetto Gritti, one of the "avvogadori di Commun," was at Mestre, some five miles from Venice, and, happening to accost a servant of Jacopo's who was loading a barge with wood, asked for the latest news from Venice, and got as answer, "Donato has been murdered!" The possession of the news some hours before it had been made public, and the fact that the newsmonger had been haunting the purlieus of the Ducal Palace on the previous afternoon, enabled the Ten to convict Jacopo. They alleged (Decree of X., March 26, 1451) that other evidence ("*testificationes et scripturæ*") was in their possession, and they pointed to the prisoner's obstinate silence on the rack — a silence unbroken save by "several incantations and magic words which fell from him," as a confirmation of his guilt. Moreover, it was "for the advantage of the State from many points of view" that convicted and condemned he should be. The question of his innocence or guilt (complicated by the report or tradition that one Nicolò Erizzo confessed on his death-bed that he had assassinated Donato for reasons of

his own) is still under discussion. Berlan (*I due Foscari*, etc., 1852, p. 36) sums up against him. It may, however, be urged in favour of Jacopo that the Ten did not produce or quote the *scripturæ et testificationes* which convinced them of his guilt; that they stopped short of the death-penalty, and pronounced a sentence inadequate to the crime; and, lastly, that not many years before they had taken into consideration the possibility and advisability of poisoning Filippo Visconti, an event which would, no doubt, have been “to the advantage of the State from many points of view.”

Innocent or guilty, he was sentenced to perpetual banishment to the city of Candia, on the north coast of the island of Crete; and, guilty or innocent, Jacopo was not the man to make the best of what remained to him and submit to fate. Intrigue he must, and, five years later (June, 1456), a report reached Venice that papers had been found in his possession, some relating to the Duke of Milan, calculated to excite “nuovi scandali e disordini,” and others in cypher, which the Ten could not read. Over and above these papers there was direct evidence that Jacopo had written to the *Imperatore dei Turchi*, imploring him to send his galley and take him away from Candia. Here was a fresh instance of treachery to the Republic, and, July 21, 1456, Jacopo returned to Venice under the custody of Lorenzo Loredano.

According to Romanin (*Storia*, etc., iv. 284), he was not put to the torture, but confessed his guilt spontaneously, pleading, by way of excuse, that the letter to the Duke of Milan had been allowed to fall into the hands of spies, with a view to his being recalled to Venice and obtaining a glimpse of his parents and family, even at a risk of a fresh trial. On the other hand, the *Dolfin Cronaca*, the work of a kinsman of the Foscari, which records Jacopo’s fruitless appeal to the sorrowful but inexorable Doge, and other incidents of a personal nature, testifies, if not to torture on the rack, “to mutilation by thirty strokes of the lash.” Be that as it may, he was once more condemned to lifelong exile, with the additional penalty that he should be imprisoned for a year. He sailed for Venice July 31, 1456, and died at Candia, January 12, 1457. Jacopo’s misconduct and consequent misfortune overshadowed the splendour of his father’s reign, and, in very truth “brought his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

After his son’s death, the aged Doge, now in his eighty-fifth year, retired to his own apartments, and refused to preside at Councils of State. The Ten, who in 1446 had yielded to the Doge’s plea that a father fretting for an exiled son could not discharge his public duties, were instant that he should abdicate the dukedom on the score of decrepitude. Accounts differ as to the mode in which he received the sentence of deposition. It is certain that he was compelled to abdicate on

Sunday morning, October 23, 1457, but was allowed a breathing-space of a few days to make his arrangements for quitting the Ducal Palace.

On Monday, October 24, the Great Council met to elect his successor, and sat with closed doors till Sunday, October 30.

On Thursday, October 27, Francesco, heedless of a suggestion that he should avoid the crowd, descended the Giants' Staircase for the last time, and, says the *Dolfin Cronaca*, "after crossing the courtyard, went out by the door leading to the prisons, and entered his boat by the Ponte di Paglia." "He was dressed," says another chronicle (*August. Cod. I, cl. vii.*), "in a scarlet mantle, from which the fur lining had been taken," surmounted by a scarlet hood, an old friend which he had worn when his ducal honours were new, and which he had entrusted to his wife's care to be preserved for "red" days and festivals of State. "In his hand he held his staff, as he walked very slowly. His brother Marco was by his side, behind him were cousins and grandsons ... and in this way he went to his own house."

On Sunday, October 30, Pasquale Malipiero was declared Doge, and two days after, All Saints' Day, at the first hour of the morning, Francesco Foscari died. If the interval between ten o'clock on Sunday night and one o'clock on Tuesday morning disproves the legend that the discrowned Doge ruptured a blood-vessel at the moment when the bell was tolling for the election of his successor, the truth remains that, old as he was, he died of a broken heart.

His predecessor, Tomaso Mocenigo, had prophesied on his death-bed that if the Venetians were to make Foscari Doge they would forfeit their "gold and silver, their honour and renown." "From your position of lords," said he, "you will sink to that of vassals and servants to men of arms." The prophecy was fulfilled. "If we look," writes Mr. H. F. Brown (*Venice, etc.*, 1893, p. 306), "at the sum-total of Foscari's reign ... we find that the Republic had increased her land territory by the addition of two great provinces, Bergamo and Brescia ... But the price had been enormous ... her debt rose from 6,000,000 to 13,000,000 ducats. Venetian funds fell to 18 ½.... Externally there was much pomp and splendour.... But underneath this bravery there lurked the official corruption of the nobles, the suspicion of the Ten, the first signs of bank failures, the increase in the national debt, the fall in the value of the funds. Land wars and landed possessions drew the Venetians from the sea to *terra ferma*.... The beginning of the end had arrived." (See *Two Doges of Venice*, by Alethea Wiel, 1891; *I due Foscari, Memorie Storiche Critiche*, di Francesco Berlan, 1852; *Storia Documentata di Venezia*, di S. Romanin, 1855, vol. iv.; *Die beiden Foscari*, von Richard Senger, 1878. For reviews, etc., of *The Two Foscari*, vide ante,

“Introduction to *Sardanapalus*,” .) Both Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh*, and Heber in the *Quarterly Review*, took exception to the character of Jacopo Foscari, in accordance with the Horatian maxim, “Incredulus odi.” “If,” said Jeffrey, “he had been presented to the audience wearing out his heart in exile, ... we might have caught some glimpse of the nature of his motives.” As it is (in obedience to the “unities”) “we first meet with him led from the ‘Question,’ and afterwards ... clinging to the dungeon walls of his native city, and expiring from his dread of leaving them.” The situation lacks conviction.

“If,” argued Heber, “there ever existed in nature a case so extraordinary as that of a man who gravely preferred tortures and a dungeon at home, to a temporary residence in a beautiful island and a fine climate; it is what few can be made to believe, and still fewer to sympathize with.”

It was, no doubt, with reference to these criticisms that Byron told Medwin (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 173) that it was no invention of his that the “young Foscari should have a sickly affection for his native city.... I painted the men as I found them, as they were — not as the critics would have them.... But no painting, however highly coloured, can give an idea of the intensity of a Venetian’s affection for his native city.”

Goethe, on the other hand, was “not careful” to note these inconsistencies and perplexities. He thought that the dramatic handling of *The Two Foscari* was “worthy of great praise,” was “admirable!” (*Conversations with Goethe*, 1874, p. 265).

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Francis Foscari, *Doge of Venice*.

Jacopo Foscari, *Son of the Doge*.

James Loredano, *a Patrician*.

Marco Memmo, *a Chief of the Forty*.

Barbarigo, *a Senator*.

Other Senators, The Council of Ten, Guards, Attendants, etc., etc.

WOMAN.

Marina, Wife of young Foscari.

Scene — The Ducal Palace, Venice.

THE TWO FOSCARI

ACT I

Scene I. — *A Hall in the Ducal Palace.*

Enter Loredano and Barbarigo, meeting.

Lor. Where is the prisoner?

Bar. Reposing from
The Question.

Lor. The hour's past — fixed yesterday
For the resumption of his trial. — Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well?

Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari, ¹⁰
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffered beyond Nature's
Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime?

Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avowed the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

Bar. To extermination.

Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this. — Let's in to council. 20

Bar. Yet pause — the number of our colleagues is not
Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can

Proceed.

Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?

Bar. No — he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

Lor. True — true —
His *last*.

Bar. Will nothing move you?

Lor. Feels he, think you?

Bar. He shows it not.

Lor. I have marked *that* — the wretch!

Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he passed the threshold 30
The old man fainted.

Lor. It begins to work, then.

Bar. The work is half your own.

Lor. And should be *all* mine —
My father and my uncle are no more.

Bar. I have read their epitaph, which says they died
By poison.

Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sickened shortly: — he *is* Sovereign.

Bar. A wretched one.

Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?

Bar. But *did* the Doge make you so?

Lor. Yes. 40

Bar. What solid proofs?

Lor. When Princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.

Bar. But you will move by law?

Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than ‘mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of commerce,
(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles) 50

“Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?”

Lor. It is written thus.

Bar. And will you leave it unerased?

Lor. Till balanced.

Bar. And how?

[Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their way to “the Hall of the Council of Ten.”]

Lor. You see the number is complete.
Follow me.*[Exit Loredano.]*

Bar. (solus). Follow *thee*! I have followed long
Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and wretch
Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush 60
The waters through them; but this son and sire
Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardily like them — Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly! —
Lo, where he comes! — Be still, my heart! they are
Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee?
Enter Guards, with young Foscari as Prisoner, etc.

Guard. Let him rest.
Signor, take time.

Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I’m feeble;
But thou mayst stand reprov’d.

Guard. I’ll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fos. That's kind: — I meet some pity, but no mercy; 70
This is the first.

Guard. And might be the last, did they
Who rule behold us.

Bar. (advancing to the Guard). There is one who does:
Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,
Wait their last summons — I am of "the Ten,"
And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call sounds,
We'll in together. — Look well to the prisoner!

Jac. Fos. What voice is that? — 'Tis Barbarigo's! Ah!
Our House's foe, and one of my few judges. 80

Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there be,
Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

Jac. Fos. True,
He judges.

Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire,
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety — —

Jac. Fos. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the waters.
Enter an Officer, who whispers Barbarigo.

Bar. (to the Guard). Let him approach. I must not speak with him
Further than thus: I have transgressed my duty 90
In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber. [*Exit Barbarigo.*
[*Guard conducting Jacopo Foscari to the window.*

Guard. There, sir, 'tis

Open. — How feel you?

Jac. Fos. Like a boy — Oh Venice!

Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimmed
The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure, in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties, 100
Plebeian as patrician, cheered us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal! — How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughened; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drenched hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kissed it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still 110
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they waxed fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As showed that I had searched the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and, drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurned
The foam which broke around me, and pursued 120
My track like a sea-bird. — I was a boy then.

Guard. Be a man now: there never was more need
Of manhood's strength.

Jac. Fos. (looking from the lattice). My beautiful, my own,
My only Venice — *this is breath!* Thy breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howled about my Candiotte dungeon, and
Made my heart sick.

Guard. I see the colour comes 130
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength to bear
What more may be imposed! — I dread to think on't.

Jac. Fos. They will not banish me again? — No — no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.

Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.

Jac. Fos. I confessed
Once — twice before: both times they exiled me.

Guard. And the third time will slay you.

Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.

Guard. And can you so much love the soil which hates you? 140

Jac. Fos. The soil! — Oh no, it is the seed of the soil
Which persecutes me: but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.
Enter an Officer.

Offi. Bring in the prisoner!

Guard. Signor, you hear the order.

Jac. Fos. Aye, I am used to such a summons; 'tis
The third time they have tortured me: — then lend me
Thine arm.[*To the Guard.*

Offi. Take mine, sir; 'tis my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

Jac. Fos. You! — you are he 150
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs —
Away! — I'll walk alone.

Offi. As you please, Signor;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council when
They — —

Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on their horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not — that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that order,
But keep off from me till 'tis issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching, 160
And the cold drops strain through my brow, as if — —
But onward — I have borne it — I can bear it. —
How looks my father?

Offi. With his wonted aspect.

Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky, the blue of Ocean,
The brightness of our city, and her domes,
The mirth of her Piazza — even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
Even here, into these chambers of the unknown
Who govern, and the unknown and the unnumbered
Judged and destroyed in silence, — all things wear 170
The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
Nothing can sympathise with Foscari,

Not even a Foscari. — Sir, I attend you.
[*Exeunt Jacopo Foscari, Officer, etc.*
Enter Memmo and another Senator.

Mem. He's gone — we are too late: — think you “the Ten”
Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.

Mem. And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
From us, the premier nobles of the state, 180
As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumours,
Which — like the tales of spectres, that are rife
Near ruined buildings — never have been proved,
Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathomed mysteries.

Mem. But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

Sen. Or Doge?

Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.

Sen. 'Tis the first station of the state, and may 190
Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
Attained by noble aspirants.

Mem. To such
I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
Is limited: I'd rather be an unit
Of an united and Imperial “Ten,”

Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher. —
Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?
Enter Marina, with a female Attendant.

Mar. What, no one? — I am wrong, there still are two;
But they are senators.

Mem. Most noble lady,
Command us.

Mar. *I command!* — Alas! my life 200
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.

Mem. I understand thee, but I must not answer.

Mar. (fiercely). True — none dare answer here save on the rack,
Or question save those — —

Mem. (interrupting her). High-born dame! bethink thee
Where thou now art.

Mar. Where I now am! — It was
My husband's father's palace.

Mem. The Duke's palace.

Mar. And his son's prison! — True, I have not forgot it;
And, if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious Memmo
For pointing out the pleasures of the place. 210

Mem. Be calm!

Mar. (looking up towards heaven). I am; but oh, thou eternal God!
Canst *thou* continue so, with such a world?

Mem. Thy husband yet may be absolved.

Mar. He is,

In Heaven. I pray you, Signer Senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had; they are there within, or were at least
An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will *he* condemn *him*?

Mem. I trust not.

Mar. But if ²²⁰
He does not, there are those will sentence both.

Mem. They can.

Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness; — my husband's lost!

Mem. Not so;
Justice is judge in Venice.

Mar. If it were so,
There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of Nature's summons; but "the Ten's" is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail!
[*A faint cry within.*]

Sen. Hark!

Mem. 'Twas a cry of —

Mar. No, no; not my husband's —
Not Foscari's.

Mem. The voice was —

Mar. Not *his*: no. ²³⁰
He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,

Not his — not his — he'll die in silence.
[*A faint groan again within.*]

Mem. What!
Again?

Mar. His voice! it seemed so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but — no — no — no — it must have been
A fearful pang, which wrung a groan from him.

Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain in silence?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari, ²⁴⁰
Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shrieked,
But did not; for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears.

Mem. All's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.
Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you? ²⁵⁰

Offi. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.[*Exit Officer.*]

Mem. Lady,
'Twere better to retire.

Sen. (*offering to assist her*), I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! I will tend him.

Mem. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers
Except “the Ten,” and their familiars.

Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have entered — many never; but
They shall not balk my entrance.

Mem. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.

Mar. Who shall oppose me?

Mem. They ²⁶⁰
Whose duty ‘tis to do so.

Mar. ‘Tis *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I’ll pass.

Mem. It is impossible.

Mar. That shall be tried.
Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levelled spears; and think you a few jailors
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way; ²⁷⁰
This is the Doge’s palace; I am wife
Of the Duke’s son, the *innocent* Duke’s son,
And they shall hear this!

Mem. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.

Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.*[Exit Marina.*

Sen. Poor lady!

Mem. 'Tis mere desperation: she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.
[The Officer passes over the stage with another person.

Mem. I hardly 280
Thought that "the Ten" had even this touch of pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to Death
By the compassionate trance, poor Nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?

Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at once.

Sen. That's not their policy: they'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land, 290
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

Mem. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the Letter, which, he says, was written
Addressed to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the Senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-conveyed to Venice.

Mem. But as a culprit.

Sen. Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought, — so he avouches. 300

Mem. The accusation of the bribes was proved.

Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annulled by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of “the Ten.”

Mem. Then why not clear him?

Sen. That
They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almore Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

Mem. There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose — 310
But here come two of “the Ten;” let us retire.
[*Exeunt Memmo and Senator.*
Enter Loredano and Barbarigo.

Bar. (*addressing Lor.*).
That were too much: believe me, ’twas not meet
The trial should go further at this moment.

Lor. And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?

Bar. No,
That’s not the cause; you saw the prisoner’s state.

Lor. And had he not recovered?

Bar. To relapse

Upon the least renewal.

Lor. 'Twas not tried.

Bar. 'Tis vain to murmur; the majority 320
In council were against you.

Lor. Thanks to *you*, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.

Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
Makes me wish — —

Lor. What?

Bar. That *you* would *sometimes* feel,
As I do always.

Lor. Go to, you're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh, 330
And melted by a tear — a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy.

Bar. He shed
No tears.

Lor. He cried out twice.

Bar. A Saint had done so,
Even with the crown of Glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,

But wrung from pangs, and followed by no prayers. 340

Lor. He muttered many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.

Bar. That I heard not:
You stood more near him.

Lor. I did so.

Bar. Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touched with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.

Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.

Bar. And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?

Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavowed, he'll be lamented. 350

Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?

Lor. Wouldst thou have
His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?

Bar. War with *them* too?

Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.

Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repressed convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away

In stern serenity; these moved you not? 360

[*Exit* Loredano.

He's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch moved me
More by his silence than a thousand outcries
Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into
The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used
To such sights. I must think no more of this,
Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes, their former injuries, and lose 370
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts; but, for the present, Foscari
Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings. — Lo! they come:
How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear 380
To look on them again in this extremity:
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

[*Exit* Barbarigo.

ACT II

Scene I. — *A hall in the Doge's Palace.*

The Doge and a Senator.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

Doge. Now;
I overlooked it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen —
[*The Doge sits down and signs the paper.*
There, Signor.

Sen. (looking at the paper). You have forgot; it is not signed.

Doge. Not signed? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipped the pen without effect.

*Sen. (dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper
before the Doge).* Your hand, too, shakes, my Lord: allow me, thus —

Doge. 'Tis done, I thank you.

Sen. Thus the act confirmed ¹⁰
By you and by "the Ten" gives peace to Venice.

Doge. 'Tis long since she enjoyed it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!

Sen. 'Tis almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.

Doge. No doubt:

I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy; it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema 20
And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

Sen. 'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

Doge. Perhaps so.

Sen. Which should be made manifest.

Doge. I have not complained, sir.

Sen. My good Lord, forgive me.

Doge. For what?

Sen. My heart bleeds for you.

Doge. For me, Signor?

Sen. And for your — —

Doge. Stop!

Sen. It must have way, my Lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness, 30
Not to feel deeply for your son.

Doge. Was this
In your commission?

Sen. What, my Lord?

Doge. This prattle

Of things you know not: but the treaty's signed;
Return with it to them who sent you.

Sen. I

Obeys. I had in charge, too, from the Council,
That you would fix an hour for their reunion.

Doge. Say, when they will — now, even at this moment,
If it so please them: I am the State's servant.

Sen. They would accord some time for your repose.

Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which shall cause 40
The loss of an hour's time unto the State.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever.
[*Exit Senator. The Doge remains in silence.*
Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!

Doge. Say on.

Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.

Doge. Bid her enter. Poor
Marina!
[*Exit Attendant. The Doge remains in silence as before.*
Enter Marina.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The State.

Mar. I wished to speak to you of *him*.

Doge. Your husband? 50

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter!

Mar. I had obtained permission from “the Ten”
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. ‘Tis revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. “The Ten.” — When we had reached “the Bridge of Sighs,”
Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurred: a messenger was sent back to
“The Ten;” — but as the Court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that 60
Until that high tribunal reassembled
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,
The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourned; and till it meets,
‘Tis dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,
They’ll torture him again; and he and I
Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the Heavens! — Oh God!
Dost thou see this?

Doge. Child — child — —

Mar. (abruptly). Call me not “child!” 70
You soon will have no children — you deserve none —
You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not weep
Their boys who died in battle, is it written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretched forth a hand to save them?

Doge. You behold me:
I cannot weep — I would I could; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the Diadem of earth, 80
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
A talisman to still them — I’d give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know not Venice.
Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me — they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
The sire’s destruction would not save the son;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is — but they have not conquered yet. 90

Mar. But they have crushed.

Doge. Nor crushed as yet — I live.

Mar. And your son, — how long will he live?

Doge. I trust,
For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,

Hath ruined all by that detected letter:
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke:
Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiote exile, I had hopes — he has quenched them — 100
He must return.

Mar. To exile?

Doge. I have said it.

Mar. And can I not go with him?

Doge. You well know
This prayer of yours was twice denied before
By the assembled “Ten,” and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors on the part
Of your Lord renders them still more austere.

Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old human fiends,
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears save drops of dotage, with long white 110
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads
As palsied as their hearts are hard, they counsel,
Cabal, and put men’s lives out, as if Life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguished
In their accurséd bosoms.

Doge. You know not — —

Mar. I do — I do — and so should you, methinks —
That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suckled —
Who have loved, or talked at least of Love — have given
Their hands in sacred vows — have danced their babes 120
Upon their knees, perhaps have mourned above them —
In pain, in peril, or in death — who are,
Or were, at least in seeming, human, could

Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself —
You, who abet them?

Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

Mar. You know it well,
And feel it nothing.

Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.

Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your flesh shook not;
And after that, what are a woman's words? ¹³⁰
No more than woman's tears, that they should shake you.

Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of thine, I tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weighed with that
Which — — but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity! — 'tis a word
Strange to thy heart — how came it on thy lips?

Doge. I must bear these reproaches, though they wrong me.
Couldst thou but read — —

Mar. 'Tis not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts, — where then ¹⁴⁰
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

Doge (*pointing downwards*). There.

Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which press it
Now, you will know me better.

Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloak their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was 150
When I received it.

Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.

Doge. Would it were so!
Better for him he never had been born;
Better for me. — I have seen our house dishonoured.

Mar. That's false! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppressed but not disgraced, crushed, overwhelmed, 160
Alive, or dead, for Prince or Paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonoured! — *he* dishonoured!
I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dishonoured;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'Tis ye who are all traitors, Tyrant! — ye!
Did you but love your Country like this victim
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile, 170
You'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me,

Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again?

Doge. Has he not been condemned?

Mar. Is none but guilt so?

Doge. Time may restore his memory — I would hope so.
He was my pride, my — — but 'tis useless now —
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were ominous. 180

Mar. I say he's innocent! And were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

Doge. I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those duties;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused:
They must then be fulfilled.
Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
"The Ten."

Doge. Who bears it?

Att. Noble Loredano.

Doge. He! — but admit him.*[Exit Attendant.*

Mar. Must I then retire?

Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this 190
Concerns your husband, and if not — — Well, Signor,
[*To Loredano entering.*
Your pleasure?

Lor. I bear that of “the Ten.”

Doge. They
Have chosen well their envoy.

Lor. ‘Tis *their* choice
Which leads me here.

Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy. — Proceed.

Lor. We have decided.

Doge. We?

Lor. “The Ten” in council.

Doge. What! have they met again, and met without
Apprising me?

Lor. They wished to spare your feelings,
No less than age.

Doge. That’s new — when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.

Lor. You know well 200
That they have power to act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge.

Doge. ‘Tis some years since I learned this, long before
I became Doge, or dreamed of such advancement.
You need not school me, Signor; I sate in
That Council when you were a young patrician.

Lor. True, in my father’s time; I have heard him and
The Admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your Highness may remember them; they both
Died suddenly.

Doge. And if they did so, better 210
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.

Lor. No doubt: yet most men like to live their days out.

Doge. And did not they?

Lor. The Grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.

Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically?

Lor. So far from strange, that never was there death
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so?

Doge. What should I think of mortals?

Lor. That they have mortal foes.

Doge. I understand you;
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things. 220

Lor. You best know if I should be so.

Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

Lor. Who dares say so?

Doge. I! — — 'Tis true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less

Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe: 230

I never worked by plot in Council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is — your existence.

Lor. I fear not.

Doge. You have no cause, being what I am; but were I
That you would have me thought, you long ere now
Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not.

Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.

Doge. But I, good Signor, 240
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have strained 250
(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what
I could enforce for my authority,
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the High Altar, even unto
The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,
The health, the pride, and welfare of the State.
And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'Tis decreed, 260

That, without further repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is,
("The Ten," dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question till a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avowed his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which conveyed him. 270

Mar. Thank God! At least they will not drag him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my daughter.

Mar. No, 'twas too human. May I share his exile?

Lor. Of this "the Ten" said nothing.

Mar. So I thought!
That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. (to the Doge). Then, father, 280
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:
[To Loredano.
And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavour.

Mar. And you, Signor?

Lor. Lady!
'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of — —

Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these things?

Mar. A Prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!
It galls you: — well, you are his equal, as 290
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant: — well, then, you're a Prince,
A princely noble; and what then am I?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts?

Lor. The presence of your husband's Judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics, 300
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And masked nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and drownings,

Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions,
Your "Bridge of Sighs," your strangling chamber, and
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem 310
The beings of another and worse world!
Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know ye;
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him: — you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear *from* you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady! words
Uttered within these walls I bear no further 320
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the State's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?

Doge. Something from
The *Doge*; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My mission *here* is to the *Doge*.

Doge. Then say
The *Doge* will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father — —

Lor. I remember *mine*. — Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious Lady,
And bow me to the Duke.[*Exit Loredano.*

Mar. Are you content? 330

Doge. I am what you behold.

Mar. And that's a mystery.

Doge. All things are so to mortals; who can read them
Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume — man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and brain,
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins
We find in others, Nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of Fortune; 340
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against Fate, 'twere well
We should remember Fortune can take nought
Save what she *gave* — the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where Hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all passions 350
Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow — clay from first to last,
The Prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our Fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon days
Our days on seasons; our whole being on
Something which is not *us*! — So, we are slaves,
The greatest as the meanest — nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm; 360
And when we think we lead, we are most led,
And still towards Death, a thing which comes as much
Without our act or choice as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinned in some old world,
And *this* is Hell: the best is, that it is not

Eternal.

Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

Doge. And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am called upon
To judge my son? I have administered
My country faithfully — victoriously — 370
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.

Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.

Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.

Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.

Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?

Mar. I know not, reckon not —
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman — 380
Any where, where we might respire unfettered,
And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.

Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade for husband,
And turn him into traitor?

Mar. He is none!
The Country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem

None rebels except subjects? The Prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more 390
A brigand than the robber-chief.

Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.

*Mar*No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st such laws as make old Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.

Doge. I found the law; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as Prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the charter
Left by our fathers.

Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?

Doge. Under such laws, Venice 400
Has risen to what she is — a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeathed
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people swayed by Senates.

Mar. Rather say,
Groaned under the stern Oligarchs.

Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the World: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest, 410
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintained in vigour.

Mar. This means that you are more a Doge than father.

Doge. It means, I am more citizen than either.
If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

Mar. Accurséd be the city where the laws
Would stifle Nature's!

Doge. Had I as many sons ⁴²⁰
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given them
To the State's service, to fulfil her wishes,
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
She might decree.

Mar. And this is Patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage "Ten,"
With all its jealousy, will hardly war ⁴³⁰
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon.

Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.

Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father?

Doge. That he obey
The laws.

Mar. And nothing more? Will you not see him
Ere he depart? It may be the last time.

Doge. The last! — my boy! — the last time I shall see
My last of children! Tell him I will come.[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I. — *The prison of Jacopo Foscari.*

Jac. Fos. (solus). No light, save yon faint gleam which shows me walls
Which never echoed but to Sorrow's sounds,
The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clanked the groan
Of Death, the imprecation of Despair!
And yet for this I have returned to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that Time, which wears
The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and here
Must I consume my own, which never beat 10
For Venice but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these which
[*Approaching the wall.*

Are scrawled along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names
Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history; 20
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
I recognise some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches.

[*He engraves his name.*

Enter a Familiar of "the Ten."

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down;
I am past hunger: but my lips are parched — 30
The water!

Fam. There.

Jac. Fos. (after drinking). I thank you: I am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you that
Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fos. Till when?

Fam. I know not. — It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fos. Ah! they relent, then — I had ceased to hope it:
'Twas time.

Enter Marina.

Mar. My best beloved!

Jac. Fos. (embracing her). My true wife,
And only friend! What happiness!

Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fos. How! would'st thou share a dungeon?

Mar. Aye,
The rack, the grave, all — any thing with thee, 40
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that — all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.
How dost thou? How are those worn limbs? Alas!
Why do I ask? Thy paleness — —

Jac. Fos. 'Tis the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!

Mar. 'Tis 50
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine eyes —
No, not thine eyes — they sparkle — how they sparkle!

Jac. Fos. And thine! — but I am blinded by the torch.

Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst thou see here?

Jac. Fos. Nothing at first; but use and time had taught me 60
Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full Sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice; but a moment ere
Thou earnest hither I was busy writing.

Mar. What?

Jac. Fos. My name: look, 'tis there — recorded next
The name of him who here preceded me, —
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him? 70

Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of men's ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,

Or those who soon must be so. — *What of him?*
Thou askest. — What of me? may soon be asked,
With the like answer — doubt and dreadful surmise —
Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. I speak of thee!

Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then shall speak of me:
The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men's groans 80
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.

Mar. Thy life is safe.

Jac. Fos. And liberty?

Mar. The mind should make its own!

Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but 'tis a sound,
A music most impressive, but too transient:
The Mind is much, but is not all. The Mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan, 90
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are things
More woful — such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.

Mar. Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is Prince.

Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely aid me to endure it.
My doom is common; many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope 100

Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day; for, save the gaoler's torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude: my soul is social.

Mar. I will be with thee.

Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so! 110
But *that* they never granted — nor will grant,
And I shall be alone: no men; no books —
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I asked for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they were
Refused me, — so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The Hall not far from hence, which bears on high 120
Hundreds of Doges, and their deeds and dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fos. I know it — look!
[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the Question
which he had undergone.*]

Mar. No — no — no more of that: even they relent
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fos. What then?

Mar. That you
Return to Candia.

Jac. Fos. Then my last hope's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoyed my spirits up
Like a ship on the Ocean tossed by storms, ¹³⁰
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accurséd isle of slaves and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seemed mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

Mar. And *here*?

Jac. Fos. At once — by better means, as briefer.
What! would they even deny me my Sire's sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

Mar. My husband!
I have sued to accompany thee hence, ¹⁴⁰
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is Passion, and not Patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A Paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched!

Mar. And yet you see how, from their banishment ¹⁵⁰
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remained of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean Rome;
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking
Another region, with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila 160
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country
And many thoughts; but afterwards addressed
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this — though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fos. Aye — we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number 170
The hearts which broke in silence at that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fevered eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading them?
That melody, which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds, 180
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is strength,
I say, — the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his Country, can love nothing.

Mar. Obey her, then: 'tis she that puts thee forth.

Jac. Fos. Aye, there it is; 'tis like a mother's curse
Upon my soul — the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,

Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitched together — I'm alone. 190

Mar. You shall be so no more — I will go with thee.

Jac. Fos. My best Marina! — and our children?

Mar. They,
I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy, (which holds all ties
As threads, which may be broken at her pleasure),
Will not be suffered to proceed with us.

Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes — with many a pang!
But — I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted 200
By duties paramount; and 'tis our first
On earth to bear.

Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?

Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have undergone
Of late, is mercy.

Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seemed ploughing deep into your heart; you never 210
Saw day go down upon your native spires[bo]
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbéd vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.

Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city,
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems,) and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles; we must sail ere night. 220

Jac. Fos. That's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?

Mar. You will.

Jac. Fos. Where?

Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber —
He said not which. I would that you could bear
Your exile as he bears it.

Jac. Fos. Blame him not.
I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his aged head
Suspicion from "the Ten," and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated! 230
What pangs are those they have spared you?

Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 'twas
Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the State's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves — away — away —
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorred,
Unjust, and — —

Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my Country?

Mar. Men and Angels! ²⁴⁰
The blood of myriads reeking up to Heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence!* *Couldst thou say*
Aught in its favour, who would praise like thee?

Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since so it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here?
Enter attended by Familiars.

Lor. (to the Familiars). Retire,
But leave the torch. *[Exeunt the two Familiars.*

Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble Signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn ²⁵⁰
Such presence hither.

Lor. 'Tis not the first time
I have visited these places.

Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain[bp]
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?

Lor. Neither are of my office, noble Lady!
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce "the Ten's" decree.

Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known.

Lor. As how?

Mar. I have informed him, not so gently, 260
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues; but he knew it.
If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence!
The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.

Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you:
What can avail such words?

Mar. To let him know
That he is known.

Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.

Lor. You do well 270
To nurse them wisely. Foscari — you know
Your sentence, then?

Jac. Fos. Return to Candia?

Lor. True —
For life.

Jac. Fos. Not long.

Lor. I said — for *life*.

Jac. Fos. And I
Repeat — not long.

Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea — afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

Jac. Fos. Both the same to me: the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is't true my wife accompanies me?

Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.

Mar. Who obtained that justice?

Lor. One who wars not with women.

Mar. But oppresses 280
Men: howsoever let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have asked or taken
From him or such as he is.

Lor. He receives them
As they are offered.

Mar. May they thrive with him
So much! — no more.

Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

Mar. Nobler!

Lor. How nobler?

Mar. As more generous!
We say the “generous steed” to express the purity 290
Of his high blood. Thus much I’ve learnt, although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skirred the coasts
Of Egypt and her neighbour Araby:
And why not say as soon the “*generous man*?”
If race be aught, it is in qualities

More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay —
Look not so stern — but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree's most green 300
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have blushed
For such a son — thou cold inveterate hater!

Jac. Fos. Again, Marina!

Mar. Again! *still*, Marina.
See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?
Let him partake it!

Jac. Fos. That were difficult.

Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it now —
Aye, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it. 310
A few brief words of truth shame the Devil's servants
No less than Master; I have probed his soul
A moment, as the Eternal Fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from me!
With death, and chains, and exile in his hand,
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit;
They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst 320
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His tempter's.

Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so; and *who* hath made us *mad*?

Lor. Let her go on; it irks not me.

Mar. That's false!

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You came
To be sued to in vain — to mark our tears,
And hoard our groans — to gaze upon the wreck
Which you have made a Prince's son — my husband;
In short, to trample on the fallen — an office 330
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him!
How have you sped? We are wretched, Signor, as
Your plots could make, and vengeance could desire us,
And how *feel you*?

Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shivered. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.
Enter the .

Jac. Fos. My father!

Doge (embracing him). Jacopo! my son — my son! 340

Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name — *our* name!

Doge. My boy!
Couldst thou but know — —

Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmured.

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. Doge, look there!
[*She points to .*

Doge. I see the man — what mean'st thou?

Mar. Caution!

Lor. Being
The virtue which this noble lady most[bq]
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would 350
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes; *worse* he could not.

Jac. Fos. Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it — is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

Doge. You behold
These white hairs!

Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!
I loved you ever — never more than now. 360
Look to my children — to your last child's children:
Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also?

Mar. No — not *here*.

Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent any where.

Mar. I would that they beheld their father in

A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that
Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well, 370
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
But let it only be their *heritage*,
And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damp, too, and yon *thick green* wave
Which floats above the place where we now stand —
A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
Might strike them: *this is not their* atmosphere,
However you — and you — and most of all, 380
As worthiest — *you*, sir, noble Loredano!
May breathe it without prejudice.

Jac. Fos. I had not
Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.
I shall depart, then, without meeting them?

Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my chamber.

Jac. Fos. And must I leave them — *all*?

Lor. You must.

Jac. Fos. Not one?

Lor. They are the State's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.

Lor. They are, in all maternal things.

Mar. That is,
In all things painful. If they're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die, 390
To me to bury and to mourn; but if

They live, they'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles — what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles!
Behold the State's care for its sons and mothers!

Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.

Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where the genial wind
Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?

Lor. 'Twas so
When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the "Riva di Schiavoni." 400

Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.

Doge. Be firm, my son!

Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavour.

Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested dungeon,
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.

Lor. And present

Liberation.

Doge. He speaks truth.

Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 'tis
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change them,
But I reproach not.

Lor. The time narrows, Signor. 410

Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly

To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and — —

Doge. Boy! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart — that too kind heart —
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now, 420
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.

Lor. (to the Familiar). The torch, there!

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

Doge. My son, you are feeble; take this hand.

Jac. Fos. Alas!
Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

Lor. Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 'twill sting you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we are plunged, 430
No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you;
It could not save, but will support you ever. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

*I. — A Hall in the Ducal Palace.
Enter and .*

Bar. And have you confidence in such a project?

Lor. I have.

Bar. 'Tis hard upon his years.

Lor. Say rather
Kind to relieve him from the cares of State.

Bar. 'Twill break his heart.

Lor. Age has no heart to break.
He has seen his son's half broken, and, except
A start of feeling in his dungeon, never

Swerved.

Bar. In his countenance, I grant you, never;
But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where is he? 10

Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with
His son, and the whole race of Foscari.

Bar. Bidding farewell.

Lor. A last! as, soon, he shall
Bid to his Dukedom.

Bar. When embarks the son?

Lor. Forthwith — when this long leave is taken. 'Tis
Time to admonish them again.

Bar. Forbear;
Retrench not from their moments.

Lor. Not I, now
We have higher business for our own. This day
Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment, 20
And that is vengeance.

Bar. In my mind, too deep.

Lor. 'Tis moderate — not even life for life, the rule
Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

Bar. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?

Lor. Doubtless.

Bar. And did not this shake your suspicion?

Lor. No.

Bar. But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the Council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds. 30

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees,
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope,) to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

Bar. What if he will not?

Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.

Bar. But will the laws uphold us?

Lor. What laws? — "The Ten" are laws; and if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.

Bar. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you, 40
Our powers are such.

Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.

Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.

Bar. Unasked?

Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:
If they were from his heart, he may be thankful:
If not, 'twill punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time; let us join them,
And be *thou* fixed in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not 50
Fail to move them, and to remove him: since
Their thoughts, their objects, have been sounded, do not
You, with your wonted scruples, teach us pause,
And all will prosper.

Bar. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.

Lor. He is safe, I tell you;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 'tis his throne

Alone is aimed at.

Bar. But discarded Princes 60
Are seldom long of life.

Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.

Bar. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long enough, and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in to council!

[*Exeunt and .*
Enter and a Senator.

Sen. A summons to “the Ten!” why so?

Mem. “The Ten”
Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summoned —
That is enough.

Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.

Mem. You will know why anon, 70
If you obey: and, if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obeyed.

Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but* — —

Mem. In Venice “*but*”’s a traitor.
But me no “*buts*” unless you would pass o’er
The Bridge which few repass.

Sen. I am silent.

Mem. Why

Thus hesitate? “The Ten” have called in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the Senate — you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honoured by the choice or chance which leads us 80
To mingle with a body so august.

Sen. Most true. I say no more.

Mem. As we hope, Signor,
And all may honestly, (that is, all those
Of noble blood may,) one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the Senate’s[br]
Chosen delegates, a school of wisdom, to
Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

Sen. Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.

Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth 90
Something, at least to you or me.

Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.

Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying “the Ten’s” summons.

Sen. All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far — let’s in.

Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils — we will not be least so.[*Exeunt.*
Enter the , , and .

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must and will depart,
Yet — yet — I pray you to obtain for me 100
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time, as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annexed they please,
But let me still return.

Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our Country's will: 'tis not
For us to look beyond.

Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so 110
Now you are last; but did the State demand
The exile of the disinterréd ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round
To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.

Mar. My husband! let us on: this but prolongs
Our sorrow.

Jac. Fos. But we are not summoned yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurled: — who knows?
The wind may change.

Mar. And if it do, it will not 120
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the galley's oars
Will quickly clear the harbour.

Jac. Fos. O, ye Elements!
Where are your storms?

Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the Tempest! 130
Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
The land I love, and never shall see more!

Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside you?

Jac. Fos. No —
No — not for thee, too good, too kind! May'st thou
Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of Heaven howl down the Gulf, 140
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appalled, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them, as an offering
To appease the waves. The billow which destroys me
Will be more merciful than man, and bear me
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave,
From fishers' hands, upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er received
One lacerated like the heart which then 150
Will be. — But wherefore breaks it not? why live I?

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why
What is this to the things thou hast borne in silence —

Imprisonment and actual torture?

Jac. Fos. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

Doge. Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.

Jac. Fos. Forgive — —

Doge. What?

Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my birth, ¹⁶⁰
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestowed upon me as my sire.

Mar. What hast thou done?

Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chastened and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!

Mar. Fear not: *that's* reserved ¹⁷⁰
For your oppressors.

Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.

Mar. Hope not?

Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.

Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A thousandfold
May the worm which never dieth feed upon them!

Jac. Fos. They may repent.

Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.
Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore — the wind
Is rising — we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once more, father,
Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own trembles! 180

Joe. Fos. No — you mistake; 'tis yours that shakes, my father.
Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fos. No — nothing.
[*To the Officer.*
Lend me your arm, good Signor.

Offi. You turn pale —
Let me support you — paler — ho! some aid there!
Some water!

Mar. Ah, he is dying!

Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready —
My eyes swim strangely — where's the door?

Mar. Away!
Let me support him — my best love! Oh, God!
How faintly beats this heart — this pulse!

Jac. Fos. The light!
Is it the light? — I am faint.
[*Officer presents him with water.*

Offi. He will be better,
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father — wife — 190
Your hands!

Mar. There's death in that damp, clammy grasp.
Oh, God! — My Foscari, how fare you?

Jac. Fos. Well! [*He dies.*

Offi. He's gone!

Doge. He's free.

Mar. No — no, he is not dead;
There must be life yet in that heart — he could not[bs]
Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter!

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now — thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!

Offi. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains 200
To those who know to honour them.

Offi. I must
Inform the Signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the Signory from *me*, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject —
Now he is *mine* — my broken-hearted boy! [*Exit Officer.*

Mar. And I must live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

Mar. My children! true — they live, and I must live
To bring them up to serve the State, and die
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings 210
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What!

You feel it then at last — *you!* — Where is now
The Stoic of the State?

Doge (throwing himself down by the body). Here!

Mar. Aye, weep on!

I thought you had no tears — you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more — never, never more.

Enter and .

Lor. What's here?

Mar. Ah! the Devil come to insult the dead! Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground.

A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it 220
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But passed here merely on our path from council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

*Mar. (pointing to the Doge, who is still on the ground
by his son's body)* He's busy, look,

About the business *you* provided for him.
Are ye content?

Bar. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.
Doge (rising). Sirs, I am ready.

Bar. No — not now.

Lor. Yet 'twas important.

Doge. If 'twas so, I can
Only repeat — I am ready.

Bar. It shall not be ²³⁰
Just now, though Venice tottered o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you bring
Are evil, you may say them; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there;
If they be good, say on; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.

Bar. I would they could!

Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.

Mar. Ah! I thought it would be so.

Doge. What mean you?

Mar. Lo! there is the blood beginning ²⁴⁰
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari —
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.

[*To* .

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How Death itself bears witness to thy deeds!

Doge. My child! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. [*To his attendants*] Signors, if it please you,
Within an hour I'll hear you.
[*Exeunt* , , and attendants with the body.
Manent and .

Bar. He must not
Be troubled now.

Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.

Bar. These are words;
But Grief is lonely, and the breaking in 250
Upon it barbarous.

Lor. Sorrow preys upon
Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world,
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.

Bar. And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?

Lor. The thing's decreed. The Giunta and "the Ten"
Have made it law — who shall oppose that law?

Bar. Humanity!

Lor. Because his son is dead?

Bar. And yet unburied.

Lor. Had we known this when 260

The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not — once passed.

Bar. I'll not consent.

Lor. You have consented to
All that's essential — leave the rest to me.

Bar. Why press his abdication now?

Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the State
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

Bar. You have a son.

Lor. I *have* — and *had* a father. 270

Bar. Still so inexorable?

Lor. Still.

Bar. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.

Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle — I consent. Men may,
Even agéd men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal; he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies. 280
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.

His sons — and he had four — are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.

Bar. And art thou sure
He dealt in such?

Lor. Most sure.

Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.

Lor. And so he seemed not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.

Bar. The attainted
And foreign traitor?

Lor. Even so: when *he*,
After the very night in which “the Ten” ²⁹⁰
(Joined with the Doge) decided his destruction,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
“The good day or good night?” his Doge-ship answered,
“That he in truth had passed a night of vigil,
In which” (he added with a gracious smile)
“There often has been question about you.”
‘Twas true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doomed, smiled on him ³⁰⁰
With deadly cozenage, eight long months beforehand —
Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his brethren —
I never *smiled* on *them*.

Bar. Was Carmagnuola
Your friend?

Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.

In early life its foe, but in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.

Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He
Whom we now act against not only saved 310
Our own, but added others to her sway.

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave a crown
To him who took a city: and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroyed by him, or *through* him, the account
Were fearfully against him, although narrowed
To private havoc, such as between him 320
And my dead father.

Bar. Are you then thus fixed?

Lor. Why, what should change me?

Bar. That which changes me.
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplished, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depressed,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep?

Lor. More soundly.

Bar. That's an error, and you'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.

Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will 330
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing towards

The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.
Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?

Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Bar. Their ³⁴⁰
Vault has been often opened of late years.

Lor. 'Twill be full soon, and may be closed for ever!

Offi. May I pass on?

Lor. You may.

Bar. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?

Offi. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining
Apartment, mutter forth the words — "My son!"
Scarce audibly. I must proceed.[*Exit Officer.*

Bar. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.

Lor. Right! ³⁵⁰
We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey

The Council's resolution.

Bar. I protest
Against it at this moment.

Lor. As you please —
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.
[*Exeunt and* .

ACT V

I. — *The Apartment.*
The and Attendants.

Att. My Lord, the deputation is in waiting;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are like. Let them approach.
[*Exit Attendant.*

An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.
*Doge*What command?

Offi. A melancholy one — to call the attendance
Of — —

Doge. True — true — true: I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old — old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin 10
To overtake me.

Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory and the Chief of the Ten.
Noble men, your pleasure!
Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole
With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more — no more of that.
Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do
Accept it as 'tis given — proceed.
Chief of the Ten. "The Ten,"
With a selected giunta from the Senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the Republic, and the o'erwhelming cares 20

Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your Country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this),
The resignation of the ducal ring,
Which you have worn so long and venerably:
And to prove that they are not ungrateful, nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden 30
Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a Sovereign's retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly?
Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?

Doge. No. — Have you done?
Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.
Chief of the Ten. We
Will now retire.

Doge. Stay! four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.
Chief of the Ten. Speak!

Doge. When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me: 40
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more
Renew this instance. I have sworn to die
In full exertion of the functions, which
My Country called me here to exercise,
According to my honour and my conscience —
I cannot break *my* oath.
Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not
To the alternative of a decree,

Instead of your compliance.

Doge. Providence

Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me; 50
But ye have no right to reproach my length
Of days, since every hour has been the Country's.
I am ready to lay down my life for her,
As I have laid down dearer things than life:
But for my dignity — I hold it of
The *whole* Republic: when the *general* will
Is manifest, then you shall all be answered.
Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot
Avail you aught.

Doge. I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance; no, not a moment. 60
What you decree — decree.
Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us?

Doge. You have heard me.
Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire.
[*Exeunt the Deputation, etc.*]
Enter an Attendant.

Att. My Lord,
The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

Doge. My time is hers.
Enter .

Mar. My Lord, if I intrude —
Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone!
Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will, and for the sake of those who are,

Endeavour — — Oh, my husband!

Doge. Give it way: 70
I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived,
So formed for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a Prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly. 80
The Country and the People whom he loved,
The Prince of whom he was the elder born,
And — —

Doge. Soon may be a Prince no longer.

Mar. How?

Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws!

Mar. Oh, the tyrants!
In such an hour too!

Doge. 'Tis the fittest time;
An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And
Will you not now resent it? — Oh, for vengeance!
But he, who, had he been enough protected, 90

Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so
Against his Country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that — —

Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him* — how I loved him!
I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is gone,
And I, who would have given my blood for him, ¹⁰⁰
Have nought to give but tears! But could I compass
The retribution of his wrongs! — Well, well!
I have sons, who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him
Bowed down by such oppression; yes, I thought
That I would rather look upon his corse
Than his prolonged captivity: — I am punished
For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he — —

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier, ¹¹⁰

Doge. And he is in his shroud!

Mar. Come, come, old man!

[*Exeunt the and .*

Enter and .

Bar. (to an Attendant). Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence,
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Bar. Let us return, then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Bar. And will they press their answer on the Doge?

Lor. 'Twas his own wish that all should be done promptly. 120
He answered quickly, and must so be answered;
His dignity is looked to, his estate
Cared for — what would he more?

Bar. Die in his robes:
He could not have lived long; but I have done
My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither?

Lor. 'Twas fit that some one of such different thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
Should whisper that a harsh majority 130
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

Bar. And not less, I must needs think, for the sake
Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating*;

‘Tis thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you
I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in 140
Your Giunta’s duties.

Lor. How! — *my* Giunta!

Bar. *Yours!*

They speak your language, watch your nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they not *yours*?

Lor. You talk unwarily. ‘Twere best they hear not
This from you.

Bar. Oh! they’ll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine; they have gone beyond
Even their exorbitance of power: and when
This happens in the most contemned and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.

Lor. You talk but idly.

Bar. That remains for proof. 150

Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence?

Att. He shall be informed.

[*Exit Attendant.*

Bar. The Duke is with his son.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so,

We will remit him till the rites are over.

Let us return. ‘Tis time enough to-morrow.

Lor. (*aside to Bar.*) Now the rich man’s hell-fire upon your tongue,
Unquenched, unquenchable! I’ll have it torn

From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this! Sage Signors,
I pray ye be not hasty.*[Aloud to the others.*

Bar. But be human! 160

Lor. See, the Duke comes!
Enter the .

Doge. I have obeyed your summons.
Chief of the Ten. We come once more to urge our past request.

Doge. And I to answer.
Chief of the Ten. What?

Doge. My only answer.
You have heard it.
Chief of the Ten. Hear you then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!

Doge. To the point —
To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts. — Go on!
Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge; you are released
From your imperial oath as Sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for 170
Your services, the State allots the appanage
Already mentioned in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.

Doge. That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.
Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!

Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari!

Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old age

Was prejudicial to the State, the Chief
Of the Republic never would have shown 180
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his Country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that Country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being rendered, I obey.[bt]
Chief of the Ten. If you would have the three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

Doge. Not eight hours, Signor,
Not even eight minutes — there's the ducal ring, 190
[*Taking off his ring and cap*.
And there the ducal diadem! And so
The Adriatic's free to wed another.
Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.

Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
A face I know not. — Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

Mem. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo.

Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend. — But *sons* and *fathers*! —
What, ho! my servants there!

Atten. My Prince!

Doge. No Prince — 200
There are the princes of the Prince!
[*Pointing to the Ten's Deputation*
— Prepare
To part from hence upon the instant.

Chief of the Ten. Why
So rashly? 'twill give scandal.

Doge. (To the Ten). Answer that;
It is your province.
[*To the Servants.*

— Sirs, bestir yourselves:
There is one burthen which I beg you bear
With care, although 'tis past all farther harm —
But I will look to that myself.

Bar. He means
The body of his son.

Doge. And call Marina,
My daughter!
Enter .

Doge. Get thee ready, we must mourn
Elsewhere.

Mar. And everywhere.

Doge. True; but in freedom, 210
Without these jealous spies upon the great.
Signers, you may depart: what would you more?
We are going; do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes. 220
Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good Signers!
May the next Duke be better than the present!

Lor. The *present* Duke is Paschal Malipiero.

Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.

Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.

Doge. Earth and Heaven!
Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
Live to hear this! — the first Doge who e'er heard 230
Such sound for his successor: happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero —
This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor. What!
Do you regret a traitor?

Doge. No — I merely
Envy the dead.
Chief of the Ten. My Lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the State's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you towards
The landing-place of the canal.

Doge. No. I
Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted 240
To sovereignty — the Giants' Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested Duke.
My services have called me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Installed, and traversed these same halls, from which
I never thought to be divorced except
A corse — a corse, it might be, fighting for them —
But not pushed hence by fellow-citizens.
But come; my son and I will go together — 250
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.
Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?

Doge. I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?

Mar. Here's my arm!

Doge. And here my *staff*: thus propped will I go forth.
Chief of the Ten. It must not be — the people will perceive it.

Doge. The people, — There's no people, you well know it,
Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor curse you, 260
Save with their hearts and eyes.

Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion,
Else — —

Doge. You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows, that I approach
A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!

Bar. You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect, 270
The *Doge* unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?
Different voices. Aye! — Aye!

Doge. You shall not
Stir — in my train, at least. I entered here
As Sovereign — I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.

Pomp is for Princes — I am none! — That's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates. — Ah!

Lor. Hark! 280

[*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*

Bar. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognise

The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I *was not young*.

Bar. Sit down, my Lord!

You tremble.

Doge. 'Tis the knell of my poor boy!

My heart aches bitterly.

Bar. I pray you sit.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne till now.

Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily.

Doge. (*walks a few steps, then stops*).

I feel athirst — will no one bring me here 290

A cup of water?

Bar. I — —

Mar. And I — —

Lor. And I — —

[*The Doge takes a goblet from the hand of .*

Doge. I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.[*bu*]

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'Tis said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and 300
Had better now be seated, nor as yet

Depart. Ah! now you look as looked my husband!

Bar. He sinks! — support him! — quick — a chair — support him!

Doge. The bell tolls on! — let's hence — my brain's on fire!

Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!

Doge. No!
A Sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!
Off with your arms! — *That bell!*
[*The drops down and dies.*]

Mar. My God! My God!

Bar. (to Lor.). Behold! your work's completed!
Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!

Att. 'Tis all over.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his obsequies 310
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?

Bar. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where[bv]
He reigned: then let his funeral rites be princely.
Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?
All, except Lor., answer, Yes.
Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be with him!

Mar. Signers, your pardon: this is mockery. 320
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your Empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory),
You banished from his palace and tore down
From his high place, with such relentless coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, Signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled. 330
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.
Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt) consigned to powers which may
Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly shortened:
It is my last of duties, and may prove 340

A dreary comfort in my desolation.[bw]
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.
Chief of the Ten. Do you
Pretend still to this office?

Mar. I do, Signor.
Though his possessions have been all consumed
In the State's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of — — [*She stops with agitation.*]
Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.

Mar. Aye, they are fatherless, I thank you.
Chief of the Ten. We
Cannot comply with your request. His relics 350
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and followed
Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.

Mar. I have heard of murderers, who have interred
Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
O'er those they slew. I've heard of widows' tears —
Alas! I have shed some — always thanks to you!
I've heard of *heirs* in sables — you have left none
To the deceased, so you would act the part 360
Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day,
I trust, Heaven's will be done too![bx]
Chief of the Ten. Know you, Lady,
To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?

Mar. I know the former better than yourselves;
The latter — like yourselves; and can face both.
Wish you more funerals?

Bar. Heed not her rash words;
Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.

Bar. (turning to Lor., who is writing upon his tablets).

What art thou writing,

With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?

Lor. (pointing to the Doge's body). That *he* has paid me!

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you? ³⁷⁰

Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and *mine*.

[*Curtain falls*

CAIN: A MYSTERY

“Now the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

Genesis,

Chapter 3rd, verse 1.

INTRODUCTION

Cain was begun at Ravenna, July 16, and finished September 9, 1821 (vide MS. M.). Six months before, when he was at work on the first act of *Sardanapalus*, Byron had “pondered” Cain, but it was not till *Sardanapalus* and a second historical play, *The Two Foscari*, had been written, copied out, and sent to England, that he indulged his genius with a third drama — on “a metaphysical subject, something in the style of *Manfred*” (Letters, 1901, v. 189).

Goethe’s comment on reading and reviewing Cain was that he should be surprised if Byron did not pursue the treatment of such “biblical subjects,” as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Conversations, etc., 1879, p. 62); and, many years after, he told Crabb Robinson (Diary, 1869, ii. 435) that Byron should have lived “to execute his vocation ... to dramatize the Old Testament.” He was better equipped for such a task than might have been imagined. A Scottish schoolboy, “from a child he had known the Scriptures,” and, as his *Hebrew Melodies* testify, he was not unwilling to turn to the Bible as a source of poetic inspiration. Moreover, he was born with the religious temperament. Questions “of Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,” exercised his curiosity because they appealed to his imagination and moved his spirit. He was eager to plunge into controversy with friends and advisers who challenged or rebuked him, Hodgson, for instance, or Dallas; and he responded with remarkable amenity to the strictures and exhortations of such orthodox professors as Mr. Sheppard and Dr. Kennedy. He was, no doubt, from first to last a heretic, impatient, not to say contemptuous, of authority, but he was by no means indifferent to religion altogether. To “argue about it and about” was a necessity, if not an agreeable relief, to his intellectual energies. It would appear from the Ravenna diary (January 28, 1821, Letters, 1901, v. 190,191), that the conception of Lucifer was working in his brain before the “tragedy of Cain” was actually begun. He had been recording a “thought” which had come to him, that “at the very height of human desire and pleasure, a certain sense of doubt and sorrow” — an amari aliquid which links the future to the past, and so blots out the present — “mingles with our bliss,” making it of none effect, and, by way of moral or corollary to his soliloquy, he adds three lines of verse headed, “Thought for a speech of Lucifer in the Tragedy of Cain” —

“Were Death an Evil, would I let thee live?

Fool! live as I live — as thy father lives,

And thy son’s sons shall live for evermore.”

In these three lines, which were not inserted in the play, and in the preceding

“thought,” we have the key-note to Cain. “Man walketh in a vain shadow” — a shadow which he can never overtake, the shadow of an eternally postponed fruition. With a being capable of infinite satisfaction, he is doomed to realize failure in attainment. In all that is best and most enjoyable, “the rapturous moment and the placid hour,” there is a foretaste of “Death the Unknown”! The tragedy of Manfred lies in remorse for the inevitable past; the tragedy of Cain, in revolt against the limitations of the inexorable present.

The investigation of the “sources” of Cain does not lead to any very definite conclusion (see Lord Byron’s *Cain und Seine Quellen*, von Alfred Schaffner, 1880). He was pleased to call his play “a Mystery,” and, in his Preface (vide post,), Byron alludes to the Old Mysteries as “those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish.” The first reprint of the Chester Plays was published by the Roxburghe Club in 1818, but Byron’s knowledge of Mystery Plays was probably derived from Dodsley’s *Plays* (ed. 1780, l., xxxiii.-xlii.), or from John Stevens’s *Continuation of Dugdale’s Monasticon* (vide post,), or possibly, as Herr Schaffner suggests, from Warton’s *History of English Poetry*, ed. 1871, ii. 222-230. He may, too, have witnessed some belated *Rappresentazione* of the Creation and Fall at Ravenna, or in one of the remoter towns or villages of Italy. There is a superficial resemblance between the treatment of the actual encounter of Cain and Abel, and the conventional rendering of the same incident in the *Ludus Coventriæ*, and in the *Mistère du Viel Testament*; but it is unlikely that he had closely studied any one Mystery Play at first hand. On the other hand, his recollections of Gessner’s *Death of Abel* which “he had never read since he was eight years old,” were clearer than he imagined. Not only in such minor matters as the destruction of Cain’s altar by a whirlwind, and the substitution of the Angel of the Lord for the Deus of the Mysteries, but in the Teutonic domesticities of Cain and Adah, and the evangelical piety of Adam and Abel, there is a reflection, if not an imitation, of the German idyll (see Gessner’s *Death of Abel*, ed. 1797, pp. 80, 102).

Of his indebtedness to Milton he makes no formal acknowledgment, but he was not ashamed to shelter himself behind Milton’s shield when he was attacked on the score of blasphemy and profanity. “If Cain be blasphemous, *Paradise Lost* is blasphemous” (letter to Murray, Pisa, February 8, 1822), was, he would fain believe, a conclusive answer to his accusers. But apart from verbal parallels or coincidences, there is a genuine affinity between Byron’s Lucifer and Milton’s Satan. Lucifer, like Satan, is “not less than Archangel ruined,” a repulsed but “unvanquished Titan,” marred by a demonic sorrow, a confessor though a rival of Omnipotence. He is a majestic and, as a rule, a serious and solemn spirit, who compels the admiration and possibly the sympathy of the reader. There is,

however, another strain in his ghostly attributes, which betrays a more recent consanguinity: now and again he gives token that he is of the lineage of Mephistopheles. He is sometimes, though rarely, a mocking as well as a rebellious spirit, and occasionally indulges in a grim persiflage beneath the dignity if not the capacity of Satan. It is needless to add that Lucifer has a most lifelike personality of his own. The conception of the spirit of evil justifying an eternal antagonism to the Creator from the standpoint of a superior morality, may, perhaps, be traced to a Manichean source, but it has been touched with a new emotion. Milton's devil is an abstraction of infernal pride —

“Sole Positive of Night!

Antipathist of Light!

Fate's only essence! primal scorpion rod —

The one permitted opposite of God!”

Goethe's devil is an abstraction of scorn. He “maketh a mock” alike of good and evil! But Byron's devil is a spirit, yet a mortal too — the traducer, because he has suffered for his sins; the deceiver, because he is self-deceived; the hoper against hope that there is a ransom for the soul in perfect self-will and not in perfect self-sacrifice. Byron did not uphold Lucifer, but he “had passed that way,” and could imagine a spiritual warfare not only against the Deus of the Mysteries or of the Book of Genesis, but against what he believed and acknowledged to be the Author and Principle of good.

Autres temps, autres mœurs! It is all but impossible for the modern reader to appreciate the audacity of Cain, or to realize the alarm and indignation which it aroused by its appearance. Byron knew that he was raising a tempest, and pleads, in his Preface, “that with regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman,” and again and again he assures his correspondents (e.g. to Murray, November 23, 1821, “Cain is nothing more than a drama;” to Moore, March 4, 1822, “With respect to Religion, can I never convince you that I have no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened everybody?” Letters, 1901, v. 469; vi. 30) that it is Lucifer and not Byron who puts such awkward questions with regard to the “politics of paradise” and the origin of evil. Nobody seems to have believed him. It was taken for granted that Lucifer was the mouthpiece of Byron, that the author of Don Juan was not “on the side of the angels.”

Little need be said of the “literature,” the pamphlets and poems which were evoked by the publication of Cain: A Mystery. One of the most prominent assailants (said to be the Rev. H. J. Todd (1763-1845), Archdeacon of Cleveland, 1832, author inter alia of Original Sin, Free Will, etc., 1818) issued A Remonstrance to Mr. John Murray, respecting a Recent Publication, 1822,

signed "Oxoniensis." The sting of the Remonstrance lay in the exposure of the fact that Byron was indebted to Bayle's Dictionary for his rabbinical legends, and that he had derived from the same source his Manichean doctrines of the Two Principles, etc., and other "often-refuted sophisms" with regard to the origin of evil. Byron does not borrow more than a poet and a gentleman is at liberty to acquire by way of raw material, but it cannot be denied that he had read and inwardly digested more than one of Bayle's "most objectionable articles" (e.g. "Adam," "Eve," "Abel," "Manichees," "Paulicians," etc.). The Remonstrance was answered in *A Letter to Sir Walter Scott, etc.*, by "Harroviensis." Byron welcomed such a "Defender of the Faith," and was anxious that Murray should print the letter together with the poem. But Murray belittled the "defender," and was upbraided in turn for his slowness of heart (letter to Murray, June 6, 1822, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 76).

Fresh combatants rushed into the fray: "Philo-Milton," with a Vindication of the "Paradise Lost" from the charge of exculpating "Cain: A Mystery," London, 1822; "Britannicus," with a pamphlet entitled, *Revolutionary Causes, etc.*, and A Postscript containing Strictures on "Cain," etc., London, 1822, etc.; but their works, which hardly deserve to be catalogued, have perished with them. Finally, in 1830, a barrister named Harding Grant, author of *Chancery Practice*, compiled a work (Lord Byron's "Cain," etc., with Notes) of more than four hundred pages, in which he treats "the proceedings and speeches of Lucifer with the same earnestness as if they were existing and earthly personages." But it was "a week too late." The "Coryphæus of the Satanic School" had passed away, and the tumult had "dwindled to a calm."

Cain "appeared in conjunction with" *Sardanapalus* and *The Two Foscari*, December 19, 1821. Last but not least of the three plays, it had been announced "by a separate advertisement (*Morning Chronicle*, November 24, 1821), for the purpose of exciting the greater curiosity" (*Memoirs of the Life, etc.* [by John Watkins], 1822, p. 383), and it was no sooner published than it was pirated. In the following January, "Cain: A Mystery, by the author of *Don Juan*," was issued by W. Benbow, at Castle Street, Leicester Square (the notorious "Byron Head," which Southey described as "one of those preparatory schools for the brothel and the gallows, where obscenity, sedition, and blasphemy are retailed in drams for the vulgar"!).

Murray had paid Byron £2710 for the three tragedies, and in order to protect the copyright, he applied, through counsel (Lancelot Shadwell, afterwards Vice-Chancellor), for an injunction in Chancery to stop the sale of piratical editions of Cain. In delivering judgment (February 12, 1822), the Chancellor, Lord Eldon (see *Courier*, Wednesday, February 13), replying to Shadwell, drew a

comparison between Cain and *Paradise Lost*, “which he had read from beginning to end during the course of the last Long Vacation — *solicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ*.” No one, he argued, could deny that the object and effects of *Paradise Lost* were “not to bring into disrepute,” but “to promote reverence for our religion,” and, *per contra*, no one could affirm that it was impossible to arrive at an opposite conclusion with regard to “the Preface, the poem, the general tone and manner of Cain.” It was a question for a jury. A jury might decide that Cain was blasphemous, and void of copyright; and as there was a reasonable doubt in his mind as to the character of the book, and a doubt as to the conclusion at which a jury would arrive, he was compelled to refuse the injunction. According to Dr. Smiles (*Memoir of John Murray*, 1891, i. 428), the decision of a jury was taken, and an injunction eventually granted. If so, it was ineffectual, for Benbow issued another edition of Cain in 1824 (see Jacob’s Reports, p. 474, note). See, too, the case of *Murray v. Benbow and Another*, as reported in the *Examiner*, February 17, 1822; and cases of *Wolcot v. Walker*, *Southey v. Sherwood*, *Murray v. Benbow*, and *Lawrence v. Smith* [*Quarterly Review*, April, 1822, vol. xxvii. pp. 120-138].

“Cain,” said Moore (February 9, 1822), “has made a sensation.” Friends and champions, the press, the public “turned up their thumbs.” Gifford shook his head; Hobhouse “launched out into a most violent invective” (letter to Murray, November 24, 1821); Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh*, was regretful and hortatory; Heber, in the *Quarterly*, was fault-finding and contemptuous. The “parsons preached at it from Kentish Town to Pisa” (letter to Moore, February 20, 1822). Even “the very highest authority in the land,” his Majesty King George IV., “expressed his disapprobation of the blasphemy and licentiousness of Lord Byron’s writings” (*Examiner*, February 17, 1822). Byron himself was forced to admit that “my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain” (*Don Juan*, Canto XI. stanza lvi. line 2). The many were unanimous in their verdict, but the higher court of the few reversed the judgment.

Goethe said that “Its beauty is such as we shall not see a second time in the world” (*Conversations, etc.*, 1874, p. 261); Scott, in speaking of “the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain,” said that the author had “matched Milton on his own ground” (letter to Murray, December 4, 1821, *vide post*, p. 206); “Cain,” wrote Shelley to Gisborne (April 10, 1822), “is apocalyptic; it is a revelation never before communicated to man.”

Uncritical praise, as well as uncritical censure, belongs to the past; but the play remains, a singular exercise of “poetic energy,” a confession, *ex animo*, of “the burthen of the mystery, ... the heavy and the weary weight Of all this unintelligible world.”

For reviews of *Cain: A Mystery*, vide ante, "Introduction to Sardanapalus," ; see, too, *Eclectic Review*, May, 1822, N.S. vol. xvii. pp. 418-427; *Examiner*, June 2, 1822; *British Review*, 1822, vol. xix. pp. 94-102.

For O'Doherty's parody of the "Pisa" Letter, February 8, 1822, see *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, February, 1822, vol. xi. pp. 215-217; and for a review of Harding Grant's *Lord Byron's Cain*, etc., see *Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1831, iii. 285-304.

TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN
IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND
AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

The following scenes are entitled "A Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries, or Moralities." The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual Scripture, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;" and that only because he was "the most subtil of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!" — holding up the Scripture. It is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the New Testament, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza; in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis. They were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little. [I am prepared to be accused of Manicheism, or some other hard name ending in ism, which makes a formidable figure and awful sound in the eyes and ears of those who would be as much puzzled to explain the terms so bandied about, as the liberal and pious indulgers in such epithets. Against such I can defend myself, or, if necessary, I can attack in turn. "Claw for claw, as Conan said to Satan and the deevil take the shortest nails" (Waverley).]

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's "Divine Legation;" whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet

been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to anything of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note. — The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc., etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a “tramelogedia” of Alfieri, called “Abele.” I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his Life.

Ravenna, Sept. 20, 1821.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Adam.

Cain.

Abel.

SPIRITS.

Angel of the Lord.

Lucifer.

WOMEN.

Eve.

Adah.

Zillah.

CAIN: A MYSTERY

ACT I

Scene I. — The Land without Paradise. — Time, Sunrise.

Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Adah, Zillah, offering a Sacrifice.

Adam. God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise! —
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word — All Hail!
Jehovah! with returning light — All Hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never —
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament — All Hail!

Abel. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth, ocean, air and fire — and with the day ¹⁰
And night, and worlds which these illuminate,
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee — All Hail! All Hail!

Adah. God! the Eternal parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be belovéd, more than all, save thee —
Let me love thee and them: — All Hail! All Hail!

Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise, ³³⁰
Keep us from further evil: — Hail! All Hail!

Adam. Son Cain! my first-born — wherefore art thou silent?

Cain. Why should I speak?

Adam. To pray.

Cain. Have ye not prayed?

Adam. We have, most fervently.

Cain. And loudly: I
Have heard you.

Adam. So will God, I trust.

Abel. Amen!

Adam. But thou my eldest born? art silent still?

Cain. 'Tis better I should be so.

Adam. Wherefore so?

Cain. I have nought to ask.

Adam. Nor aught to thank for?

Cain. No.

Adam. Dost thou not live?

Cain. Must I not die?

Eve. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins ³⁰
To fall.

Adam. And we must gather it again.
Oh God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?

Cain. And wherefore plucked ye not the tree of life?
Ye might have then defied him.

Adam. Oh! my son,
Blaspheme not: these are Serpent's words.

Cain. Why not?

The snake spoke truth; it was the Tree of Knowledge;
It was the Tree of Life: knowledge is good,
And Life is good; and how can both be evil?

Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke in sin,
Before thy birth: let me not see renewed ⁴⁰
My misery in thine. I have repented.
Let me not see my offspring fall into
The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,
Which even in Paradise destroyed his parents.
Content thee with what is. Had we been so,
Thou now hadst been contented. — Oh, my son!

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,
Each to his task of toil — not heavy, though
Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly
Her fruits with little labour.

Eve. Cain — my son — ⁵⁰
Behold thy father cheerful and resigned —
And do as he doth.[Exeunt Adam and Eve.

Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,
Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
The Eternal anger?

Adah. My beloved Cain
Wilt thou frown even on me?

Cain. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.
Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass;
Precede me, brother — I will follow shortly.
And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind; ⁶⁰
Your gentleness must not be harshly met:
I'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother!

[Exeunt Abel, Zillah, and Adah.]

Cain (solus). And this is
Life? — Toil! and wherefore should I toil? — because
My father could not keep his place in Eden?
What had I done in this? — I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the Serpent and the woman? or ⁷⁰
Yielding — why suffer? What was there in this?
The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, “‘Twas his will,
And he is good.” How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
I judge but by the fruits — and they are bitter —
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here? — A shape like to the angels ⁸⁰
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In Twilight’s hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o’er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The Cherubim-defended battlements? ⁹⁰
If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet — he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality. And is it

So? and can aught grieve save Humanity?
He cometh.
Enter Lucifer.

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain. Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts ¹⁰⁰
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!
You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought; — 'tis your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?
This has not been revealed: the Tree of Life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of Knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was plucked too soon; and all the fruit is Death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.

Cain. I live,
But live to die; and, living, see no thing ¹¹⁰
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome —
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer. Thou livest — and must live for ever. Think not

The Earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence — it will cease — and thou wilt be —
No less than thou art now.

Cain. No less! and why
No more?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we. 120

Cain. And ye?

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. We are mighty.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. No: art thou?

Cain. How should I be so? Look on me!

Lucifer. Poor clay!
And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

Cain. I am: — and thou, with all thy might, what art thou?

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain. Ah!
Thou look'st almost a god; and — —

Lucifer. I am none:
And having failed to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquered; let him reign! 130

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. Thy Sire's maker — and the Earth's.

Cain. And Heaven's,
And all that in them is. So I have heard
His Seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say — what they must sing and say, on pain
Of being that which I am, — and thou art —
Of spirits and of men.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality —
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good! If he has made, ¹⁴⁰
As he saith — which I know not, nor believe —
But, if he made us — he cannot unmake:
We are immortal! — nay, he'd have us so,
That he may torture: — let him! He is great —
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne —
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence ¹⁵⁰
And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, Indissoluble Tyrant;
Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on!
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and Men, at least we sympathise —
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all ¹⁶⁰
With all! But He! so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create — perhaps he'll make

One day a Son unto himself — as he
Gave you a father — and if he so doth,
Mark me! that Son will be a sacrifice!

Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which long have swum
In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me ¹⁷⁰
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded Cherubim,
Which shut them out — and me: I feel the weight
Of daily toil, and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things — but I thought alone
This misery was mine. My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind ¹⁸⁰
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse; my brother is
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my Adah — my
Own and beloved — she, too, understands not
The mind which overwhelms me: never till
Now met I aught to sympathise with me. ¹⁹⁰
'Tis well — I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul
For such companionship, I would not now
Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.

Cain. Ah! didst thou tempt my mother?

Lucifer. I tempt none,
Save with the truth: was not the Tree, the Tree

Of Knowledge? and was not the Tree of Life
Still fruitful? Did I bid her pluck them not?
Did I plant things prohibited within ²⁰⁰
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have made ye
Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
Because “ye should not eat the fruits of life,
And become gods as we.” Were those his words?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from those who heard them,
In thunder.

Lucifer. Then who was the Demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would
Have made ye live for ever, in the joy
And power of Knowledge?

Cain. Would they had snatched both ²¹⁰
The fruits, or neither!

Lucifer. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

Cain. How so?

Lucifer. By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things — ‘tis made
To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer. I?
Poor clay — what should I tempt them for, or how?

Cain. They say the Serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer. Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high:

The proud One will not so far falsify, ²²⁰
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake was the snake —
No more; and yet not less than those he tempted,
In nature being earth also — more in wisdom,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain. But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forked tongue. ²³⁰
I tell thee that the Serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent: ask the Cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have rolled o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him, who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy ²⁴⁰
Fond parents listened to a creeping thing,
And fell. For what should spirits tempt them? What
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
Space — — but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not,
With all thy Tree of Knowledge.

Cain. But thou canst not
Speak aught of Knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.

Lucifer. And heart to look on?

Cain. Be it proved.

Lucifer. Darest thou look on Death?

Cain. He has not yet ²⁵⁰
Been seen.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Cain. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he's named; and Abel lifts his eyes
To Heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.

Lucifer. And thou?

Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems, *Inevitable*. Could I wrestle with him?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy, ²⁶⁰
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape; but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

Cain. Ah!
I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. The Maker — Call him
Which name thou wilt: he makes but to destroy.

Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of Death: although I know not what it is —
Yet it seems horrible. I have looked out ²⁷⁰
In the vast desolate night in search of him;

And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequered
By the far-flashing of the Cherubs' swords,
I watched for what I thought his coming; for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 'twas which shook us all — but nothing came.
And then I turned my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure, ²⁸⁰
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?

Lucifer. Perhaps — but long outlive both thine and thee.

Cain. I'm glad of that: I would not have them die —
They are so lovely. What is Death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 'tis denounced against us,
Both them who sinned and sinned not, as an ill —
What ill?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

Cain. Were I quiet earth, ²⁹⁰
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's — for he wished to know!

Cain. But not to live — or wherefore plucked he not
The Life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hindered.

Cain. Deadly error!

Not to snatch first that fruit: — but ere he plucked
The knowledge, he was ignorant of Death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it — fear I know not what!

Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing; see 300
What is true knowledge.

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Aye, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.

Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me — thy Lord.

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer. No.

Cain. His equal?

Lucifer. No; — I have nought in common with him!
Nor would: I would be aught above — beneath —
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great: —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall — be thou amongst the first.

Cain. I never 310
As yet have bowed unto my father's God.
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice: —
Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bowed
To him?

Cain. Have I not said it? — need I say it?

Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bowed to me.

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'er the less,
Thou art my worshipper; not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that? 320

Lucifer. Thou'lt know here — and hereafter.

Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer. Follow
Where I will lead thee.

Cain. But I must retire
To till the earth — for I had promised — — *Lucifer.* What?

Cain. To cull some first-fruits.

Lucifer. Why?

Cain. To offer up
With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Said'st thou not
Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?

Cain. Yes —
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me;
The offering is more his than mine — and Adah — — *Lucifer.* Why dost
thou hesitate?

Cain. She is my sister, 330
Born on the same day, of the same womb; and

She wrung from me, with tears, this promise; and
Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
Bear all — and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me!

Cain. I will.
Enter Adah.

Adah. My brother, I have come for thee;
It is our hour of rest and joy — and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast laboured not
This morn; but I have done thy task: the fruits
Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens:
Come away.

Cain. Seest thou not?

Adah. I see an angel; ³⁴⁰
We have seen many: will he share our hour
Of rest? — he is welcome.

Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.

Adah. Are there, then, others?
But he is welcome, as they were: they deigned
To be our guests — will he?
Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou?

Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him.

Adah. And leave us?

Cain. Aye.

Adah. And me?

Cain. Belovéd Adah!

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer. No, she must not.

Adah. Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain. He is a God.

Adah. How know'st thou?

Cain. He speaks like
A God.

Adah. So did the Serpent, and it lied. 410

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah! — was not the Tree that
Of Knowledge?

Adah. Aye — to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge — so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 'twas with Truth;
And Truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gathered
Evil on ill; expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was — and hope of that 360
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this Spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me — I
Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy sire?

Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer. No, not yet;
It one day will be in your children.

Adah. What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God!
Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their father, ³⁷⁰
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other? and
In multiplying our being multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them? — And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you — whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in *Mortality*.

Adah. What is the sin which is not ³⁸⁰
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue? — if it doth, we are the slaves
Of — — *Lucifer.* Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence ³⁹⁰
Must be all goodness.

Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?

Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the Serpent, and as false.

Lucifer. As true.

Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?

Adah. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast plucked a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast passed
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits:
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden, ⁴⁰⁰
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God, and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts — as thou
Wert worked on by the snake, in thy most flushed
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.
I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him: in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which ⁴¹⁰
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart
Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws me near,
Nearer and nearer: — Cain — Cain — save me from him!

Cain. What dreads my Adah? This is no ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God — nor God's: I have beheld
The Cherubs and the Seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still —
The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah. Aye — but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery — no.

Adah. I have heard it said, ⁴²⁰
The Seraphs love most — Cherubim know most —
And this should be a Cherub — since he loves not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches love,
What must he be you cannot love when known?
Since the all-knowing Cherubim love least,
The Seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Choose betwixt Love and Knowledge — since there is
No other choice: your sire hath chosen already: ⁴³⁰
His worship is but fear.

Adah. Oh, Cain! choose Love.

Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose not — It was
Born with me — but I love nought else.

Adah. Our parents?

Cain. Did they love us when they snatched from the Tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

Adah. We were not born then — and if we had been,
Should we not love them — and our children, Cain?

Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget — — but it can never be forgotten ⁴⁴⁰
Through thrice a thousand generations! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sowed the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour! They plucked the tree of science
And sin — and, not content with their own sorrow,
Begot me — thee — and all the few that are,

And all the unnumbered and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages! — and I must be sire of such things! 450
Thy beauty and thy love — my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many years
Of sin and pain — or few, but still of sorrow,
Interchecked with an instant of brief pleasure,
To Death — the unknown! Methinks the Tree of Knowledge
Hath not fulfilled its promise: — if they sinned,
At least they ought to have known all things that are
Of knowledge — and the mystery of Death. 460
What do they know? — that they are miserable.
What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that?

Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
Wert happy — —

Cain. Be thou happy, then, alone —
I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.

Adah. Alone I could not,
Nor would be happy; but with those around us
I think I could be so, despite of Death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
It seems an awful shadow — if I may 470
Judge from what I have heard.

Lucifer. And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy?

Adah. Alone! Oh, my God!
Who could be happy and alone, or good?
To me my solitude seems sin; unless
When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
His brother, and our children, and our parents.

Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is he happy?
Lonely, and good?

Adah. He is not so; he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy. 480
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden;
Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
It is not tranquil.

Adah. Alas! no! and you —
Are you of Heaven?

Lucifer. If I am not, enquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. We must bear,
And some of us resist — and both in vain, 490
His Seraphs say: but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without: there is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for
Its beauty.

Lucifer. And why not adore?

Adah. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer. But the symbols
Of the Invisible are the loveliest 500
Of what is visible; and yon bright star

Is leader of the host of Heaven.

Adah. Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer. Hast thou seen him?

Adah. Yes — in his works.

Lucifer. But in his being?

Adah. No —
Save in my father, who is God's own image;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee —
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming: as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us; but thou seem'st ⁵¹⁰
Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumbered stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns;
So beautiful, unnumbered, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.
Thou seem'st unhappy: do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.

Lucifer. Alas! those tears!
Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed — — 520

Adah. By me?

Lucifer. By all.

Adah. What all?

Lucifer. The million millions —
The myriad myriads — the all-peopled earth —
The unpeopled earth — and the o'er-peopled Hell,

Of which thy bosom is the germ.

Adah. O Cain!

This spirit curseth us.

Cain. Let him say on;

Him will I follow.

Adah. Whither?

Lucifer. To a place

Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour;

But in that hour see things of many days.

Adah. How can that be?

Lucifer. Did not your Maker make

Out of old worlds this new one in few days? ⁵³⁰

And cannot I, who aided in this work,

Show in an hour what he hath made in many,

Or hath destroyed in few?

Cain. Lead on.

Adah. Will he,

In sooth, return within an hour?

Lucifer. He shall.

With us acts are exempt from time, and we

Can crowd eternity into an hour,

Or stretch an hour into eternity:

We breathe not by a mortal measurement —

But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.

Adah. Will he return?

Lucifer. Aye, woman! he alone ⁵⁴⁰

Of mortals from that place (the first and last

Who shall return, save One), shall come back to thee,

To make that silent and expectant world

As populous as this: at present there
Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I dwell? Where are
Thy God or Gods — there am I: all things are
Divided with me: Life and Death — and Time —
Eternity — and heaven and earth — and that
Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with ⁵⁵⁰
Those who once peopled or shall people both —
These are my realms! so that I do divide
His, and possess a kingdom which is not *His*. If I were not that which I have
said,
Could I stand here? His angels are within
Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair Serpent
Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard.
If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate
That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits
Which shall deprive thee of a single good ⁵⁶⁰
The Conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

Cain. Spirit, I have said it.
[Exeunt Lucifer and Cain.
Adah (follows exclaiming). Cain! my brother! Cain!

ACT II

Scene I. — The Abyss of Space.

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not — yet I fear
To sink.

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the Prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety?

Lucifer. Believe — and sink not! doubt — and perish! thus
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me Demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem 10
Evil or good what is proclaimed to them
In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of my dooming. There will come
An hour, when, tossed upon some water-drops,
A man shall say to a man, “Believe in me,
And walk the waters;” and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe. I will not say, 20
Believe in me, as a conditional creed
To save thee; but fly with me o’er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar’st not deny, — the history
Of past — and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh God! or Demon! or whate’er thou art,
Is yon our earth?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise

The dust which formed your father?

Cain. Can it be?

Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet purpler it still, ³⁰
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?
Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them?

Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from them, ⁴⁰
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own — inhabited
By greater things — and they themselves far more
In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living — and all doomed to death — and wretched,
What wouldst thou think?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were ⁵⁰
Linked to a servile mass of matter — and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chained down
To the most gross and petty paltry wants,

All foul and fulsome — and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoomed to be
As frail, and few so happy — — *Cain*. Spirit! I ⁶⁰
Know nought of Death, save as a dreadful thing
Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life — a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, Spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die —
Methinks is merely propagating Death, ⁷⁰
And multiplying murder.

Lucifer. Thou canst not
All die — there is what must survive.

Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be as I am?

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond my power, ⁸⁰
Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.

Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay?

Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality — and yet
Seem'st sorrowful?

Lucifer. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal?

Cain. Thou hast said, I must be ⁹⁰
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately — but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

Cain. How?

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal?

Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now, behold!
Is it not glorious?

Cain. Oh thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased ¹⁰⁰
And still-increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aërial universe of endless
Expansion — at which my soul aches to think —
Intoxicated with eternity?
Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are! ¹¹⁰

How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die,
(If that they die), or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour
Unworthy what I see, though my dust is;
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine earth!

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there! ¹²⁰

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. That! — yonder!

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?
Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling — what dost think of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both beautiful,
The little shining fire-fly in its flight, ¹³⁰
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?

Cain. How know I what
I dare behold? As yet, thou hast shown nought
I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me.
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal?

Cain. Why, what are things?

Lucifer. Both partly: but what doth
Sit next thy heart?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall — the mysteries of Death. 140

Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things which have died,
As I have shown thee much which cannot die?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty wings!

Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue! The stars fade from us!
The earth! where is my earth? Let me look on it,
For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'Tis now beyond thee,
Less, in the universe, than thou in it;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou
Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust:
'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine. 150

Cain. Where dost thou lead me?

Lucifer. To what was before thee!
The phantasm of the world; of which thy world
Is but the wreck.

Cain. What! is it not then new?

Lucifer. No more than life is; and that was ere thou
Or I were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either: many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for much meaner than we can 160
Surmise; for moments only and the space
Have been and must be all unchangeable.
But changes make not death, except to clay;
But thou art clay — and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shall behold.

Cain. Clay — Spirit — what thou wilt — I can survey.

Lucifer. Away, then!

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approached,
And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.

Cain. And Edens in them?

Lucifer. It may be.

Cain. And men? 170

Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.

Cain. Aye! and serpents too?

Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them? must no reptiles
Breathe, save the erect ones?

Cain. How the lights recede!
Where fly we?

Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.

Cain. But it grows dark, and dark — the stars are gone!

Lucifer. And yet thou seest.

Cain. 'Tis a fearful light!
No sun — no moon — no lights innumerable —
The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight — yet I see ¹⁸⁰
Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and showed them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took,
Like them, the features of fair earth: — instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.

Lucifer. But distinct. ¹⁹⁰
Thou seekest to behold Death, and dead things?

Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold, at once, what I
Must one day see perforce.

Lucifer. Behold!

Cain. 'Tis darkness!

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever — but we will
Unfold its gates!

Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart — what's this?

Lucifer. Enter!

Cain. Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should Death be peopled? 200
Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide
And wider, and make widening circles round us!

Lucifer. Advance!

Cain. And thou!

Lucifer. Fear not — without me thou
Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On! on!
[They disappear through the clouds.

Scene II. — Hades.

Enter Lucifer and Cain.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim worlds!
For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
So thickly in the upper air, that I
Had deemed them rather the bright populace
Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
Than things to be inhabited themselves,
But that on drawing near them I beheld
Their swelling into palpable immensity

Of matter, which seemed made for life to dwell on, 10
Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy, and so full of twilight, that
It speaks of a day past.

Lucifer. It is the realm
Of Death. — Wouldst have it present?

Cain. Till I know
That which it really is, I cannot answer.
But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a thing —
Oh God! I dare not think on't! Curséd be
He who invented Life that leads to Death!
Or the dull mass of life, that, being life, 20
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it —
Even for the innocent!

Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?

Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth, in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?

Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee —
But for thy sons and brother?

Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeathed to me? I leave them my inheritance!
Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms 30
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy — what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.

Cain. Then what is Death?

Lucifer. What? Hath not he who made ye
Said 'tis another life?

Cain. Till now he hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.

Lucifer. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.

Cain. Happy the day!

Lucifer. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogged 40
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only!

Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I see
Floating around me? — They wear not the form
Of the Intelligences I have seen
Round our regretted and unentered Eden;
Nor wear the form of man as I have viewed it
In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's: 50
And yet they have an aspect, which, though not
Of men nor angels, looks like something, which,
If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not
The wing of Seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which 60
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.

Lucifer. Yet they lived.

Cain. Where?

Lucifer. Where
Thou livest.

Cain. When?

Lucifer. On what thou callest earth
They did inhabit.

Cain. Adam is the first.

Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee — but too mean to be
The last of these.

Cain. And what are they?

Lucifer. That which
Thou shalt be.

Cain. But what were they?

Lucifer. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire
Adam could e'er have been in Eden, as ⁷⁰
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son; — and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me! and did they perish?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade from thine.

Cain. But was mine theirs?

Lucifer. It was.

Cain. But not as now.
It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall?

Lucifer. Ask him who fells.

Cain. But how?

Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable ⁸⁰
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
Subsiding has struck out a world: such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity. —
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'Tis awful!

Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms! they were once
Material as thou art.

Cain. And must I be
Like them?

Lucifer. Let He who made thee answer that.
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they were thou feelest, in degree ⁹⁰
Inferior as thy petty feelings and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is Life, and what ye shall have — Death: the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engendered out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crushed into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with

Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness — 100
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barred as poison. But behold
What these superior beings are or were;
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task — I'll waft thee there in safety.

Cain. No: I'll stay here.

Lucifer. How long?

Cain. For ever! Since
I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me — let me dwell in shadows.

Lucifer. It cannot be: thou now beholdest as 110
A vision that which is reality.
To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou seest have passed —
The gates of Death.

Cain. By what gate have we entered
Even now?

Lucifer. By mine! But, plighted to return,
My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions
Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on;
But do not think to dwell here till thine hour
Is come!

Cain. And these, too — can they ne'er repass
To earth again?

Lucifer. Their earth is gone for ever — 120
So changed by its convulsion, they would not
Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely hardened surface — 'twas —
Oh, what a beautiful world it was!

Cain. And is!

It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war — but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of Death and Life.

Lucifer. What thy world is, thou see'st, ¹³⁰
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence
(At least so seeming) to the things we have passed,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror; taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden — with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them — ¹⁴⁰
And tusks projecting like the trees stripped of
Their bark and branches — what were they?

Lucifer. That which
The Mammoth is in thy world; — but these lie
By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But
None on it?

Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless —
'Twould be destroyed so early.

Cain. But why war?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden — war with all things,

And death to all things, and disease to most things, 150
And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals —
Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, they were made for you,
As you for him. — You would not have their doom
Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas! the hopeless wretches!
They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple;
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought knowledge! 160
It was a lying tree — for we know nothing.
At least it promised knowledge at the price
Of death — but knowledge still: but what knows man?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the highest knowledge;
And being of all things the sole thing certain,
At least leads to the surest science: therefore
The Tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms!
I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly — but 'tis something 170
To know there are such realms.

Cain. We knew already
That there was Death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own —
And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

Lucifer. Be content; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem 180
The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue —
What is it?

Lucifer. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it — 'tis the phantasm of an Ocean.

Cain. 'Tis like another world; a liquid sun —
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface?

Lucifer. Are its inhabitants,
The past Leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense 190
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty
Head, ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar,
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately looked on —
Is he not of the kind which basked beneath
The Tree in Eden?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so called) ²⁰⁰
But never that precisely, which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not?

Cain. No: 'twas my mother
Who tempted him — she tempted by the serpent.

Lucifer. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons' wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange,
Be sure thou seest first who hath tempted them!

Cain. Thy precept comes too late: there is no more
For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to, ²¹⁰
And man tempt woman: — let thy sons look to it!
My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even
Given chiefly at my own expense; 'tis true,
'Twill not be followed, so there's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou! —
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy — is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime, I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin — and thou art evil, ²²⁰

Of sorrow — and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do. —
Now let us back to earth!

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge?

Cain. Yes — as being ²³⁰
The road to happiness!

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal Tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it.
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No —
I'll not believe it — for I thirst for good.

Lucifer. And who and what doth not? Who covets evil
For its own bitter sake? — None — nothing! 'tis ²⁴⁰
The haven of all life, and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we behold,
Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar.

Cain. And what of that?

Distance can but diminish glory — they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beautiful,
And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this — 250
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion. — What is that
Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

Cain. My sister Adah. — All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world —
The hues of twilight — the Sun's gorgeous coming —
His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold 260
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds —
The forest shade, the green bough, the bird's voice —
The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of Cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls; —
All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation, 270
And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her brother.

Lucifer. Mortal!

My brotherhood's with those who have no children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me.

But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched?

Cain. Why do I exist?

Why art thou wretched? why are all things so? 280

Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker
Of things unhappy! To produce destruction
Can surely never be the task of joy,
And yet my sire says he's omnipotent:
Then why is Evil — he being Good? I asked
This question of my father; and he said,
Because this Evil only was the path
To Good. Strange Good, that must arise from out
Its deadly opposite. I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor suckling 290
Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
And piteous bleating of its restless dam;
My father plucked some herbs, and laid them to
The wound; and by degrees the helpless wretch
Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain
The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.
Behold, my son! said Adam, how from Evil
Springs Good!

Lucifer. What didst thou answer?

Cain. Nothing; for

He is my father: but I thought, that 'twere 300
A better portion for the animal
Never to have been stung at all, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life

With agonies unutterable, though
Dispelled by antidotes.

Lucifer. But as thou saidst
Of all beloved things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers
Unto thy children — — *Cain.* Most assuredly:
What should I be without her?

Lucifer. What am I?

Cain. Dost thou love nothing?

Lucifer. What does thy God love? 310

Cain. All things, my father says; but I confess
I see it not in their allotment here.

Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst not see if I love
Or no — except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like snows.

Cain. Snows! what are they?

Lucifer. Be happier in not knowing
What thy remoter offspring must encounter;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter.

Cain. But dost thou not love something like thyself?

Lucifer. And dost thou love thyself?

Cain. Yes, but love more 320
What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it!

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 'tis beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

Cain. Cease to be beautiful! how can that be?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But time has passed, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair:
Not fair like Adah and the Seraphim — 330
But very fair.

Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it; but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less:
And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.

Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother —
Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well — so does thy God. 340

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'Tis well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly!

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.

Cain. Let him keep
Her favour, since the Serpent was the first

To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
To me? should I not love that which all love?

Lucifer. And the Jehovah — the indulgent Lord,
And bounteous planter of barred Paradise —
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain. I
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles. 350

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.
Cain Rarely.

Lucifer. But
Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to me of this?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.

Cain. And if
I have thought, why recall a thought that — —
(he pauses as agitated) — Spirit!
Here we are in thy world; speak not of mine.
Thou hast shown me wonders: thou hast shown me those
Mighty Pre-Adamites who walked the earth
Of which ours is the wreck: thou hast pointed out 360
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life: thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us — Death; thou hast shown me much
But not all: show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial Paradise — or thine:

Where is it?

Lucifer. Here, and o'er all space.

Cain. But ye
Have some allotted dwelling — as all things;
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants; ³⁷⁰
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe our breath, have theirs, thou say'st;
And the Jehovah and thyself have thine —
Ye do not dwell together?

Lucifer. No, we reign
Together; but our dwellings are asunder.

Cain. Would there were only one of ye! perchance
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarred in storms.
How came ye, being Spirits wise and infinite, ³⁸⁰
To separate? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence — and your nature, and your glory?

Lucifer. Art not thou Abel's brother?

Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain; but were it not so,
Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out —
Infinity with Immortality?
Jarring and turning space to misery —
For what?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal?

Lucifer. Yea!

Cain. And what I have seen —

Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

Lucifer. Aye. 390

Cain. And cannot ye both reign, then? — is there not
Enough? — why should ye differ?

Lucifer. We both reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which?

Cain. Thou! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?

Lucifer. And why not he who made? I made ye not;
Ye are his creatures, and not mine.

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or his dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee
Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore.

Cain. And why not now? 400

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to gather
The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought: and thou wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double Mysteries! the two Principles!
And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There

The son of her who snatched the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them; 410
That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of Death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shall multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep — and die!

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I showed,
Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem 420

Nothing.

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness;
Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'Twill spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit!
Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No! By heaven, which he
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him — No!
I have a Victor — true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all — but none from me: 430

I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest Heaven — through all Eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched! 440
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
He as a conqueror will call the conquered
Evil; but what will be the Good he gives?
Were I the victor, his works would be deemed
The only evil ones. And you, ye new
And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts
To you already, in your little world?

Cain. But few; and some of those but bitter.

Lucifer. Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest 450
Of his celestial boons to you and yours.
Evil and Good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the Giver;
But if he gives you good — so call him; if
Evil springs from him, do not name it mine,
Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
Not by words, though of Spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be.
One good gift has the fatal apple given, —
Your reason: — let it not be overruled 460
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
Think and endure, — and form an inner world
In your own bosom — where the outward fails;
So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your own.

[They disappear.

ACT III

Scene I. — The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter Cain and Adah.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain!

Cain. I will — but wherefore?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain. Cypress! 'tis
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourned
O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it
For our child's canopy?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seemed
Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Aye, the last —
And longest; but no matter — lead me to him.
[They go up to the child.
How lovely he appears! his little cheeks, ¹⁰
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake soon —
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'Tis closed.

Cain. You have said well; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps! — sleep on,
And smile, thou little, young inheritor

Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile! 20
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent! thou hast not plucked the fruit —
Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on!
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them;
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream — 30
Of what? Of Paradise! — Aye! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!

Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
Can we not make another?

Cain. Where?

Adah. Here, or
Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden. 40
Have I not thee — our boy — our sire, and brother,
And Zillah — our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth?

Cain. Yes — Death, too, is amongst the debts we owe her.

Adah. Cain! that proud Spirit, who withdrew thee hence,
Hath saddened thine still deeper. I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see 50
Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him,

And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain. So soon?

Adah. 'Tis scarcely
Two hours since ye departed: two long hours
To me, but only hours upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approached that sun, and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had rolled o'er my absence.

Adah. Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time, ⁶⁰
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skimmed extinguished worlds;
And, gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity: but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the Spirit,
That I was nothing!

Adah. Wherefore said he so?
Jehovah said not that.

Cain. No: he contents him ⁷⁰
With making us the nothing which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again — for what?

Adah. Thou know'st —
Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that
To us? they sinned, then let them die!

Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought
Thy own, but of the Spirit who was with thee.
Would I could die for them, so they might live!

Cain. Why, so say I — provided that one victim ⁸⁰
Might satiate the Insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him.

Adah. How know we that some such atonement one day
May not redeem our race?

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, we are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to ⁹⁰
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin —
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?

Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew he, that I would be so ready

With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings 100
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship — as a bribe
To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; I have no offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful,
Blossom and bud — and bloom of flowers and fruits —
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toiled, and tilled, and sweaten in the sun,
According to the curse: — must I do more? 110
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing —
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well-pleased with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by 120
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there,
The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 'twere
I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him 'gainst
The rocks, than let him live to — —

Adah. Oh, my God!
Touch not the child — my child! thy child! Oh, Cain!

Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power
Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss. 130

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech?

Cain. I said,
‘Twere better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since
That saying jars you, let us only say —
‘Twere better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were then the joys,
The mother’s joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch!
[She goes to the child.
Oh, Cain! look on him; see how full of life, ¹⁴⁰
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy —
How like to me — how like to thee, when gentle —
For then we are all alike; is’t not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are
In the clear waters, when they are gentle, and
When thou art gentle. Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine, ¹⁵⁰
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.

Cain. Bless thee, boy!
If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the Serpent’s curse!

Adah. It shall.
Surely a father’s blessing may avert
A reptile’s subtlety.

Cain. Of that I doubt; ¹⁶⁰
But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.

Cain. Thy brother Abel.
Enter Abel.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wandering,
In high communion with a Spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

Cain. No.

Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so — if so you term him? ¹⁷⁰

Abel. Term him! your words are strange to-day, my brother.
My sister Adah, leave us for awhile —
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness! [Exit Adah, with her child.

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

Cain. The dead —
The Immortal — the Unbounded — the Omnipotent —
The overpowering mysteries of space —
The innumerable worlds that were and are — 180
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light —
Thy cheek is flushed with an unnatural hue —
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound —
What may this mean?

Cain. It means — I pray thee, leave me.

Abel. Not till we have prayed and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone — 190
Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. Both well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that;
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then — but let it be alone —
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God, called not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood — 'tis thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er 200
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee

To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

Cain. No;
Nothing can calm me more. Calm! say I? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements stilled. My Abel, leave me!
Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so — — well, then,
What shall I do?

Abel. Choose one of those two altars. 210

Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so much turf
And stone.

Abel. Choose thou!

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'Tis the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?

Abel. Behold them here —
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof —
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil — its fruit:
[He gathers fruits.
Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.
[They dress their altars, and kindle aflame upon them.

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first ²²⁰
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No — I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow — as I may.
Abel (kneeling). Oh, God!
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so tempered with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise, ²³⁰
Compared with our great crimes: — Sole Lord of light!
Of good, and glory, and eternity!
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence!
Inscrutable, but still to be fulfilled!
Accept from out thy humble first of shepherds'
First of the first-born flocks — an offering,
In itself nothing — as what offering can be
Aught unto thee? — but yet accept it for ²⁴⁰
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven — bowing his own
Even to the dust, of which he is — in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!
Cain (standing erect during this speech).
Spirit whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be — and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works: — ²⁵⁰
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
And softened with a sacrifice, receive them;
Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes

On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
Or, if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstained turf 260
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripened them, may seem
Good to thee — inasmuch as they have not
Suffered in limb or life — and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
He is — such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling: if he's evil, 270
Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st —
For what can he oppose? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
Rests upon thee; and Good and Evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy will —
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence — but merely to endure
Its mandate; which thus far I have endured.
[The fire upon the altar of Abel kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and
ascends to heaven; while a whirlwind throws down the altar of Cain, and scatters
the fruits abroad upon the earth.
Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray! Jehovah's wroth with thee. 280

Cain. Why so?

Abel. Thy fruits are scattered on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them return;
Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer:
Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better; see
How Heaven licks up the flames, when thick with blood!

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,

But make another of thine own — before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any — —
Abel (rising). Cain! what meanest thou?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatterer of the clouds, ²⁹⁰
The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers —
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in blood.
Abel (opposing him).
Thou shalt not: — add not impious works to impious
Words! let that altar stand — 'tis hallowed now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. His!
His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which ³⁰⁰
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my altar
With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be — —

Abel. What mean'st thou?

Cain. Give —
Give way! — thy God loves blood! — then look to it: — ³¹⁰
Give way, ere he hath more!

Abel. In his great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strewed this turf along
Its native soil: — else — —
Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.
Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples, which
he snatches from the altar). Then take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.
Abel (falls). What hast thou done — my brother?

Cain. Brother!

Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant! and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did — Cain, give me — give me thy hand; and tell 320
Poor Zillah —
Cain (after a moment's stupefaction).
My hand! 'tis all red, and with — —
What? [A long pause. — Looking slowly round.
Where am I? alone! Where's Abel? where
Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake! — why liest thou so long on the green earth?
'Tis not the hour of slumber: — why so pale?
What hast thou! — thou wert full of life this morn!
Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;
And only done to daunt me: — 'twas a blow — 330
And but a blow. Stir — stir — nay, only stir!
Why, so — that's well! — thou breathest! breathe upon me!
Oh God! Oh God!
Abel (very faintly). What's he who speaks of God?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah: — she has but one brother

Now.[Abel dies.

Cain. And I none! — Who makes me brotherless?
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes;
And yet I feel it not. — His heart! — his heart! — 340
Let me see, doth it beat? methinks — — No! — no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world.
The earth swims round me: — what is this? — 'tis wet;
[Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.
And yet there are no dews! 'Tis blood — my blood —
My brother's and my own! and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead! — Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by him. 350
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
Thus quickly! — he hath spoken to me since —
What shall I say to him? — My brother! — No:
He will not answer to that name; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet — yet — speak to me.
Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!
Enter Zillah.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can it be?
'Tis Cain; and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh, Heaven! 360
What means this paleness, and yon stream? — No, no!
It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
Abel! what's this? — who hath done this? He moves not;
He breathes not: and his hands drop down from mine
With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!
Why camest thou not in time to save him from

This violence? Whatever hath assailed him,
Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have stepped in
Between him and aggression! Father! — Eve! —
Adah! — come hither! Death is in the world! 370

[Exit Zillah, calling on her Parents, *etc.*

Cain (solus) And who hath brought him there? — I — who abhor
The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoisoned all my life, before I knew
His aspect — I have led him here, and given
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last — a dreary dream
Had maddened me; — but he shall ne'er awake!
Enter Adam, Eve, Adah, and Zillah.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here — 380
What do I see? — 'Tis true! — My son! — my son!
Woman, behold the Serpent's work, and thine! [To Eve.

Eve. Oh! speak not of it now: the Serpent's fangs
Are in my heart! My best beloved, Abel!
Jehovah! this is punishment beyond
A mother's sin, to take him from me!

Adam. Who,
Or what hath done this deed? — speak, Cain, since thou
Wert present; was it some more hostile angel,
Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild
Brute of the forest?

Eve. Ah! a livid light 390
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! yon brand
Massy and bloody! snatched from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with — —

Adam. Speak, my son!
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not thou!

Eve. It was!

I see it now — he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine!

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong —
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal, ⁴⁰⁰
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah!
May the eternal Serpent's curse be on him!
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate! May — —

Adah. Hold!
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son —
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betrothed.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother —
Zillah no husband — me no son! for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore!
All bonds I break between us, as he broke ⁴¹⁰
That of his nature, in yon — — Oh Death! Death!
Why didst thou not take me, who first incurred thee?
Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long foreshadowed to us;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve. (pointing to Cain).
His will! the will of yon Incarnate Spirit
Of Death, whom I have brought upon the earth ⁴²⁰

To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery Cherubim pursue him
By day and night — snakes spring up in his path —
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth — the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strewed
With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim! 430
His waking a continual dread of Death!
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!
May every element shun or change to him!
May he live in the pangs which others die with!
And Death itself wax something worse than Death
To him who first acquainted him with man!
Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is Cain,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire! 440
May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!
[Exit Eve.

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.
Depart! and leave the dead to me — I am
Henceforth alone — we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not
Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.
Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse. 450

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.

Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm — my heart! my heart!
[Exeunt Adam and Zillah weeping.

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I am ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night. — Nay, speak to me.
To me — thine own.

Cain. Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee. 460

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear
To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear
Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.
I must not speak of this — it is between thee
And the great God.
A Voice from within exclaims. Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?
The Voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.
Enter the Angel of the Lord.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?

Cain. Am I then
My brother's keeper?

Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?
The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out, 470

Even from the ground, unto the Lord! — Now art thou
Cursed from the earth, which opened late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not
Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth, ⁴⁸⁰
'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could! but who are they
Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment ⁴⁹⁰
To him thou now seest so besmeared with blood?
The fratricide might well engender parricides. —
But it shall not be so — the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head. Come hither!

Cain. What
Wouldst thou with me?

Angel. To mark upon thy brow

Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die!

Angel. It must not be.

[The Angel sets the mark on Cain's brow.

Cain. It burns ⁵⁰⁰

My brow, but nought to that which is within it!

Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he

Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten;

Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from

The Serpent, and my sire still mourned for Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek

For life, nor did I make myself; but could I ⁵¹⁰

With my own death redeem him from the dust —

And why not so? let him return to day,

And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored

By God the life to him he loved; and taken

From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is done, is done;

Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds

Unlike the last! [The Angel disappears.

Adah. He's gone, let us go forth;

I hear our little Enoch cry within

Our bower.

Cain. Ah! little knows he what he weeps for! ⁵²⁰

And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!

But the four rivers would not cleanse my soul.

Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would — —
Cain (interrupting her). No,
No more of threats: we have had too many of them:
Go to our children — I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead —
Let us depart together.

Cain. Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou now art 530
I know not! but if thou seest what I am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul. — Farewell!
I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drained
The same breast, clasped thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me — compose thy limbs into their grave — 540
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast rendered to me, I
Give thee back this. — Now for the wilderness!
[Adah stoops down and kisses the body of Abel.

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee. 550
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way;
'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.

Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our God

Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And he who lieth there was childless! I
Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have tempered this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring! 560
O Abel!

Adah. Peace be with him!

Cain. But with me! — —
[Exeunt.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

A MYSTERY.

Founded on the Following Passage in Genesis, Chap. vi. 1, 2.

“And it came to pass ... that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

“And woman wailing for her demon lover.”

Coleridge [*Kubla Khan*, line 16]

INTRODUCTION

Heaven and Earth was begun at Ravenna October 9, 1821. "It occupied about fourteen days" (Medwin's *Conversations*, 1824, p. 231), and was forwarded to Murray, November 9, 1821. "You will find it," wrote Byron (*Letters*, 1901, v. 474), "*pious* enough, I trust — at least some of the Chorus might have been written by Sternhold and Hopkins themselves for that, and perhaps for the melody." It was on "a scriptural subject" — "less speculative than *Cain*, and very pious" (*Letters*, 1901, v. 475; vi. 31). It was to be published, he insists, at the same time, and, if possible, in the same volume with the "others" (*Sardanapalus*, etc.), and would serve, so he seems to have *reflected* ("The moment he reflects, he is a child," said Goethe), as an antidote to the audacities, or, as some would have it, the impieties of *Cain*!

He reckoned without his publisher, who understood the temper of the public and of the Government, and was naturally loth to awaken any more "reasonable doubts" in the mind of the Chancellor with regard to whether a "scriptural drama" was irreverent or profane. The new "Mystery" was revised by Gifford and printed, but withheld from month to month, till, at length, "the fire kindled," and, on the last day of October, 1821, Byron instructed John Hunt to "obtain from Mr. Murray *Werner: a Drama*, and another dramatic poem called *Heaven and Earth*." It was published in the second number of *The Liberal* (pp. 165-206), January 1, 1823.

The same subject, the unequal union of angelic lovers with the daughters of men, had taken Moore's fancy a year before Byron had begun to "dramatize the Old Testament." He had designed a long poem, but having discovered that Byron was at work on the same theme, he resolved to restrict himself to the production of an "episode," to "give himself the chance of ... an *heliacal rising*," before he was outshone by the advent of a greater luminary. Thanks to Murray's scruples, and the "translation" of MSS. to Hunt, the "episode" took the lead of the "Mystery" by eight days. The *Loves of the Angels* (see *Memoirs*, etc., 1853, iv. 28) was published December 23, 1822. None the less, lyric and drama were destined to run in double harness. Critics found it convenient to review the two poems in the same article, and were at pains to draw a series of more or less pointed and pungent comparisons between the unwilling though not unwitting rivals.

Wilson, in *Blackwood*, writes, "The first [the *Loves*, etc.] is all glitter and point like a piece of Derbyshire spar, and the other is dark and massy like a block of

marble.... Moore writes with a crow-quill, ... Byron writes with an eagle's plume;" while Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh*, likens Moore to "an *aurora borealis*" and Byron to "an eruption of Mount Vesuvius"!

There is, indeed, apart from the subject, nothing in common between Moore's tender and alluring lyric and Byron's gloomy and tumultuous rhapsody, while contrast is to be sought rather in the poets than in their poems. The *Loves of the Angels* is the finished composition of an accomplished designer of Amoretti, one of the best of his kind, *Heaven and Earth* is the rough and unpromising sketch thrown off by a great master.

Both the one and the other have passed out of the ken of readers of poetry, but, on the whole, the *Loves of the Angels* has suffered the greater injustice. It is opined that there may be possibilities in a half-forgotten work of Byron, but it is taken for granted that nothing worthy of attention is to be found in Moore. At the time, however, Moore scored a success, and Byron hardly escaped a failure. It is to be noted that within a month of publication (January 18, 1823) Moore was at work upon a revise for a fifth edition — consulting D'Herbelot "for the project of turning the poor 'Angels' into Turks," and so "getting rid of that connection with the Scriptures," which, so the Longmans feared, would "in the long run be a drag on the popularity of the poem" (*Memoirs, etc.*, 1853, iv. 41). It was no wonder that Murray was "timorous" with regard to Byron and his "scriptural dramas," when the Longmans started at the shadow of a scriptural allusion. Byron, in his innocence, had taken for his motto the verse in *Genesis* (ch. vi. 2), which records the intermarriage of the "sons of God" with the "daughters of men." In *Heaven and Earth* the angels *are* angels, members, though erring members, of Jehovah's "thundering choir," and the daughters of men are the descendants of Cain. The question had come up for debate owing to the recent appearance of a translation of the *Book of Enoch* (by Richard Laurence, LL.D., Oxford, 1821); and Moore, by way of safeguarding himself against any suspicion of theological irregularity, is careful to assure his readers ("Preface" to *Loves of the Angels*, 1823, p. viii. and note, pp. 125-127) that the "sons of God" were the descendants of Seth, and not beings of a supernatural order, as a mistranslation by the LXX., assisted by Philo and the "rhapsodical fictions of the *Book of Enoch*" had induced the ignorant or the profane to suppose. Nothing is so dangerous as innocence, and a little more of that *empeiria* of which Goethe accused him, would have saved Byron from straying from the path of orthodoxy. It is impossible to say for certain whether Laurence's translation of the whole of the *Book of Enoch* had come under Byron's notice before he planned his new "Mystery," but it is plain that he was, at any rate, familiar with the well-known

fragment, “Concerning the ‘Watchers’” [Περὶ τῶν Ἑγρηγόρων], which is preserved in the *Chronographia* of Georgius Syncellus, and was first printed by J. J. Scaliger in *Thes. temp. Euseb.* in 1606. In the prophecy of the Deluge to which he alludes (*vide post*,), the names of the delinquent seraphs (Semjâzâ and Azâzêl), and of the archangelic monitor Raphael, are to be found in the fragment. The germ of *Heaven and Earth* is not in the *Book of Genesis*, but in the *Book of Enoch*.

Medwin, who prints (*Conversations*, 1824, pp. 234-238) what purports to be the prose sketch of a Second Part of *Heaven and Earth* (he says that Byron compared it to Coleridge’s promised conclusion of *Christabel* — “that, and nothing more!”), detects two other strains in the composition of the “Mystery,” an echo of Goethe’s *Faust* and a “movement” which recalls the *Eumenides* of Æschylus. Byron told Murray that his fourth tragedy was “more lyrical and Greek” than he at first intended, and there is no doubt that with the *Prometheus Vincitus* he was familiar, if not at first hand, at least through the medium of Shelley’s rendering. But apart from the “Greek choruses,” which “Shelley made such a fuss about,” Byron was acquainted with, and was not untouched by, the metrical peculiarities of the *Curse of Kehama*, and might have traced a kinship between his “angels” and Southey’s “Glendoveers,” to say nothing of *their* collaterals, the “glumms” and “gawreys” of *Peter Wilkins* (see notes to Southey’s *Curse of Kehama*, Canto VI., *Poetical Works*, 1838, viii. 231-233). Goethe was interested in *Heaven and Earth*. “He preferred it,” says Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, 1869, ii. 434), “to all the other serious poems of Byron.... ‘A bishop,’ he exclaimed, though it sounded almost like satire, ‘might have written it.’ Goethe must have been thinking of a *German* bishop!” (For his daughter-in-law’s translation of the speeches of Anah and Aholibamah with their seraph-lovers, see *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 1899, pp. 18-21 [Letters, 1901, v. Appendix II. p. 518].)

Heaven and Earth was reviewed by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, February, 1823, vol. 38, pp. 42-48; by Wilson in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, January, 1823, vol. xiii. pp. 71, 72; and in the *New Monthly Magazine*, N.S., 1823, vol. 7, pp. 353-358.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ANGELS.

Samiasa.

Azaziel.

Raphael, the Archangel.

MEN.

Noah and his Sons.

Irad.

Japhet.

WOMEN.

Anah.

Aholibamah.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth. — Chorus of Mortals.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

PART I

Scene I. — A woody and mountainous district near Mount Ararat. — Time, midnight.

Enter Anah and Aholibamah.

Anah. Our father sleeps: it is the hour when they
Who love us are accustomed to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky Ararat: —
How my heart beats!

Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.

Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.

Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.

Anah. My sister, though
I love Azazel more than — — oh, too much!
What was I going to say? my heart grows impious.

Aho. And where is the impiety of loving 10
Celestial natures?

Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved me:
This cannot be of good; and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.

Aho. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin!

There's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long:
Marry, and bring forth dust!

Anah. I should have loved
Azazel not less were he mortal; yet
I am glad he is not. I cannot outlive him. 20
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible; but yet I pity him:
His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the Seraph,
And he the perishable.

Aho. Rather say,
That he will single forth some other daughter
Of earth, and love her as he once loved *Anah*. 30

Anah. And if it should be so, and she loved him,
Better thus than that he should weep for me.

Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
All Seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from me.
But to our invocation! — 'Tis the hour.

Anah.
Seraph!
From thy sphere!
Whatever star contain thy glory;
In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with "the seven," 40
Though through space infinite and hoary
Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
Yet hear!
Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!
And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her.
Thou canst not tell, — and never be

Such pangs decreed to aught save me, —
The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years, 50
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
With me thou canst not sympathise,
Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving dust
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.

Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou see'st
The face of him who made thee great,
As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate:
Yet, Seraph dear! 60

Oh hear!
For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
Until I know what I must die in knowing,
That thou forget'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart Death could not keep from o'erflowing
For thee, immortal essence as thou art!
Great is their love who love in sin and fear;
And such, I feel, are waging in my heart
A war unworthy: to an Adamite
Forgive, my Seraph! that such thoughts appear, 70
For sorrow is our element;
Delight
An Eden kept afar from sight,
Though sometimes with our visions blent.
The hour is near
Which tells me we are not abandoned quite. —
Appear! Appear!
Seraph!
My own Azazel! be but here,
And leave the stars to their own light! 80

Aho.
Samiasa!
Wheresoe'er
Thou rulest in the upper air —
Or warring with the spirits who may dare

Dispute with him
Who made all empires, empire; or recalling
Some wandering star, which shoots through the abyss,
Whose tenants dying, while their world is falling,
Share the dim destiny of clay in this;
Or joining with the inferior cherubim, 90
Thou deignest to partake their hymn —
Samiasa!

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.
Many may worship thee, that will I not:
If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,
Descend and share my lot!
Though I be formed of clay,
And thou of beams
More bright than those of day
On Eden's streams, 100
Thine immortality can not repay
With love more warm than mine
My love. There is a ray
In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
It may be hidden long: death and decay
Our mother Eve bequeathed us — but my heart
Defies it: though this life must pass away,
Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part?
Thou art immortal — so am I: I feel — 110
I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth — "Thou liv'st for ever!"
But if it be in joy
I know not, nor would know;
That secret rests with the Almighty giver,
Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss and woe.
But thee and me he never can destroy;
Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm; we are 120
Of as eternal essence, and must war
With him if he will war with us; with *thee*

I can share all things, even immortal sorrow;
For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,
And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity?
No! though the serpent's sting should pierce me thorough,
And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil
Around me still! and I will smile,
And curse thee not; but hold
Thee in as warm a fold 130
As — — but descend, and prove
A mortal's love
For an immortal. If the skies contain
More joy than thou canst give and take, remain!

Anah. Sister! sister! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night.

Aho. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But if our father see the sight!

Aho. He would but deem it was the moon 140
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
An hour too soon.

Anah. They come! *he* comes! — Azazel!

Aho. Haste
To meet them! Oh! for wings to bear
My spirit, while they hover there,
To Samiasa's breast!

Anah. Lo! they have kindled all the west,
Like a returning sunset; — lo!
On Ararat's late secret crest
A mild and many-coloured bow, 150
The remnant of their flashing path,
Now shines! and now, behold! it hath
Returned to night, as rippling foam,

Which the Leviathan hath lashed
From his unfathomable home,
When sporting on the face of the calm deep,
Subsides soon after he again hath dashed
Down, down, to where the Ocean's fountains sleep.

Aho. They have touched earth! Samiasa!

Anah. My Azaziel!
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II. — *Enter Irad and Japhet.*

Irad. Despond not: wherefore wilt thou wander thus
To add thy silence to the silent night,
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
They cannot aid thee.

Japh. But they soothe me — now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah!

Irad. But she loves thee not.

Japh. Alas!

Irad. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also. 10

Japh. I feel for thee too.

Irad. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn:
It may be, time too will avenge it.

Japh. Canst thou
Find joy in such a thought?

Irad. Nor joy nor sorrow.
I loved her well; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love: as 'tis, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.

Japh. What destinies?

Irad. I have some cause to think
She loves another.

Japh. Anah!

Irad. No; her sister.

Japh. What other?

Irad. That I know not; but her air, 20
If not her words, tells me she loves another.

Japh. Aye, but not Anah: she but loves her God.

Irad. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee?

Japh. True, nothing; but
I love.

Irad. And so did I.

Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier?

Irad. Yes.

Japh. I pity thee.

Irad. Me! why?

Japh. For being happy,
Deprived of that which makes my misery.

Irada. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels 30
Than all our father's herds would bring, if weighed
Against the metal of the sons of Cain —
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discoloured trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford. — Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon —
I must back to my rest.

Japh. And so would I
If I could rest.

Irada. Thou wilt not to our tents then? 40

Japh. No, Irada; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth they say opens from the internal world,
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.

Irada. Wherefore so?
What wouldst thou there?

Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot,
And I am hopeless.

Irada. But 'tis dangerous;
Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors.
I must go with thee.

Japh. Irada, no; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil. 50

Irada. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.

Japh. No, neither, Irad;
I must proceed alone.

Irad. Then peace be with thee!
[*Exit Irad.*

Japh. (solus).
Peace! I have sought it where it should be found,
In love — with love, too, which perhaps deserved it;
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart,
A weakness of the spirit, listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep
Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm 60
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The Earth's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaimed
A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom
To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou 70
Have lain within this bosom, folded from
The elements; this bosom, which in vain
Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
While thine — Oh, God! at least remit to her
Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the failing
As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah!
How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not;
And still would I redeem thee — see thee live
When Ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed 80
By rock or shallow, the Leviathan,
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.[*Exit Japhet.*
Enter Noah and Shem.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?

Shem. He went forth,
According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest;
Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
Which opens to the heart of Ararat. 90

Noah. What doth he there? It is an evil spot
Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
Than even wicked men resort there: he
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
Although he could not wed her if she loved him,
And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts
Of men! that one of my blood, knowing well
The destiny and evil of these days,
And that the hour approacheth, should indulge
In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the way; 100
He must be sought for!

Shem. Go not forward, father:
I will seek Japhet.

Noah. Do not fear for me:
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah. — Let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters?

Noah. No; to the cavern of the Caucasus.
[*Exeunt Noah and Shem.*]

Scene III. — *The mountains. — A cavern, and the rocks of Caucasus.*

Japh. (solus). Ye wilds, that look eternal; and thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone

In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach them — yes,
Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurled
Before the mass of waters; and yon cave, 10
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths searched by the sweeping wave,
And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
And man — — Oh, men! my fellow-beings! Who
Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My kinsmen,
Alas! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of Anah
While I had hope? or the more savage haunts, 20
Scarce less beloved, where I despaired for her?
And can it be! — Shall yon exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
No more to have the morning sun break forth,
And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow? no more to have
Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
No more to be the beacon of the world, 30
For angels to alight on, as the spot
Nearest the stars? And can those words "*no more*"
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve *them*, and I *not* have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolonged,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world, 40
Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this, until
The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,

The sole and undistinguished sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life? How much
Breath will be stilled at once! All beauteous world!
So young, so marked out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
And night by night, thy numbered days and nights. 50
I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more; but as
A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as — Oh God! and canst thou — [*He pauses.*
[*A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts*
of laughter — afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japh. In the name
Of the Most High, what art thou?
Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha! ha!

Japh. By all that earth holds holiest, speak!
Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha!

Japh. By the approaching deluge! by the earth
Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
The deep which will lay open all her fountains! 60
The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,
And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes!
Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me!
Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou?

Japh. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha! ha! ha!
[*Spirit vanishes.*

Japh. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,
The coming desolation of an orb,

On which the sun shall rise and warm no life!
How the earth sleeps! and all that in it is 70
Sleep too upon the very eve of death!
Why should they wake to meet it? What are here,
Which look like death in life, and speak like things
Born ere this dying world? They come like clouds!
[Various Spirits pass from the cavern.

Spirit.

Rejoice!
The abhorréd race
Which could not keep in Eden their high place,
But listened to the voice
Of knowledge without power,
Are nigh the hour, 80
Of Death!
Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
Nor years, nor heart-break, nor Time's sapping motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow!
Earth shall be Ocean!
And no breath,
Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave!
Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot:
Not even a rock from out the liquid grave
Shall lift its point to save, 90
Or show the place where strong Despair hath died,
After long looking o'er the ocean wide
For the expected ebb which cometh not:
All shall be void,
Destroyed!
Another element shall be the lord
Of life, and the abhorred
Children of dust be quenched; and of each hue
Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
And of the variegated mountain 100
Shall nought remain
Unchanged, or of the level plain;
Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain:
All merged within the universal fountain,

Man, earth, and fire, shall die,
And sea and sky
Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
Upon the foam
Who shall erect a home?

Japh. (coming forward).

My sire! 110
Earth's seed shall not expire;
Only the evil shall be put away
From day.
Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the waste!
Who howl your hideous joy
When God destroys whom you dare not destroy:
Hence! haste!
Back to your inner caves!
Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place, 120
And drive your sullen race
Forth, to be rolled upon the tossing winds,
In restless wretchedness along all space!

Spirit.

Son of the saved!
When thou and thine have braved
The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy? — No!
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe —
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years 130
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride.
Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears!
And art thou not ashamed
Thus to survive,
And eat, and drink, and wive?
With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction named,

Without such grief and courage, as should rather 140

Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favoured father,
And build thy city o'er the drowned earth's grave?

Who would outlive their kind,
Except the base and blind?

Mine

Hateth thine

As of a different order in the sphere,
But not our own.

There is not one who hath not left a throne 150

Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.

Go, wretch! and give

A life like thine to other wretches — live!

And when the annihilating waters roar

Above what they have done,

Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,

And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!

Thyself for being his son!

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

Rejoice! 160

No more the human voice

Shall vex our joys in middle air

With prayer;

No more

Shall they adore;

And we, who ne'er for ages have adored

The prayer-exacting Lord,

To whom the omission of a sacrifice

Is vice;

We, we shall view the deep's salt sources poured 170

Until one element shall do the work

Of all in chaos; until they,

The creatures proud of their poor clay,

Shall perish, and their bleached bones shall lurk

In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where

The deep shall follow to their latest lair;

Where even the brutes, in their despair,

Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother; 180
Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky:
While a brief truce
Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation
Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to Time 190
New beings — years, diseases, sorrow, crime —
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until — —

Japh. (Interrupting them).

The eternal Will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things;
And, gathered under his almighty wings,
Abolish Hell!
And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth, 200
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well!

Spirits. And when shall take effect this wondrous spell?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh; first in pain,
And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till Earth wax hoary;
War with yourselves, and Hell, and Heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory 210

With the blood reeking from each battle-plain;
New times, new climes, new arts, new men; but still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,
Shall be amongst your race in different forms;
But the same moral storms
Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves.

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice!

Mortal, farewell!

Hark! hark! already we can hear the voice 220

Of growing Ocean's gloomy swell;

The winds, too, plume their piercing wings;

The clouds have nearly filled their springs;

The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,

And heaven set wide her windows; while mankind

View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token —

Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.

We hear the sound they cannot hear,

The mustering thunders of the threatening sphere;

Yet a few hours their coming is delayed; 230

Their flashing banners, folded still on high,

Yet undisplayed,

Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.

Howl! howl! oh Earth!

Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth;

Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below

The Ocean's overflow!

The wave shall break upon your cliffs; and shells,

The little shells, of ocean's least things be

Deposed where now the eagle's offspring dwells — 240

How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea!

And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,

Unanswered, save by the encroaching swell; —

While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,

The wings which could not save: —

Where could he rest them, while the whole space brings

Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave?

Brethren, rejoice!
And loudly lift each superhuman voice —
All die, ²⁵⁰
Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed —
The seed of Seth,
Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death.
But of the sons of Cain
None shall remain;
And all his goodly daughters
Must lie beneath the desolating waters;
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,
Which would not spare ²⁶⁰
Beings even in death so fair.
It is decreed,
All die!
And to the universal human cry
The universal silence shall succeed!
Fly, brethren, fly!
But still rejoice!
We fell!
They fall!
So perish all ²⁷⁰
These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from Hell!
[The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.]

Japh. (solus).

God hath proclaimed the destiny of earth;
My father's ark of safety hath announced it;
The very demons shriek it from their caves;
The scroll of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books, which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear:
And yet men listened not, nor listen; but
Walk darkling to their doom: which, though so nigh,
Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief, ²⁸⁰
Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty purpose,
Or deaf obedient Ocean, which fulfils it.
No sign yet hangs its banner in the air;

The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture;
The Sun will rise upon the Earth's last day
As on the fourth day of creation, when
God said unto him, "Shine!" and he broke forth
Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
Unformed forefather of mankind — but roused
Before the human orison the earlier 290
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites:
Their matins now draw nigh — the east is kindling —
And they will sing! and day will break! Both near,
So near the awful close! For these must drop
Their outworn pinions on the deep; and day,
After the bright course of a few brief morrows, —
Aye, day will rise; but upon what? — a chaos, 300
Which was ere day; and which, renewed, makes Time
Nothing! for, without life, what are the hours?
No more to dust than is Eternity
Unto Jehovah, who created both.
Without him, even Eternity would be
A void: without man, Time, as made for man,
Dies with man, and is swallowed in that deep
Which has no fountain; as his race will be
Devoured by that which drowns his infant world. —
What have we here? Shapes of both earth and air? 310
No — *all* of heaven, they are so beautiful.
I cannot trace their features; but their forms,
How lovelily they move along the side
Of the grey mountain, scattering its mist!
And after the swart savage spirits, whose
Infernal immortality poured forth
Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
For which I have so often prayed. — They come! 320
Anah! oh, God! and with her — —

Enter Samiasa, Azaziel, Anah, and Aholibamah.

Anah. Japhet!

Sam. Lo!

A son of Adam!

Aza. What doth the earth-born here,
While all his race are slumbering?

Japh. Angel! what
Dost thou on earth when thou should'st be on high?

Aza. Know'st thou not, or forget'st thou, that a part
Of our great function is to guard thine earth?

Japh. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
Which is condemned; nay, even the evil fly
The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
In vain, and long, and still to be, beloved! 330
Why walk'st thou with this Spirit, in those hours
When no good Spirit longer lights below?

Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
Forgive me — —

Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no more
Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.

Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
We know thee not.

Japh. The hour may come when thou
May'st know me better; and thy sister know
Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been 340
Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow, mixed with wrath,

How have Azaziel, or myself, brought on thee
Wrong?

Japh. Wrong! the greatest of all wrongs! but, thou
Say'st well, though she be dust — I did not, could not,
Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said
That word so often! but now say it, ne'er
To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er
Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power
To save this beautiful — *these* beautiful 350
Children of Cain?

Aza. From what?

Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment; or, at the least,
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.

Japh. And hath not the Most High expounded them?
Then ye are lost as they are lost.

Aho. So be it!
If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare 360
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa!

Anah. Sister! sister! speak not

Thus.

Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah?

Anah. Yes, for thee:

I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japh. It is for *him*, then! for the Seraph thou
Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, cannot 370
Be happy or be hallowed. We are sent
Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto
The Highest: but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.

Anah. Ah! he speaks of Death.

Sam. Of death to *us*! and those who are with us!
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear.
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found 380
Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth!

Aho. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood
Warm in our veins, — strong Cain! who was begotten 390
In Paradise, — would mingle with Seth's children?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage?
No, not to save all Earth, were Earth in peril!
Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine

From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah!
Too much of the forefather whom thou vauntest
Has come down in that haughty blood which springs
From him who shed the first, and that a brother's!
But thou, my Anah! let me call thee mine, 400
Albeit thou art not; 'tis a word I cannot
Part with, although I must from thee. My Anah!
Thou who dost rather make me dream that Abel
Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art
The rest of the stem Cainites, save in beauty,
For all of them are fairest in their favour — —

Aho. (*interrupting him*).
And would'st thou have her like our father's foe
In mind, in soul? If *I* partook thy thought,
And dreamed that aught of *Abel* was in *her*! — 410
Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou makest strife.

Japh. Offspring of Cain, thy father did so!

Aho. But
He slew not Seth: and what hast thou to do
With other deeds between his God and him?

Japh. Thou speakest well: his God hath judged him, and
I had not named his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink
From what he had done.

Aho. He was our father's father;
The eldest born of man, the strongest, bravest,
And most enduring: — Shall I blush for him 420
From whom we had our being? Look upon
Our race; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days — —

Japh. They are numbered.

Aho. Be it so! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers.

Japh. My sire and race but glory in their God,
Anah! and thou? — —

Anah. Whate'er our God decrees,
The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,
And will endeavour patiently to obey.
But could I dare to pray in his dread hour 430
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my sister!
What were the world, or other worlds, or all
The brightest future, without the sweet past —
Thy love, my father's, all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like the stars,
Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholibamah!
Oh! if there should be mercy — seek it, find it: 440
I abhor Death, because that thou must die.

Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with his father's ark,
The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
Shaken *my* sister? Are we not the loved
Of Seraphs? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives?
Rather than thus — — But the enthusiast dreams
The worst of dreams, the fantasies engendered
By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth, 450
And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
Distinct from that which we and all our sires
Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?

Japh. He whose one word produced them.

Aho. Who *heard* that word?

Japh. The universe, which leaped
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in scorn?
Turn to thy Seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!

Aho. I have ever hailed our Maker, Samiasa,
As thine, and mine: a God of Love, not Sorrow. 460

Japh. Alas! what else is Love but Sorrow? Even
He who made earth in love had soon to grieve
Above its first and best inhabitants.

Aho. 'Tis said so.

Japh. It is even so.
Enter Noah and Shem.

Noah. Japhet! What
Dost thou here with these children of the wicked?
Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom?

Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then, 470
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain; the sons of Heaven,
Who seek Earth's daughters for their beauty?

Aza. Patriarch!
Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion!

Has not God made a barrier between Earth
And Heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?

Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
Did God not love what he had made? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love?

Noah. I am ⁴⁸⁰
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God; but as our God
Has deigned to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of Seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*? — world,
Cannot be good.

Aza. What! though it were to save?

Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What he who made you glorious hath condemned. ⁴⁹⁰
Were your immortal mission safety, 'twould
Be general, not for two, though beautiful;
And beautiful they are, but not the less

Condemned.

Japh. Oh, father! say it not.

Noah. Son! son!
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist: they soon shall cease to be,
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.

Japh. Let me die with *this*, and *them*!

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt not: he

Who *can*, redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee, 500
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both?

Noah. Ask him who made thee greater than myself
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!
Enter Raphael the Archangel.

Raph.
Spirits!
Whose seat is near the throne,
What do ye here?
Is thus a Seraph's duty to be shown,
Now that the hour is near 510
When Earth must be alone?
Return!
Adore and burn,
In glorious homage with the elected "Seven."
Your place is Heaven.

Sam.
Raphael!
The first and fairest of the sons of God,
How long hath this been law,
That Earth by angels must be left untrod?
Earth! which oft saw 520
Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!
The world he loved, and made
For love; and oft have we obeyed
His frequent mission with delighted pinions:
Adoring him in his least works displayed;
Watching this youngest star of his dominions;
And, as the latest birth of his great word,
Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.
Why is thy brow severe?
And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near? 530

Raph.

Had Samiasa and Azaziel been
In their true place, with the angelic choir,
Written in fire
They would have seen
Jehovah's late decree,
And not enquired their Maker's breath of me:
But ignorance must ever be
A part of sin;
And even the Spirits' knowledge shall grow less
As they wax proud within; 540
For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.
When all good angels left the world, ye stayed,
Stung with strange passions, and debased
By mortal feelings for a mortal maid:
But ye are pardoned thus far, and replaced
With your pure equals. Hence! away! away!
Or stay,
And lose Eternity by that delay!

Aza.

And thou! if Earth be thus forbidden
In the decree 550
To us until this moment hidden,
Dost thou not err as we
In being here?

Raph.

I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,
In the great name and at the word of God,
Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less dear —
That which I came to do: till now we trod
Together the eternal space; together
Let us still walk the stars. True, Earth must die!
Her race, returned into her womb, must wither, 560
And much which she inherits: but oh! why
Cannot this Earth be made, or be destroyed,
Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks? immortal still

In their immeasurable forfeiture.
Our brother Satan fell; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared endure!
But ye who still are pure!
Seraphs! less mighty than that mightiest one, —
Think how he was undone! 570
And think if tempting man can compensate
For Heaven desired too late?
Long have I warred,
Long must I war
With him who deemed it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who midst the cherubim
Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him — beautiful he was: oh, Heaven! 580
Save *his* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven!
The wish is impious: but, oh ye!
Yet undestroyed, be warned! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice:
He hath not tempted you; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt:
But man hath listened to his voice,
And ye to woman's — beautiful she is, 590
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss.
The snake but vanquished dust; but she will draw
A second host from heaven, to break Heaven's law.
Yet, yet, oh fly!
Ye cannot die;
But they
Shall pass away,
While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky
For perishable clay,
Whose memory in your immortality 600
Shall long outlast the Sun which gave them day.
Think how your essence differeth from theirs

In all but suffering! why partake
The agony to which they must be heirs —
Born to be ploughed with years, and sown with cares,
And reaped by Death, lord of the human soil?
Even had their days been left to toil their path
Through time to dust, unshortened by God's wrath,
Still they are Evil's prey, and Sorrow's spoil.

Aho.

Let them fly! 610

I hear the voice which says that all must die,
Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died;
And that on high
An ocean is prepared,
While from below
The deep shall rise to meet Heaven's overflow —
Few shall be spared,
It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.

Sister! since it is so, 620

And the eternal Lord
In vain would be implored
For the remission of one hour of woe,
Let us resign even what we have adored,
And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,
If not unmoved, yet undismayed,
And wailing less for us than those who shall
Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,
And, when the fatal waters are allayed,
Weep for the myriads who can weep no more. 630
Fly, Seraphs! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl, nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,
And yours to live for ever:
But which is best, a dead Eternity,
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.
Obey him, as we shall obey;
I would not keep this life of mine in clay

An hour beyond his will;
Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace, 640
For all the mercy which Seth's race
Find still.

Fly!
And as your pinions bear ye back to Heaven,
Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
Samiasa!
And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to weep, —
Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!

Anah.

And must we die? 650
And must I lose thee too,
Azaziel?
Oh, my heart! my heart!
Thy prophecies were true!
And yet thou wert so happy too!
The blow, though not unlocked for, falls as new:
But yet depart!
Ah! why?
Yet let me not retain thee — fly!
My pangs can be but brief; but thine would be 660
Eternal, if repulsed from Heaven for me.
Too much already hast thou deigned
To one of Adam's race!
Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,
But to the Spirits who have not disdained
To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurled
From his once archangelic throne
Into some unknown world:
And thou, Azaziel! No — 670
Thou shall not suffer woe
For me. Away! nor weep!
Thou canst not weep; but yet
May'st suffer more, not weeping: then forget
Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling deep

Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
Being gone, 'twill be less difficult to die.

Japh.

Oh say not so!
Father! and thou, archangel, thou!
Surely celestial mercy lurks below 680
That pure severe serenity of brow:
Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
Save in our ark, or let me be no more!

Noah.

Peace, child of passion, peace!
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong!
Live as he wills it — die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.
Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease
To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint. 690
Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee?
Such would it be
To alter his intent
For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.

Japh.

Aye, father! but when they are gone,
And we are all alone,
Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all 700
Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
Can we in Desolation's peace have rest?
Oh God! be thou a God, and spare
Yet while 'tis time!
Renew not Adam's fall:
Mankind were then but twain,
But they are numerous now as are the waves

And the tremendous rain,
Whose drops shall be less thick than would their graves, 710
Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.

Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine's a crime.
Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.

Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion: Ye!
Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
May now return with me.

Sam. It may not be:
We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?

Aza. He hath said it, and I say, Amen!

Raph.
Again!
Then from this hour, 720
Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
And aliens from your God,
Farewell!

Japh. Alas! where shall they dwell?
Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
Are howling from the mountain's bosom:
There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:
Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry! 730
In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
And hover round the mountain, where before
Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
Yet dared to soar,
Even when the waters waxed too fierce to brave.
Soon it shall be their only shore,

And then, no more!

Japh. The sun! the sun!

He riseth, but his better light is gone;

And a black circle, bound 740

His glaring disk around,

Proclaims Earth's last of summer days hath shone!

The clouds return into the hues of night,

Save where their brazen-coloured edges streak

The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.

Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,

The distant thunder's harbinger, appears!

It cometh! hence, away!

Leave to the elements their evil prey!

Hence to where our all-hallowed ark uprears 750

Its safe and wreckless sides!

Japh. Oh, father, stay!

Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides!

Noah. Must we not leave all life to such? Begone!

Japh. Not I.

Noah. Then die

With them!

How darest thou look on that prophetic sky,

And seek to save what all things now condemn,

In overwhelming unison 760

With just Jehovah's wrath!

Japh. Can rage and justice join in the same path?

Noah. Blasphemer! darest thou murmur even now!

Raph. Patriarch, be still a father! smooth thy brow:

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink:

He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink

With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters;
But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,
Nor perish like Heaven's children with man's daughters.

Aho. The tempest cometh; heaven and earth unite 770
For the annihilation of all life.
Unequal is the strife
Between our strength and the Eternal Might!

Sam. But ours is with thee; we will bear ye far
To some untroubled star,
Where thou, and Anah, shalt partake our lot:
And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth,
Our forfeit Heaven shall also be forgot.

Anah. Oh! my dear father's tents, my place of birth,
And mountains, land, and woods! when ye are not, 780
Who shall dry up my tears?

Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not; though we are shut from Heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we can not be driven.

Raph. Rebel! thy words are wicked, as thy deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak: the flaming sword,
Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.

Aza. It cannot slay us: threaten dust with death,
And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal eyes? 790

Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy strength;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands:
Thy former force was in thy faith.
Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.
Chorus of Mortals.
The heavens and earth are mingling — God! oh God!

What have we done? Yet spare!
Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!
The dragon crawls from out his den,
To herd, in terror, innocent with men;
And the birds scream their agony through air. 800
Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod
Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair!
Hear not man only but all nature plead!

Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons of clay,
I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis decreed!
[Exit Raphael.

Japh. Some clouds sweep on as vultures for their prey,
While others, fixed as rocks, await the word
At which their wrathful vials shall be poured.
No azure more shall robe the firmament,
Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death hath risen: 810
In the Sun's place a pale and ghastly glare
Hath wound itself around the dying air.

Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,
To which the elements again repair,
To turn it into what it was: beneath
The shelter of these wings thou shall be safe,
As was the eagle's nestling once within
Its mother's. — Let the coming chaos chafe
With all its elements! Heed not their din!
A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe 820
Ethereal life, will we explore:
These darkened clouds are not the only skies.
[Azazel and Samiassa fly off, and disappear
with Anah and Aholibamah.

Japh. They are gone! They have disappeared amidst the roar
Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all Earth's life,
Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes.

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all — all — *all* behind?
While safe amidst the elemental strife, 830
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?
A Mother (offering her infant to Japhet).
Oh, let this child embark!
I brought him forth in woe,
But thought it joy
To see him to my bosom clinging so.
Why was he born?
What hath he done —
My unweaned son —
To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?
What is there in this milk of mine, that Death 840
Should stir all Heaven and Earth up to destroy
My boy,
And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?
Save him, thou seed of Seth!
Or curséd be — with him who made
Thee and thy race, for which we are betrayed!

Japh. Peace! 'tis no hour for curses, but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!
And where
Shall prayer ascend, 850
When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
And burst,
And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
Until the very deserts know no thirst?
Accursed
Be he who made thee and thy sire!
We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
But as we know the worst,
Why should our hymns be raised, our knees be bent
Before the implacable Omnipotent, 860
Since we must fall the same?
If he hath made Earth, let it be his shame,

To make a world for torture. — Lo! they come,
The loathsome waters, in their rage!
And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
The forest's trees (coeval with the hour
When Paradise upsprung,
Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
So massy, vast, yet green in their old age, 870
Are overtopped,
Their summer blossoms by the surges lopped,
Which rise, and rise, and rise.
Vainly we look up to the lowering skies —
They meet the seas,
And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.
Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine ease,
In thine allotted ocean-tent;
And view, all floating o'er the element,
The corpses of the world of thy young days: 880
Then to Jehovah raise
Thy song of praise!
A Mortal.
Blesséd are the dead
Who die in the Lord!
And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,
Yet, as *his* word,
Be the decree adored!
He gave me life — he taketh but
The breath which is his own:
And though these eyes should be for ever shut, 890
Nor longer this weak voice before his throne
Be heard in supplicating tone,
Still blessed be the Lord,
For what is past,
For that which is:
For all are his,
From first to last —
Time — Space — Eternity — Life — Death —
The vast known and immeasurable unknown.

He made, and can unmake; 900
And shall I, for a little gasp of breath,
Blaspheme and groan?
No; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the Universe may quake!

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly?
Not to the mountains high;
For now their torrents rush, with double roar,
To meet the Ocean, which, advancing still,
Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearched cave. 910

Enter a Woman.

Woman.

Oh, save me, save!
Our valley is no more:
My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,
The pleasant trees that o'er our noonday bent,
And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds,
The little rivulet which freshened all
Our pastures green,
No more are to be seen.
When to the mountain cliff I climbed this morn, 920
I turned to bless the spot,
And not a leaf appeared about to fall; —
And now they are not! —
Why was I born?

Japh.

To die! in youth to die!
And happier in that doom,
Than to behold the universal tomb,
Which I
Am thus condemned to weep above in vain.
Why, when all perish, why must I remain?
[*The waters rise; Men fly in every direction; many are overtaken by the waves:*
the Chorus of Mortals disperses in search of safety up the mountains: Japhet

remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats towards him in the distance.

WERNER

OR,
THE INHERITANCE:

A TRAGEDY.

[*Werner* was produced, for the first time, at the Park Theatre, New York, in 1826. Mr. Barry played “Werner.”

Werner was brought out at Drury Lane Theatre, and played, for the first time, December 15, 1830. Macready appeared as “Werner,” J. W. Wallack as “Ulric,” Mrs. Faucit as “Josephine,” and Miss Mordaunt as “Ida.” According to the *Times*, December 16, 1830, “Mr. Macready appeared to very great advantage. We have never seen him exert himself more — we have never known him to exert himself with more powerful effect. Three of his scenes were masterpieces.” Genest says that *Werner* was acted seventeen times in 1830-31.

There was a revival in 1833. Macready says (*Diary*, March 20) that he acted “‘Werner’ with unusual force, truth, and collectedness ... finished off each burst of passion, and, in consequence, entered on the following emotion with clearness and earnestness” (Macready’s *Reminiscences*, 1875, i 36.6).

Werner was played in 1834, 5, 6, 7, 9; in 1841; in 1843-4 (New York, Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Montreal); in 1845 (Paris, London, Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin); in 1846, 1847; in America in 1848; in the provinces in 1849; in 1850; and, for the last time, at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, January 14, 1851. At the farewell performance Macready appeared as “Werner,” Mr. Davenport as “Ulric,” Mrs. Warner as “Josephine,” Mrs. Ryder as “Ida.” In the same year (1851) a portrait of Macready as “Werner,” by Daniel Maclise, R.A., was on view at the Exhibition at the Royal Academy. The motto was taken from *Werner*, act i. sc. 1, lines 114, sq. (See, for a detailed criticism of Macready’s “Werner,” *Our Recent Actors*, by Westland Marston, 1881, i. 89-98; and for the famous “Macready burst,” in act ii. sc. 2, and act v. sc. 1, *vide ibid.*, i. 97.)

Werner was brought out at Sadler’s Wells Theatre, November 21, 1860, and repeated November 22, 23, 24, 28, 29; December, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 1860. Phelps appeared as “Werner,” Mr. Edmund Phelps as “Ulric,” Miss Atkinson as “Josephine.” “Perhaps the old actor never performed the part so finely as he did on that night. The identity between the real and ideal relations of the characters

was as vivid to him as to the audience, and gave a deeper intensity, on both sides, to the scenes between father and son.” (See *The London Stage*, by H. Barton Baker, 1889, ii. 217.)

On the afternoon of June 1, 1887, *Werner* (four acts, arranged by Frank Marshall) was performed at the Lyceum Theatre for the benefit of Westland Marston. [Sir] Henry Irving appeared as “Werner,” Miss Ellen Terry as “Josephine,” Mr. Alexander as “Ulric.” (See for an appreciation of Sir Henry Irving’s presentation of *Werner*, the *Athenæum*, June 4, 1887.)]

INTRODUCTION

Werner; or, The Inheritance, was begun at Pisa, December 18, 1821, and finished January 20, 1822. At the end of the month, January 29, Byron despatched the MS., not to Murray, but to Moore, then in retreat at Paris, intending, no doubt, that it should be placed in the hands of another publisher; but a letter from Murray “melted him,” and on March 6, 1822 (*Letters*, 1901, vi. 34), he desired Moore to forward the packet to Albemarle Street. The play was set up in type, and revised proofs were returned to Murray at the end of June; but, for various reasons, publication was withheld, and, on October 31, Byron informed John Hunt that he had empowered his friend Douglas Kinnaird to obtain *Werner*, with other MSS., from Murray. None the less, milder counsels again prevailed, and on Saturday, November 23, 1822, *Werner* was published, not in the same volume with *Heaven and Earth*, as Byron intended and expected, nor by John Hunt, as he had threatened, but by itself, and, as heretofore, by John Murray. *Werner* was “the last of all the flock” to issue from Murray’s fold.

In his Preface to *Werner* (*vide post*,) Byron disclaims all pretensions to originality. “The following drama,” he writes, “is taken entirely from the ‘German’s Tale, Kruitzner,’ published ... in Lee’s *Canterbury Tales*.... I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story.” *Kruitzner* seems to have made a deep impression on his mind. When he was a boy of thirteen (*i.e.* in 1801, when the fourth volume of the *Canterbury Tales* was published), and again in 1815, he set himself to turn the tale into a drama. His first attempt, named *Ulric and Ilvina*, he threw into the fire, but he had nearly completed the first act of his second and maturer adaptation when he was “interrupted by circumstances,” that is, no doubt, the circumstances which led up to and ended in the separation from his wife. (See letter of October 9, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 391.)

On his leaving England for the Continent, April 25, 1816, the fragment was left behind. Most probably the MS. fell into his sister’s hands, for in October, 1821, it was not forthcoming when Byron gave directions that Hobhouse should search for it “amongst my papers.” Ultimately it came into the possession of the late Mr. Murray, and is now printed for the first time in its entirety (*vide post*, pp. -466: selections were given in the *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1899). It should be borne in mind that this unprinted first act of *Werner*, which synchronizes with the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, was written when Byron was a member of the sub-committee of management of Drury Lane Theatre, and,

as the numerous stage directions testify, with a view to stage-representation. The MS. is scored with corrections, and betrays an unusual elaboration, and, perhaps, some difficulty and hesitation in the choice of words and the construction of sentences. In the opening scene the situation is not caught and gripped, while the melancholy squalor of the original narrative is only too faithfully reproduced. The *Werner* of 1821, with all its shortcomings, is the production of a playwright. The *Werner* of 1815 is the attempt of a highly gifted amateur.

When Byron once more bethought himself of his old subject, he not only sent for the MS. of the first act, but desired Murray “to cut out Sophia Lee’s” (*vide post*,) “*German’s Tale* from the *Canterbury Tales*, and send it in a letter” (*Letters*, 1901, v. 390). He seems to have intended from the first to construct a drama out of the story, and, no doubt, to acknowledge the source of his inspiration. On the whole, he carried out his intention, taking places, characters, and incidents as he found them, but recasting the materials and turning prose into metre. But here and there, to save himself trouble, he “stole his brooms ready made,” and, as he acknowledges in the Preface, “adopted even the language of the story.” Act ii. sc. 2, lines 87-172; act iii. sc. 4; and act v. sc. 1, lines 94-479, are, more or less, faithful and exact reproductions of pp. 203-206, 228-232, and 252-271 of the novel (see *Canterbury Tales*, ed. 1832, vol. ii.). On the other hand, in the remaining three-fourths of the play, the language is not Miss Lee’s, but Byron’s, and the “conveyance” of incidents occasional and insignificant. Much, too, was imported into the play (*e.g.* almost the whole of the fourth act), of which there is neither hint nor suggestion in the story. Maginn’s categorical statement (see “O’Doherty on *Werner*,” *Miscellanies*, 1885, i. 189) that “here Lord Byron has *invented* nothing — absolutely, positively, undeniably nothing;” that “there is not one incident in his play, not even the most trivial, that is not to be found in the novel,” etc., is “positively and undeniably” a falsehood. Maginn read *Werner* for the purpose of attacking Byron, and, by printing selected passages from the novel and the play, in parallel columns, gives the reader to understand that he had made an exhaustive analysis of the original and the copy. The review, which is quoted as an authority in the editions of 1832 (xiv. pp. 113, 114) and 1837, etc., p. 341, is disingenuous and misleading.

The original story may be briefly retold. The prodigal and outlawed son of a Bohemian noble, Count Siegendorf, after various adventures, marries, under the assumed name of Friedrich Kruitznor, the daughter of an Italian scholar and man of science, of noble birth, but in narrow circumstances. A son, Conrad, is born to him, who, at eight years of age, is transferred to the charge of his grandfather.

Twelve years go by, and, when the fortunes of the younger Siegendorf are at their lowest ebb, he learns, at the same moment, that his father is dead, and that a distant kinsman, the Baron Stralenheim, is meditating an attack on his person, with a view to claiming his inheritance. Of Conrad, who has disappeared, he hears nothing.

An accident compels the count and the baron to occupy adjoining quarters in a small town on the northern frontier of Silesia; and, again, another accident places the usurping and intriguing baron at the mercy of his poverty-stricken and exiled kinsman. Stralenheim has fallen asleep near the fire in his easy-chair. Papers and several rouleaux of gold are ranged on a cabinet beside the bed. Kruitznier, who is armed with "a large and sharp knife," is suddenly confronted with his unarmed and slumbering foe, and though habit and conscience conspire to make murder impossible, he yields to a sudden and irresistible impulse, and snatches up "the portion of gold which is nearest." He has no sooner returned to his wife and confessed his deed, than Conrad suddenly appears on the scene, and at the very moment of an unexpected and joyous reunion with his parents, learns that his father is a thief. Kruitznier pleads "guilty with extenuating circumstances," and Conrad, who either is or pretends to be disgusted at his father's sophistries, makes the best of a bad business, and undertakes to conceal his father's dishonour and rescue him from the power of Stralenheim. The plot hinges on the unlooked-for and unsuspected action of Conrad. Unlike his father, he is not the man to let "I dare not wait upon I would," but murders Stralenheim in cold blood, and, at the same time, diverts suspicion from his father and himself to the person of his comrade, a Hungarian soldier of fortune, who is already supposed to be the thief, and who had sought and obtained shelter in the apartments of the conscience-stricken Kruitznier.

The scene changes to Prague. Siegendorf, no longer Kruitznier, has regained his inheritance, and is once more at the height of splendour and prosperity. A service of thanksgiving is being held in the cathedral to commemorate the signature of the Treaty of Prague (1635), and the count is present in state. Suddenly he catches sight of the Hungarian, and, "like a flash of lightning" feels and remembers that he *is* a thief, and that he might, however unjustly, be suspected if not accused of the murder of Stralenheim. The service is over, and the count is recrossing "Muldau's Bridge," when he hears the fatal word *Kruitznier*, "the seal of his shame," spoken in his ear. He returns to his castle, and issues orders that the Hungarian should be arrested and interrogated. An interview takes place, at which the Hungarian denounces Conrad as the murderer of Stralenheim. The son acknowledges the deed, and upbraids the father for his

weakness and credulity in supposing that his escape from Stralenheim's machinations could have been effected by any other means. If, he argues, circumstances can palliate dishonesty, they can compel and justify murder. Common sense even now demands the immediate slaughter of the Hungarian, as it compelled and sanctioned the effectual silencing of Stralenheim. But Siegendorf knows not "thorough," and shrinks at assassination. He repudiates and denounces his son, and connives at the escape of the Hungarian. Conrad, who is banished from Prague, rejoins his former associates, the "black bands," which were the scandal and terror of the neighbouring provinces, and is killed in a skirmish with the regular troops. Siegendorf dies of a broken heart.

The conception of *The German's Tale*, as Byron perceived, is superior to the execution. The style is laboured and involved, and the narrative long-winded and tiresome. It is, perhaps, an adaptation, though not a literal translation, of a German historical romance. But the *motif* — a son predestined to evil by the weakness and sensuality of his father, a father punished for his want of rectitude by the passionate criminality of his son, is the very key-note of tragedy.

If from haste or indolence Byron scamped his task, and cut up whole cantles of the novel into nerveless and pointless blank verse, here and there throughout the play, in scattered lines and passages, he outdoes himself. The inspiration is fitful, but supreme.

Werner was reviewed in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, December, 1822, vol. xii. pp. 710-719 (republished in *Miscellanies* of W. Maginn, 1885, i. 189); in the *Scots Magazine*, December, 1822, N.S. vol. xi. pp. 688-694; the *European Magazine*, January, 1823, vol. 83, pp. 73-76; and in the *Eclectic Review*, February, 1823, N.S. vol. xix. pp. 148-155.

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY
IS DEDICATED.
PREFACE

The following drama is taken entirely from the *German's Tale*, *Kruitznier*, published many years ago in "Lee's *Canterbury Tales*" written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it developes. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names: but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815, (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "Ulric and Ilvina," which I had sense enough to burn,) and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts. The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Werner.

Ulric.

Stralenheim.

Idenstein.

Gabor.

Fritz.

Henrick.

Eric.

Arnheim.

Meister.

Rodolph.

Ludwig.

WOMEN.

Josephine.

Ida Stralenheim.

Scene — Partly on the Frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time — *The Close of the Thirty Years' War.*

WERNER

OR,
THE INHERITANCE.

ACT I

Scene I. — *The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the Northern Frontier of Silesia — the Night tempestuous.*

Werner and Josephine, his Wife.

Jos. My love, be calmer!

Wer. I am calm.

Jos. To me —

Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours,
With steps like thine, when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;
But *here!*

Wer. 'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

Jos. Ah, no!

Wer. (*smiling*). Why! wouldst thou have it so?

Jos. I would
Have it a healthful current.

Wer. Let it flow 10
Until 'tis spilt or checked — how soon, I care not.

Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart?

Wer. All — all.

Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?

Wer. (*approaching her slowly*).

But for *thee* I had been — no matter what —

But much of good and evil; what I am,

Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,

Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor

Shall aught divide us.

[*Werner walks on abruptly, and then approaches Josephine.*

The storm of the night,

Perhaps affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,

And have of late been sickly, as, alas! 20

Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my Love!

In watching me.

Jos. To see thee well is much —

To see thee happy — —

Wer. Where hast thou seen such?

Let me be wretched with the rest!

Jos. But think

How many in this hour of tempest shiver

Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,

Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,

Which hath no chamber for them save beneath

Her surface.

Wer. And that's not the worst: who cares

For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom 30

Thou namest — aye, the wind howls round them, and

The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones

The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,

A hunter, and a traveller, and am

A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

Jos. And art thou not now sheltered from them all?

Wer. Yes. And from these alone.

Jos. And that is something.

Wer. True — to a peasant.

Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more ⁴⁰
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?

Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is not: we
Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee — but we have borne it.

Jos. Well?

Wer. Something beyond our outward sufferings (though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and ⁵⁰
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,
And leaves us — no! this is beyond me! — but
For this I had been happy — *thou* been happy —
The splendour of my rank sustained — my name —
My father's name — been still upheld; and, more
Than those — —

Jos. (*abruptly*). My son — our son — our Ulric,
Been clasped again in these long-empty arms,
And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
Twelve years! he was but eight then: — beautiful
He was, and beautiful he must be now, ⁶⁰
My Ulric! my adored!

Wer. I have been full oft
The chase of Fortune; now she hath o'ertaken

My spirit where it cannot turn at bay, —
Sick, poor, and lonely.

Jos. Lonely! my dear husband?

Wer. Or worse — involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.

Jos. And I had not outlived thee; but pray take
Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive
With Fortune win or weary her at last, ⁷⁰
So that they find the goal or cease to feel

Further. Take comfort, — we shall find our boy.

Wer. We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow —
And to be baffled thus!

Jos. We are not baffled.

Wer. Are we not penniless?

Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.

Wer. But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;
Enjoyed them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth: but for the abuse ⁸⁰
Long-sufferings have atoned. My father's death
Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

Jos. Who knows? our son
May have returned back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

Wer. 'Tis hopeless. 90
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have revealed his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on
The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

Jos. I must hope better still, — at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim. 100

Wer. We should have done, but for this fatal sickness; —
More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend: —
How do I know he hath not tracked us here?

Jos. He does not know thy person; and his spies,
Who so long watched thee, have been left at Hamburgh.
Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind: 110
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.

Wer. Save what we seem! save what we *are* — sick beggars,
Even to our very hopes. — Ha! ha!

Jos. Alas!
That bitter laugh!

Wer. *Who* would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands?

Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry? In this worn cheek
And famine-hollowed brow, the Lord of halls
Which daily feast a thousand vassals?

Jos. You ¹²⁰
Pondered not thus upon these worldly things,
My Werner! when you deigned to choose for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

Wer. An exile's daughter with an outcast son,
Were a fit marriage: but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decayed;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

Jos. Your father did not think so, though 'twas noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match ¹³⁰
With thee, I should have deemed it what it is.

Wer. And what is that in thine eyes?

Jos. All which it
Has done in our behalf, — nothing.

Wer. How, — nothing?

Jos. Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty but as
Millions of myriads feel it — cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou mightst have earned thy bread, as thousands earn it;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce, ¹⁴⁰
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

Wer. (*ironically*). And been an Hanseatic burgher? Excellent!

Jos. Whate'er thou mightest have been, to me thou art

What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice; — which chose thee, knowing neither
Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy sorrows:
While they last, let me comfort or divide them:
When they end — let mine end with them, or thee!

Wer. My better angel! Such I have ever found thee;
This rashness, or this weakness of my temper, 150
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chastened, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself, — to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring,
My father barred me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less 160
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved-exclusion; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the Gorgon's round me.
[A loud knocking is heard.]

Jos. Hark!

Wer. A knocking!

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour? We have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well — I am prepared.
[Werner puts his hand into his bosom, as if to search for some weapon.]

Jos. Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door. It cannot be of import 170

In this lone spot of wintry desolation: —
The very desert saves man from mankind.
[*She goes to the door.*
Enter Idenstein.

Iden. A fair good evening to my fair hostess
And worthy — — What's your name, my friend?

Wer. Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

Iden. Not afraid?
Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I asked for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

Wer. Better, sir!

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony: what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month 180
Here in the prince's palace — (to be sure,
His Highness had resigned it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years — but 'tis still a palace) —
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer. My name is Werner.

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy name,
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburg, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust, 190
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos. Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.
(*Aside to Werner.*) Cannot you humour the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

Iden. Well, I'm glad of that;
I thought so all along, such natural yearnings
Played round my heart: — blood is not water, cousin;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be 200

Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drunk enough already;
And if you have not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours: but this you know, or should know:
You see I am poor, and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

Iden. Why, what should bring me here?

Wer. I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

Jos. (*aside*).Patience, dear Werner!

Iden. You don't know what has happened, then?

Jos. How should we?

Iden. The river has o'erflowed.

Jos. Alas! we have known 210
That to our sorrow for these five days; since
It keeps us here.

Iden. But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream and three postilions' wishes,

Is drowned below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff — and a valet.

Jos. Poor creatures! are you sure?

Iden. Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his Excellency's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown, 220
As it is fit that men in office should be;
But what is certain is, that he has swallowed
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatched him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

Jos. And where will you receive him? here, I hope,
If we can be of service — say the word. 230

Iden. Here? no; but in the Prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest: — 'tis damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be
Still liable to cold — and if not, why
He'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless,
I have ordered fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst — that is,
In case he should survive.

Jos. Poor gentleman! 240
I hope he will, with all my heart.

Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learned his name? (*Aside to his wife.*) My Josephine,
Retire: I'll sift this fool. [*Exit Josephine.*]

Iden. His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer; or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

Wer. True, true, I did so: you say well and wisely.
Enter Gabor.

Gab. If I intrude, I crave — —

Iden. Oh, no intrusion! 250
This is the palace; this a stranger like
Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home:
But where's his Excellency? and how fares he?

Gab. Wetly and wearily, but out of peril:
He paused to change his garments in a cottage
(Where I doffed mine for these, and came on hither),
And has almost recovered from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

Iden. What ho, there! bustle!
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad!
[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*
A nobleman sleeps here to-night — see that 260
All is in order in the damask chamber —
Keep up the stove — I will myself to the cellar —
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger,)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since his Highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His Excellency will sup, doubtless?

Gab. Faith!
I cannot tell; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table, after 270

His soaking in your river: but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean
To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

Iden. But are you sure
His Excellency — — But his name: what is it?

Gab. I do not know.

Iden. And yet you saved his life.

Gab. I helped my friend to do so.

Iden. Well, that's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.

Gab. Not so; for there are some I know so well, 280
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

Iden. Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be?

Gab. By my family,

Hungarian.

Iden. Which is called?

Gab. It matters little.

Iden. (aside). I think that all the world are grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he's called!
Pray, has his Excellency a large suite?

Gab. Sufficient.

Iden. How many?

Gab. I did not count them.
We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.

Iden. Well, what would I give to save a great man! 290
No doubt you'll have a swingeing sum as recompense.

Gab. Perhaps.

Iden. Now, how much do you reckon on?

Gab. I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer — a *green* glass,
Wreathed with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage:
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drowned, (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you,) 300
I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

Iden. (aside). I don't much like this fellow — close and dry
He seems, — two things which suit me not; however,
Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.[*Exit* Idenstein.

Gab. (to Werner). This master of the ceremonies is
The intendant of the palace, I presume:
'Tis a fine building, but decayed.

Wer. The apartment 310
Designed for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.

Gab. I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.

Wer. (*quickly*). Sir!

Gab. Pray

Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?

Wer. Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.

Gab. And that's the reason I would have us less so:
I thought our bustling guest without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.

Wer. Very true. 320

Gab. Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here
(At least to me) by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

Wer. Pray, pardon me; my health — —

Gab. Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

Gab. In what service?
The Imperial?

Wer. (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*).
I commanded — no — I mean 330
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.

Gab. Well, that's over now, and peace

Has turned some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may: and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

Wer. What is that?

Gab. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep ³⁴⁰
Their castle walls — beyond them 'tis but doubtful
Travel for your rich Count or full-blown Baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

Wer. And I — nothing.

Gab. That's harder still. You say you were a soldier.

Wer. I was.

Gab. You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levelled) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits ³⁵⁰
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
You are poor and sickly — I am not rich, but healthy;
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this — wilt share it?
[Gabor *pulls out his purse*.

Wer. Who
Told you I was a beggar?

Gab. You yourself,
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

Wer. (*looking at him with suspicion*). You know me not.

Gab. I know no man, not even
Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er
Beheld till half an hour since?

Wer. Sir, I thank you. 360
Your offer's noble were it to a friend,
And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,
Though scarcely prudent; but no less I thank you.
I am a beggar in all save his trade;
And when I beg of any one, it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what
Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me. [*Exit Werner.*]

Gab. (*solus*). A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn
As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,
Which tear life out of us before our time; 370
I scarce know which most quickly: but he seems
To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday? — But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine: however,
For the cup's sake I'll bear the cupbearer.
Enter Idenstein.

Iden. 'Tis here! the *supernaculum*! twenty years
Of age, if 'tis a day.

Gab. Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine; and 'tis great pity,
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other. 380
Fill full — Here's to our hostess! — your fair wife!
[*Takes the glass.*]

Iden. Fair! — Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal
To that you show for beauty; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

Gab. Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Beseemed this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), returned my salutation —
Is not the same your spouse?

Iden. I would she were! 390
But you're mistaken: — that's the stranger's wife.

Gab. And by her aspect she might be a Prince's;
Though time hath touched her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

Iden. And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty: as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared — but never mind!

Gab. I don't. But who
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

Iden. There I differ. 400
He's poor as Job, and not so patient; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learned
To-night), I know not.

Gab. But how came he here?

Iden. In a most miserable old caleche,
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

Gab. Tender and true! — but why?

Iden. Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.

Gab. In that case, I much wonder that a person 410
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

Iden. That's true: but pity, as you know, *does* make
One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour;
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long 420
As they could pay for firewood.

Gab. Poor souls!

Iden. Aye,
Exceeding poor.

Gab. And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

Iden. Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to Heaven itself.
Some days ago that looked the likeliest journey
For Werner.

Gab. Werner! I have heard the name.
But it may be a feigned one.

Iden. Like enough!
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his Excellency's come. 430
I must be at my post; will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door?

Gab. I dragged him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring “Help!” but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) — I did mine *then*,⁴⁴⁰
Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!

Iden. I cringe! — but I shall lose the opportunity —
Plague take it! he’ll be *here*, and I *not there*!
[*Exit Idenstein hastily.*
Re-enter Werner.

Wer. (*to himself*). I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How
All sounds now jar me! [*Perceiving Gabor.*
Still here! Is he not
A spy of my pursuer’s? His frank offer
So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
The aspect of a secret enemy;
For friends are slow at such.

Gab. Sir, you seem rapt;
And yet the time is not akin to thought.⁴⁵⁰
These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
Or count (or whatsoe’er this half drowned noble
May be), for whom this desolate village and
Its lone inhabitants show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.

Iden. (*without*). This way —
This way, your Excellency: — have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decayed; but if we had expected
So high a guest — Pray take my arm, my Lord!
Enter Stralenheim, Idenstein, and Attendants — partly his own, and partly
Retainers of the Domain of which Idenstein is Intendant.

Stral. I'll rest here a moment.

Iden. (to the servants). Ho! a chair! 460
Instantly, knaves. [*Stralenheim sits down.*]

Wer. (aside). Tis he!

Stral. I'm better now.
Who are these strangers?

Iden. Please you, my good Lord,
One says he is no stranger.

Wer. (aloud and hastily). Who says that?
[*They look at him with surprise.*]

Iden. Why, no one spoke of you, or to you! — but
Here's one his Excellency may be pleased
To recognise. [*Pointing to Gabor.*]

Gab. I seek not to disturb
His noble memory.

Stral. I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?
[*Pointing to Werner.*]
My state when I was succoured must excuse 470
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

Iden. He! — no, my Lord! he rather wants for rescue
Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dreamed to rise.

Stral. Methought
That there were two.

Gab. There were, in company;

But, in the service rendered to your Lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.
The chief part of whatever aid was rendered
Was *his*: it was his fortune to be first. 480
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripped me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

Stral. Where is he?

An Atten. My Lord, he tarried in the cottage where
Your Excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

Stral. Till

That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then — —

Gab. I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself. 490

Stral. (*fixing his eyes upon Werner: then aside*).

It cannot be! and yet he must be looked to.

'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof

My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave

At Hamburg those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,

To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear 500

To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till — —

[*He pauses and looks at Werner: then resumes.*

This man must

Be watched. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,

Would pass by him unknown. I must be wary:
An error would spoil all.

Iden. Your Lordship seems

Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

Stral. 'Tis past fatigue, which gives my weighed-down spirit
An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

Iden. The Prince's chamber is prepared, with all 510
The very furniture the Prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.

(Aside). Somewhat tattered,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light;
And that's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

Stral. (rising and turning to Gabor).
Good night, good people! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the meantime I crave your company 520
A moment in my chamber.

Gab. I attend you.

Stral, (after a few steps, pauses, and calls Werner).
Friend!

Wer. Sir!

Iden. Sir! Lord — oh Lord! Why don't you say
His Lordship, or his Excellency? Pray,
My Lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding:
He hath not been accustomed to admission
To such a presence.

Stral. (to Idenstein). Peace, intendant!

Iden. Oh!
I am dumb.

Stral. (to Werner). Have you been long here?

Wer. Long?

Stral. I sought
An answer, not an echo.

Wer. You may seek
Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.

Stral. Indeed! Ne'er the less, 530
You might reply with courtesy to what
Is asked in kindness.

Wer. When I know it such
I will requite — that is, *reply* — in unison.

Stral. The intendant said, you had been detained by sickness —
If I could aid you — journeying the same way?

Wer. (*quickly*). I am not journeying the same way!

Stral. How know ye
That, ere you know my route?

Wer. Because there is
But one way that the rich and poor must tread

Together. You diverged from that dread path
Some hours ago, and I some days: henceforth 540
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.

Stral. Your language is above
Your station.

Wer. (*bitterly*). Is it?

Stral. Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

Wer. 'Tis well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?

Stral. (*startled*). I?

Wer. Yes — you! You know me not, and question me,
And wonder that I answer not — not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me. 550

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

Wer. Many have such: — Have you none?

Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

Stral. Sir,
I will not balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service — but good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*To Gabor.*) Sir, you will with me?
[*Exeunt Stralenheim and Attendants; Idenstein and Gabor.*]

Wer. (*solus*). 'Tis he! I am taken in the toils. Before 560
I quitted Hamburg, Giulio, his late steward,
Informed me, that he had obtained an order
From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitznor (such the name I then bore) when

I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom — till I left
Its walls — fool that I was to quit them! But
I deemed this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person; 570
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognised *him*, after twenty years —
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who
No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,
To sound and to secure me. Without means!
Sick, poor — begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes 580
Of overpowering peril, with men's lives, —
How can I hope! An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I'm detected, — on the very eve
Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter Idenstein and Fritz in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you, 'tis impossible.

Fritz. It must
Be tried, however; and if one express 590
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid

Tenfold.

Iden. The Baron is retired to rest?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has ordered
He may not be disturbed until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before

An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him. 600

Fritz. Remember! [*Exit Fritz.*]

Iden. The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards

Frankfort. Methinks the Baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, "it *must*" and there's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes — he's dozing, 610
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the Commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
But I must not lose time: Good night! [*Exit Iden.*]

Wer. "To Frankfort!"
So, so, it thickens! Aye, "the Commandant!"
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt

He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress. — Sooner than 620
This — —
[Werner *looks around, and snatches up a knife*
lying on a table in a recess.
Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark, — footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me 's certain. I'm alone —
He with a numerous train: I weak — he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
He full-blown with his titles, which impose 630
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!
I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the — — No! all is silent — 'twas my fancy! —
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder: — I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst. 640
[Werner *draws a panel, and exit, closing it after him.*
Enter Gabor and Josephine.

Gab. Where is your husband?

Jos. Here, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the Intendant.

Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the Intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,

I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. Alas!

What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy Baron, and the unknown Werner?

Gab. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how ⁶⁵⁰
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

Gab. I helped to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in

Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak: —
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of ⁶⁶⁰
Your good intentions.

Gab. Is he so suspicious?

Jos. He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

Gab. I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night! I trust to meet with him at day-break.
[Exit Gabor.

Re-enter Idenstein and some Peasants. Josephine retires up the Hall.
First Peasant. But if I'm drowned?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for 't,

And have risked more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

Second Peasant. But our wives and families?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may 670
Be better.

Third Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.

Iden. That's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the Prince's body-guard — if you succeed:
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,
Two thalers.

Third Peasant. No more!

Iden. Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily 680
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

Third Peasant. Never — but ne'er
The less I must have three.

Iden. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

Third Peasant. No — the Prince's,
And not the stranger's.

Iden. Sirrah! in the Prince's
Absence, I am sovereign; and the Baron is
My intimate connection; — "Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains! troop — march — march, I say;
And if a single dog's ear of this packet 690
Be sprinkled by the Odeur — look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretched as parchment on a drum,

Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities. — Away, ye earth-worms!
[Exit, driving them out.]

Jos. (coming forward).

I fain would shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot, 700
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still — the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tattered splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys 710
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rained, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewelled purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime, 720
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul — as the bleak elements
His form. And 'tis to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants! and such his pride of birth —
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father born in a humble state could nerve
His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;

But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father! 730
May thy long-tried and now rewarded spirit
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus?
*Enter Werner hastily, with the knife in his hand, by the secret panel, which he
closes hurriedly after him.*

Wer. (not at first recognising her).
Discovered! then I'll stab — (*recognising her*). Ah! Josephine
Why art thou not at rest?

Jos. What rest? My God!
What doth this mean?

Wer. (showing a rouleau).
Here's *gold* — *gold*, Josephine,
Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

Jos. And how obtained? — that knife!

Wer. 'Tis bloodless — yet.
Away — we must to our chamber.

Jos. But whence comest thou? 740

Wer. Ask not! but let us think where we shall go —
This — this will make us way — (*showing the gold*) — I'll fit them now.

Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

Wer. Dishonour!

Jos. I have said it.

Wer. Let us hence:
'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

Jos. And not the worst, I hope.

Wer. Hope! I make *sure*.
But let us to our chamber.

Jos. Yet one question —
What hast thou *done*?

Wer. (fiercely). Left one thing *undone*, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!

Jos. Alas that I should doubt of thee! 750
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

Scene I. — *A Hall in the same Palace.*

Enter Idenstein and Others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A Baron pillaged in a Prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoiled
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The Baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

Iden. And so am I. 10

Fritz. But whom do you suspect?

Iden. Suspect! all people
Without — within — above — below — Heaven help me!

Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Iden. None whatsoever.

Fritz. Are you sure of that?

Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,
And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

Iden. Doubtless.

Fritz. The man called *Werner's* poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser.

But lodged so far off, in the other wing, 20
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz. There's another,
The stranger — —

Iden. The Hungarian?

Fritz. He who helped
To fish the baron from the Oder.

Iden. Not

Unlikely. But, hold — might it not have been 30
One of the suite?

Fritz. How? *We*, sir!

Iden. No — not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The Baron was asleep in the great chair —
The velvet chair — in his embroidered night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappeared: — the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps 40
Which forms the Baron's household's unimpeached
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters;
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board wages. Then 50
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swooped all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

Iden. There is some sense in that — —

Fritz. No, Sir, be sure
'Twas none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is — Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

Iden. You don't mean me?

Fritz. No, sir; I honour more 60
Your talents — —

Iden. And my principles, I hope.

Fritz. Of course. But to the point: What's to be done?

Iden. Nothing — but there's a good deal to be said.
We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we've no printer); and set by my clerk

To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest 70
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;
And for the Baron's gold — if 'tis not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchemy
For your Lord's losses!

Fritz. He hath found a better.

Iden. Where?

Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my Lord 80
Is on his way to take possession.

Iden. Was there
No heir?

Fritz. Oh, yes; but he has disappeared
Long from the world's eye, and, perhaps, the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,
If living, he must chew the husks still. But
The Baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to re-appear: he's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court. 90

Iden. He's fortunate.

Fritz. 'Tis true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late Count reclaimed from his son's hands,
And educated as his heir; but, then,
His birth is doubtful.

Iden. How so?

Fritz. His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:
Noble, they say, too; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son. 100

Iden. If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your Baron to unravel.

Fritz. Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities, — impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but
The strangest is, that he too disappeared
Some months ago.

Iden. The devil he did!

Fritz. Why, yes:
It must have been at *his* suggestion, at 110
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assigned?

Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
And none, perhaps, the true one. Some averred
It was to seek his parents; some because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wished to serve in war,
But, peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since returned, were that the motive; 120

A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature
He had joined the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit-warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

Iden. That cannot be.

A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury, ¹³⁰
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!

Fritz. Heaven best knows!

But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar, ¹⁴⁰
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaimed,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The Baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter Stralenheim and Ulric.

Stral. Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them, ¹⁵⁰
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,

They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf — —

Ulr. I pray you press the theme no further.

Stral. But

Can I not serve you? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so;
And, doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of War, ¹⁶⁰
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger,
In an as perilous, but opposite, element.
You are made for the service: I have served;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends,
Who shall be yours. 'Tis true this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily;
But 'twill not last, men's spirits are too stirring;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the time shows us ¹⁷⁰
In every forest, or a mere armed truce.
War will reclaim his own; and, in the meantime,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburgh, wherein
I stand well with the Elector; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

Ulr. You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and, of course, my service due
To my own Sovereign. If I must decline ¹⁸⁰
Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which
Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury!
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,

To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

Ulr. You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not —
You are nobly born?

Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your name?

Ulr. Ulric.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulr. When I'm worthy of it, 190
I'll answer you.

Stral. (aside). Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorred.

[*Aloud to Fritz and Idenstein.*
So, sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

Iden. Indifferent well, your Excellency.

Stral. Then
I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

Iden. Humph! — not exactly.

Stral. Or, at least, suspected?

Iden. Oh! for that matter, very much suspected.

Stral. Who may he be?

Iden. Why, don't *you* know, my Lord? 200

Stral. How should I? I was fast asleep.

Iden. And so
Was I — and that's the cause I know no more
Than does your Excellency.

Stral. Dolt!

Iden. Why, if
Your Lordship, being robbed, don't recognise
The rogue; how should I, not being robbed, identify
The thief among so many? In the crowd,
May it please your Excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon,
That wise men know your felon by his features; 210
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

Stral. (to Fritz). Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow?

Fritz. Faith!
My Lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled 220
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

Iden. True;
If there were aught to carry off, my Lord.

Ulr. What is all this?

Stral. You joined us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robbed last night.

Ulr. Some rumour of it reached me as I passed
The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.

Stral. It is a strange business:
The Intendant can inform you of the facts. 230

Iden. Most willingly. You see — —

Stral. (impatiently). Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

Iden. That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see — —

Stral. (again interrupting him, and addressing Ulr).
In short, I was asleep upon my chair,
My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only): some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
A hundred golden ducats, which to find 240
I would be fain, and there's an end. Perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint) would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?

Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss of time —
(*To Idenstein.*) Come hither, mynheer!

Iden. But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and — —

Ulr. Standing motionless
None; so let's march: we'll talk as we go on.

Iden. But — —

Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you. 250

Fritz. I will, sir, with his Excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

Fritz. Hence!

Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!
[*Exit with Idenstein and Fritz.*]

Stral. (solus). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:
I have need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle. 260
And though I am not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;
But he hath played the truant in some hour
Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
Champion his claims. That's well. The father, whom
For years I've tracked, as does the blood-hound, never
In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
To fault; but *here* I *have* him, and that's better.
It must be *he*! All circumstance proclaims it; 270
And careless voices, knowing not the cause
Of my enquiries, still confirm it. — Yes!
The man, his bearing, and the mystery
Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
The Intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;

Besides the antipathy with which we met,
As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
By secret instinct that both must be foes
Deadly, without being natural prey to either; 280
All — all — confirm it to my mind. However,
We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe
Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,
Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
(Save for the actual loss) is lucky also;
He's poor, and that's suspicious — he's unknown, 290
And that's defenceless. — True, we have no proofs
Of guilt — but what hath he of innocence?
Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
In other bearings, I should rather lay
The inculcation on the Hungarian, who
Hath something which I like not; and alone
Of all around, except the Intendant, and
The Prince's household and my own, had ingress
Familiar to the chamber.

Enter Gabor.

Friend, how fare you?

Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when they 300
Have supped and slumbered, no great matter how —
And you, my Lord?

Stral. Better in rest than purse:
Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

Gab. I heard
Of your late loss; but 'tis a trifle to
One of your order.

Stral. You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.

Gab. I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turned back — I have outstripped them,
In my return.

Stral. You! — Why?

Gab. I went at daybreak, 310
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all checked like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

Stral. Would the dogs were in it!
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
I ordered this at all risks.

Gab. Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obeyed, perhaps 320
They might have ventured.

Stral. I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves! — but they shall smart for this.
[Exit Stralenheim.

Gab. (solus). There goes my noble, feudal, self-willed Baron!
Epitome of what brave chivalry
The preux Chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window 330
Of his o'erset and water-logged conveyance;
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches

Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:
'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh, thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest! [*Exit Gabor.*
Scene II. — *The Apartment of Werner, in the Palace.*

Enter Josephine and Ulric.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric! — my beloved! — can it be —
After twelve years?

Ulr. My dearest mother!

Jos. Yes!
My dream is realised — how beautiful! —
How more than all I sighed for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks! a mother's tears of joy!
This is indeed thy work! — At such an hour, too,
He comes not only as a son, but saviour.

Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten from my heart 10
A part of the long debt of duty, not
Of love (for that was ne'er withheld) — forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.

Jos. I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from
My memory by this oblivious transport! —
My son!
Enter Werner.

Wer. What have we here, — more strangers? —

Jos. No!
Look upon him! What do you see?

Wer. A stripling,
For the first time —

Ulr. (*kneeling*). For twelve long years, my father!

Wer. Oh, God!

Jos. He faints!

Wer. No — I am better now — 20

Ulr. (*Embraces him.*)

Ulr. My father, Siegendorf!

Wer. (*starting*). Hush! boy —
The walls may hear that name!

Ulr. What then?

Wer. Why, then —
But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!
Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
But, had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!

Ulr. And yet you knew me not! 30

Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

Ulr. My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times in
The proud and princely halls of — (I'll not name them,
As you say that 'tis perilous) — but i' the pomp

Of your sire's feudal mansion, I looked back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down 40
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.

Wer. I know not that.
Are you aware my father is no more?

Ulr. Oh, Heavens! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three months since.

Wer. Why did you leave him?

Jos. (embracing Ulric). Can you ask that question?
Is he not *here*?

Wer. True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state! 50

Ulr. All shall be bettered. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

Wer. Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

Ulr. I saved
His life but yesterday: he's here.

Wer. You saved
The serpent who will sting us all!

Ulr. You speak 60

Riddles: what is this Stralenheim to us?

Wer. Every thing. One who claims our father's lands:
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

Ulr. I never heard his name till now. The Count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me — and what then?
His right must yield to ours.

Wer. Aye, if at Prague:
But here he is all-powerful; and has spread 70
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

Ulr. Doth he personally know you?

Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betrayed last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

Ulr. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present. 80
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
He hath been plundered too, since he came hither:
Is sick, a stranger, and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robbed him:
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that: but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure — you, my parents!

Wer. (*agitatedly*). Who

Taught you to mouth that name of “villain?”

Ulr. What

More noble name belongs to common thieves? 90

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?

Ulr. My own feelings

Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Ulr. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Every thing!

That ruffian is thy father!

Jos. Oh, my son!

Believe him not — and yet! — (*her voice falters.*)

Ulr. (*starts, looks earnestly at Werner*
and then says slowly) And you avow it?

Wer. Ulric, before you dare despise your father, 100
Learn to divine and judge his actions. Young,
Rash, new to life, and reared in Luxury’s lap,
Is it for you to measure Passion’s force,
Or Misery’s temptation? Wait — (not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly) — Wait! —
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted till
Sorrow and Shame are handmaids of your cabin —
Famine and Poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow — then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e’er arrive — 110
Should you see then the Serpent, who hath coiled
Himself around all that is dear and noble

Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor — midnight for your mantle —
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he as 'twere
Inviting death, by looking like it, while 120
His death alone can save you: — Thank your God!
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside — — I did so.

Ulr. But — —

Wer. (*abruptly*). Hear me!
I will not brook a human voice — scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still) —
Hear me! you do not know this man — I do.
He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few
From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim, 130
Housed in a Prince's palace, couched within
A Prince's chamber, lay below my knife!
An instant — a mere motion — the least impulse —
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
He was within my power — my knife was raised —
Withdrawn — and I'm in his: — are you not so?
Who tells you that he knows you *not*? Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon?
[*He pauses.*

Ulr. Proceed — proceed!

Wer. *Me* he hath ever known, 140
And hunted through each change of time — name — fortune —
And why not *you*? Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path

Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurned
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric! — Ulric! — there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.

Ulr. (who looks first at him and then at Josephine).
My mother!

Wer. Ah! I thought so: you have now 150
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulr. But stay!
[*Werner rushes out of the chamber.*]

Jos. (to Ulric). Follow him not, until this storm of passion

Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well for him,
I had not followed?

Ulr. I obey you, mother,
Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.

Jos. Oh! he is good!
Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for him,
That this is but the surface of his soul, 160
And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulr. These then are but my father's principles?
My mother thinks not with him?

Jos. Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulr. Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.
I pledge myself to accomplish this — but would 170
I had arrived a few hours sooner!

Jos. Aye!
Hadst thou but done so!
Enter Gabor and Idenstein, with Attendants.

Gab. (to *Ulr.*). I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward!

Ulr. What do you mean?

Gab. 'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this!
(To *Idenstein.*) But for your age and folly, I would — —

Iden. Help!
Hands off! Touch an Intendant!

Gab. Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone by choking you myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite: but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me. 180

Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or — —

Gab. At once, then,
The Baron has been robbed, and upon me
This worthy personage has deigned to fix
His kind suspicions — me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester evening.

Iden. Wouldst have me suspect

My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

Gab. You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,
The worms! You hound of malice!
[*Gabor seizes on him.*

Ulr. (interfering). Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarmed — be temperate, Gabor!

Gab. (letting go Idenstein). True: 190
I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulr. (to Idenstein). How
Fare you?

Iden. Help!

Ulr. I have helped you.

Iden. Kill him! then
I'll say so.

Gab. I am calm — live on!

Iden. That's more
Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The Baron shall decide!

Gab. Does *he* abet you in your accusation?

Iden. Does he not?

Gab. Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes!
Enter Stralenheim.

Gab. (*goes up to him*). My noble Lord, I'm here! 200

Stral. Well, sir!

Gab. Have you aught with me?

Stral. What should I
Have with you?

Gab. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not washed away your memory;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber: — is the charge your own or his?

Stral. I accuse no man.

Gab. Then you acquit me, Baron?

Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

Gab. But you at least 210
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted —
Oppressed here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy — teach them their duty!
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.

Stral. You!

Gab. Aye, sir; and, for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed —
I do not ask for hints, and surmises, 220
And circumstance, and proof: I know enough

Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know, that were I even
The villain I am deemed, the service rendered
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing: I demand of you 230
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have asked so much.

Stral. This tone
May be of innocence.

Gab. 'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stral. You
Are hot, sir.

Gab. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I found him in 240
Your company.

Gab. We found *you* in the Oder;
Would we had left you there!

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.

Gab. I've earned them; but might have earned more from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stral. Ulric! you know this man?

Gab. No more than you do
If he avouches not my honour.

Ulr. I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connection led me, honour.

Stral. Then
I'm satisfied.

Gab. (*ironically*). Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration 250
More than in mine?

Stral. I merely said that *I*
Was satisfied — not that you are absolved.

Gab. Again! Am I accused or no?

Stral. Go to!
You wax too insolent. If circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

Gab. My Lord, my Lord, this is mere cozenage,
A vile equivocation; you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you — 260
Your looks a voice — your frowns a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me — because
You have it; but beware! you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

Stral. Threat'st thou?

Gab. Not so much
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.

Stral. As you have said, 'tis true I owe you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

Gab. Not with your gold.

Stral. With bootless insolence.

[*To his Attendants and Idenstein.*

You need not further to molest this man, 270

But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!

[*Exit Stralenheim, Idenstein, and Attendants.*

Gab. (following). I'll after him and — —

Ulr. (stopping him). Not a step.

Gab. Who shall

Oppose me?

Ulr. Your own reason, with a moment's

Thought.

Gab. Must I bear this?

Ulr. Pshaw! we all must bear

The arrogance of something higher than

Ourselves — the highest cannot temper Satan,

Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.

I've seen you brave the elements, and bear

Things which had made this silkworm cast his skin —

And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words? 280

Gab. Must I bear to be deemed a thief? If 'twere

A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it —

There's something daring in it: — but to steal

The moneys of a slumbering man! —

Ulr. It seems, then,

You are *not* guilty.

Gab. Do I hear aright?
You too!

Ulr. I merely asked a simple question.

Gab. If the judge asked me, I would answer “No” —
To you I answer *thus*. [*He draws.*

Ulr. (*drawing*). With all my heart!

Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help! — Oh, God! here’s murder!
[*Exit Josephine, shrieking.*

Gabor and Ulric *fight*. Gabor is *disarmed just as* Stralenheim, Josephine,
Idenstein, *etc., re-enter.*

Jos. Oh! glorious Heaven! He’s safe!

Stral. (*to Josephine*). *Who’s* safe!

Jos. My — —

Ulr. (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards to Stralenheim*). Both! ²⁹⁰
Here’s no great harm done.

Stral. What hath caused all this?

Ulr. *You*, Baron, I believe; but as the effect
Is harmless, let it not disturb you. — Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your *friends*.
[*Ulric pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to Gabor.*

Gab. I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.

Stral. These
Brawls must end here.

Gab. (taking his sword). They *shall*. You've wronged me, Ulric,
More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I would
The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's 300
Absurd insinuations — ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Entail will last him longer than his lands —
But I may fit *him* yet: — you have vanquished me.
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However — but in friendship.[*Exit* Gabor.]

Stral. I will brook
No more! This outrage following upon his insults, 310
Perhaps his guilt, has cancelled all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.
Ulric, you are not hurt? —

Ulr. Not even by a scratch.

Stral. (to Idenstein). Intendant! take your measures to secure
Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort,
The instant that the waters have abated.

Iden. Secure him! He hath got his sword again —
And seems to know the use on't; 'tis his trade, 320
Belike; — *I'm* a civilian.

Stral. Fool! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!

Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you!

Stral. I must be

Obedied. No words!

Iden. Well, if it must be so —
March, vassals! I'm your leader, and will bring
The rear up: a wise general never should
Expose his precious life — on which all rests.
I like that article of war.
[*Exit Idenstein and Attendants.*]

Stral. Come hither,
Ulric; what does that woman here? Oh! now 330
I recognise her, 'tis the stranger's wife
Whom they *name* "Werner."

Ulr. 'Tis his name.

Stral. Indeed!
Is not your husband visible, fair dame? —

Jos. Who seeks him?

Stral. No one — for the present: but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself

Alone.

Ulr. I will retire with you.

Jos. Not so:
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.
(*Aside to Ulric, as she goes out.*) O Ulric! have a care —
Remember what depends on a rash word!

Ulr. (*to Josephine*). Fear not! —
[*Exit Josephine.*]

Stral. Ulric, I think that I may trust you; 340
You saved my life — and acts like these beget

Unbounded confidence.

Ulr. Say on.

Stral. Mysterious

And long-engendered circumstances (not
To be now fully entered on) have made
This man obnoxious — perhaps fatal to me.

Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

Stral. No — this “Werner” —
With the false name and habit.

Ulr. How can this be?

He is the poorest of the poor — and yellow
Sickness sits caverned in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

Stral. He is — ’tis no matter; — 350
But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here — and much
That is not here — confirm my apprehension)
He must be made secure ere twelve hours further.

Ulr. And what have I to do with this?

Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the Governor, my friend,
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburg),
For a fit escort — but this curséd flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours. 360

Ulr. It is abating.

Stral. That is well.

Ulr. But how

Am I concerned?

Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued. — Keep your eye on *him*!
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him. —
Watch him! — as you would watch the wild boar when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap —
Like him he must be speared.

Ulr. Why so?

Stral. He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance! 370
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulr. I hope so.

Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimmed it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms far and near
Made deserts.

Ulr. You describe it faithfully.

Stral. Aye — could you see it, you would say so — but,
As I have said, you shall.

Ulr. I accept the omen. 380

Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch —

This way-worn stranger — stands between you and
This Paradise? — (As Adam did between
The devil and his) — [*Aside*].

Stral. He doth.

Ulr. Hath he no right?

Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts — but chiefly by his marriage, ³⁹⁰
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

Ulr. He has a wife, then?

Stral. You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He *calls* his wife.

Ulr. Is she not so?

Stral. No more
Than he's your father: — an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banished man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.

Ulr. They are childless, then?

Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man — the grandsire (as old age ⁴⁰⁰
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:
But the imp stands not in my path — he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand. — Why do you smile?

Ulr. At your vain fears:

A poor man almost in his grasp — a child
Of doubtful birth — can startle a grandee!

Stral. All's to be feared, where all is to be gained.

Ulr. True; and aught done to save or to obtain it. 410

Stral. You have harped the very string next to my heart.
I may depend upon you?

Ulr. 'Twere too late
To doubt it.

Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful) — he is a wretch, as likely
To have robbed me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine; and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine, 420
To deem he would descend to such an act:
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once — though too rash.

Ulr. And they, my Lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first — which makes them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,
Nor e'er be robbed: their spoils are a bequest —
No more.

Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards 430
Concealment or escape.

Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I

Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulr. Such is my intention.*[Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene I. — *A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage leads.*

Enter Werner and Gabor.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale: if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well —
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter? — wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert — —

Gab. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer. Ah!

Gab. I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do 10
The same myself. But will you shelter me?
I am oppressed like you — and poor like you —
Disgraced — —

Wer. (abruptly). Who told you that I was disgraced?

Gab. No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but
I said *I* was so — and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

Wer. Again!
As *I*?

Gab. Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft?

Wer. No, no — I cannot. 20

Gab. Why that's my heart of honour! yon young gallant —
Your miserly Intendant and dense noble —
All — all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst clothed, and least named amongst them;
Although, were Momus' lattice in your breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs: but thus it is — you poor and helpless —
Both still more than myself.

Wer. How know you that?

Gab. You're right: I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it, 30
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World the Spaniard boasts about
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weighed at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it,) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean?

Gab. Just what I say; I thought my speech was plain: 40
You are no thief — nor I — and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damned world, sir.

Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),

Therefore I'll stick by this — as being both
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The dove did — trusting that they have abated. 50

Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?

Gab. There was
At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe.

Gab. Are you
In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gab. That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty?

Gab. No — you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only: you've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?

Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't, 60
Although I almost wish you had the Baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate?

Gab. What?

Wer. Are you aware
To whom you speak?

Gab. No; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without.*) But hark! they come!

Wer. Who come?

Gab. The Intendant and his man-hounds after me:
I'd face them — but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:
Think if it were your own case!

Wer. (*aside*). Oh, just God! 70
Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?

Gab. I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:
I may live to requite it.

Wer. Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's?

Gab. Not I! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you?
Although, I recollect, his frequent question
About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion; but you best know — what — and why.
I am his deadliest foe.

Wer. You?

Gab. After such
A treatment for the service which in part 80
I rendered him, I am his enemy:
If you are not his friend you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gab. But how?

Wer. (*showing the panel*). There is a secret spring:
Remember, I discovered it by chance,
And used it but for safety.

Gab. Open it,
And I will use it for the same.

Wer. I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding walls,
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness,)
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to 90
I know not whither; you must not advance:
Give me your word.

Gab. It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?

Wer. Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?
I know not — (mark you!) — but who knows it might not
Lead even into the chamber of your foe?
So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements 100
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never passed them,) I'll not answer
For what you may be led to.

Gab. But I will.
A thousand thanks!

Wer. You'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.

Gab. I'll in — farewell!
[*Gabor goes in by the secret panel.*]

Wer. (solus). What have I done? Alas! what *had* I done
Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man, 110
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own —
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!
Enter Idenstein and Others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanished then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise
On long pearl-coloured beards and crimson crosses.
And gilded crosiers, and crossed arms, and cowls,
And helmets, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows 120
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain.

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search
Of him who robbed the Baron.

Wer. Are you sure
You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you
Stand there: but where's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him ¹³⁰
Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?
Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,
To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be
I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t'other.

Wer. You had best begin
Your inquisition now: I may not be
So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.

Wer. Insolent! ¹⁴⁰
Said you not that he was not here?

Iden. Yes, *one*;
But there's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.
[*Exit Idenstein and Attendants.*]

Wer. In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with blood. ¹⁵⁰
Enter Ulric.

Ulr. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is't not dangerous?

Ulr. No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more —
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it:
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulr. I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briers in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarmed carle 160
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hewed for bread.
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so:
We'll overfly or rend them.

Wer. Show me *how*?

Ulr. Can you not guess?

Wer. I cannot.

Ulr. That is strange.
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night*?

Wer. I understand you not.

Ulr. Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic — —

Wer. You mean to *pursue* it, as
'Tis of our safety.

Ulr. Right; I stand corrected. 170
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating; a few hours
Will bring his summoned myrmidons from Frankfort,
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardised by practice
Of this same Baron to make way for him.

Wer. And now your remedy! I thought to escape
By means of this accurséd gold; but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it. 180
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt
For motto, not the mintage of the state;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders, Lo! a villain!

Ulr. You must not use it, at least now; but take
This ring.*[He gives Werner a jewel.*

Wer. A gem! It was my father's!

Ulr. And
As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the Intendant for his old caleche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise, 190
Together with my mother.

Wer. And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too?

Ulr. Fear nothing!
The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort: so far's in our favour
The route on to Bohemia, though encumbered,
Is not impassable; and when you gain

A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond 200
The frontier, and you're safe.

Wer. My noble boy!

Ulr. Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge in them
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have looked through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold* —
No jewel: therefore it could *not* be his;
And then the man who was possest of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The Baron's coin, when he could thus convert 210
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer. I will follow
In all things your direction.

Ulr. I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appeared
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

Wer. My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou 220
Fare in our absence?

Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

Wer. To part no more!

Ulr. I know not that; but at
The least we'll meet again once more.

Wer. My boy!
My friend! my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!

Ulr. Hate my father!

Wer. Aye,
My father hated me. Why not my son?

Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wer. Scorpions ²³⁰
Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulr. I'll wait!
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wer. I see it, and I feel it; yet I feel
Further — that you despise me.

Ulr. Wherefore should I?

Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation?

Ulr. No!
I have fathomed it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or, if it must be ever, ²⁴⁰
Not *now*. Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house
At secret war with that of Stralenheim:
All we have now to think of is to baffle

Him. I have shown *one* way.

Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who showed *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

Ulr. You *shall* be safe; let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were 250
Admitted to our lands?

Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now; although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest —
Especially the next in blood.

Ulr. *Blood!* 'tis
A word of many meanings; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing —
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is called) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest. 260

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulr. That may be —
And should, perhaps — and yet — but get ye ready;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the Intendant: sound him with the gem;
'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze, too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time! 270
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father! — —

Wer. Let me embrace thee!

Ulr. We may be
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!
Keep off from me as from your foe!

Wer. Accursed
Be he who is the stifling cause which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts;
At such an hour too!

Ulr. Yes, curse — it will ease you!
Here is the Intendant.
Enter Idenstein.

Ulr. Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught
The rogue?

Iden. No, faith!

Ulr. Well, there are plenty more: 280
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the Baron?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulr. Your great men
Must be answered on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'Tis well they have horses, too; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he?

Ulr. An old Bohemian — an imperial gipsy. 290

Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the same,

For they pass by both names. And was he one?

Ulr. I've heard so; but I must take leave. Intendant,
Your servant! — Werner (*to Werner slightly*), if that be your name,

Yours. [*Exit Ulric.*]

Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That's well —
That's very well. You also know your place, too; 300
And yet I don't know that *I* know your place.

Wer. (*showing the ring*).
Would this assist your knowledge?

Iden. How! — What! — Eh!
A jewel!

Wer. 'Tis your own on one condition.

Iden. Mine! — Name it!

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 'tis
A family ring.

Iden. A family! — *yours!* — a gem!
I'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me,
An hour ere daybreak, with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real? Let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

Wer. Come, I'll trust you: 310
You have guessed, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it: this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

Iden. So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

Wer. I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the Baron's self hereafter — 'tis 320
To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 'tis not my business;
Besides, I never could obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward —
But *this!* — another look!

Wer. Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touch-stone of Philosophy herself! 330
Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou loadstar of
The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which

All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which, sitting
High on the Monarch's Diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist! — 340
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

Wer. Call me Werner still;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dreamed in a low garb. —
But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters; let us hence:
I'll show thee I am honest — (oh, thou jewel!)
Thou shalt be furnished, Werner, with such means 350
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee. — Let me gaze again!
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburg skilled in precious stones. How many
Carats may it weigh? — Come, Werner, I will wing thee.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene II. — Stralenheim's *Chamber*.

Stralenheim *and* Fritz.

Fritz. All's ready, my good Lord!

Stral. I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed: I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet

Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
‘Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist: — I will
Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well! 10

Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear?

Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable — — but ‘tis
All folly. Were the locks as I desired
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night’s
Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him “Ulric.”

Stral. *You think!* you supercilious slave! what right 20
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty. —
Get hence; “*You think*” indeed! you, who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dashed aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to
Thank him — and despise you. “*You think!*” and scarce
Can recollect his name! I will not waste 30
More words on you. Call me betimes.

Fritz. Good night!
I trust to-morrow will restore your Lordship
To renovated strength and temper. [*The scene closes.*
Scene III. — *The secret Passage.*

Gab. (solus). Four —

Five — six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts, on the never-merry clock,
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'Tis a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage-feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried, without resurrection,
In the grave of Possession; while the knoll 10
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple time in the son's ear.

I'm cold —

I'm dark; — I've blown my fingers — numbered o'er
And o'er my steps — and knocked my head against
Some fifty buttresses — and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their curséd pattering feet and whirling wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance): but it blinks 20
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction: I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.

A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me! Else — Heaven aid me
To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly: mighty well! 30
That corner's turned — so — ah! no; — right! it draws

Nearer. Here is a darksome angle — so,
That's weathered. — Let me pause. — Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped — no matter, 'tis a new one;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,

Wear more magnetic aspects: — I will on,
And be it where it may — I have my dagger
Which may protect me at a pinch. — Burn still,
Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus*! 40
My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp! — So! so!
He hears my invocation, and fails not.[*The scene closes.*
Scene IV. — *A Garden.*

Enter Werner.

Wer. I could not sleep — and now the hour's at hand!
All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;
And stationed in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in heaven; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never, never
Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
But not dishonoured: and I leave them with
A stain, — if not upon my name, yet in 10
My heart! — a never-dying canker-worm,
Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part: but how, without discovery? —
It must be done, however; and I'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my misery led to this
Base infamy; repentance must retrieve it: 20
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine;
Lands, freedom, life, — and yet he sleeps as soundly
Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when — — Hark! what noise is that? Again!
The branches shake; and some loose stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.

[Ulric *leaps down from the terrace.*
Ulric! ever welcome!
Thrice welcome now! this filial — —

Ulr. Stop! before
We approach, tell me — —

Wer. Why look you so?

Ulr. Do I ³⁰
Behold my father, or — —

Wer. What?

Ulr. An assassin?

Wer. Insane or insolent!

Ulr. Reply, sir, as
You prize your life, or mine!

Wer. To what must I
Answer?

Ulr. Are you or are you not the assassin
Of Stralenheim?

Wer. I never was as yet
The murderer of any man. What mean you?

Ulr. Did not you *this* night (as the night before)
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and — —
[Ulric *pauses.*

Wer. Proceed.

Ulr. *Died* he not by your hand?

Wer. Great God! ⁴⁰

Ulr. You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!
Embrace me! Yes, — your tone — your look — yes, yes, —
Yet *say* so.

Wer. If I e'er, in heart or mind,
Conceived deliberately such a thought,
But rather strove to trample back to hell
Such thoughts — if e'er they glared a moment through
The irritation of my oppressed spirit —
May Heaven be shut for ever from my hopes,
As from mine eyes!

Ulr. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as 'tis hateful! — 50
But what have I to do with this?

Ulr. No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarmed; but as the Intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been entered secretly. Excuse me,
If nature — —

Wer. Oh, my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

Ulr. My father! I acquit you! 60
But will the world do so? will even the judge,
If — but you must away this instant.

Wer. No!
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

Ulr. Yet
You had *no* guests — *no* visitors — no life

Breathing around you, save my mother's?

Wer. Ah!

The Hungarian?

Ulr. He is gone! he disappeared
Ere sunset.

Wer. No; I hid him in that very
Concealed and fatal gallery.

Ulr. *There* I'll find him.
[*Ulric is going.*

Wer. It is too late: he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret panel 70
Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatched the silent
And favourable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

Ulr. You reclosed
The panel?

Wer. Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

Ulr. You are sure you closed it? 80

Wer. Certain.

Ulr. That's well; but had been better, if
You ne'er had turned it to a den for — — [*He pauses.*

Wer. Thieves!

Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and deserve it;
But not — —

Ulr. No, father; do not speak of this:
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?

Wer. Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime: a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from 90
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have in such circumstances thrust him forth.

Ulr. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder thus: — you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace the murderer, if 'tis possible.

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion: two new victims in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian, 100
Who seems the culprit, and — —

Ulr. Who *seems*? Who else
Can be so?

Wer. Not *I*, though just now you doubted —
You, my *son*! — doubted — —

Ulr. And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

Wer. Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I,
Having seen the innocent oppressed for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart

Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be, 110
Because 'tis dusky.

Ulr. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away! — I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace — he also is a partner in
Your flight — moreover — —

Wer. Fly! and leave my name
Linked with the Hungarian's, or, preferred as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

Ulr. Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our fathers' sovereignty and castles, 120
For which you have so long panted, and in vain!
What *name*? You have *no name*, since that you bear
Is feigned.

Wer. Most true: but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men — —
Besides, the search — —

Ulr. I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 'tis *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment, 130
Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reached this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crushed, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled them.

Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such* — without lands, influence,
Save what hath perished with him. Few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway 140
O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown, — a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he'll have, or wants. If *I* discover
The assassin, 'twill be well — if not, believe me,
None else; though all the full-fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),
Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*. 150
Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer. — Look!
The stars are almost faded, and the grey
Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
You shall not answer: — Pardon me that I
Am peremptory: 'tis your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son. — Let's call my mother!
Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me: I'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed. 160
We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf — once more
Our banners shall be glorious! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them — Hence!
And may your age be happy! — I will kiss
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you!

Wer. This counsel's safe — but is it honourable?

Ulr. To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt*.

ACT IV

Scene I. — *A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near Prague.*

Enter Eric and Henrick, Retainers of the Count.

Eric. So, better times are come at last; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail — both
A long desideratum.

Hen. Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave: but, as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintained
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another Prince of the empire.

Eric. Why
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment 10
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?

Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as he's bounteous,
And we all love him.

Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honeymoon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal:
Anon, we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the present! 20
Then his brave son, Count Ulric — there's a knight!

Pity the wars are o'er!

Hen. Why so?

Eric. Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

Hen. He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Eric. That's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

Hen. But
Perhaps a true one.

Eric. Pity, as I said,
The wars are over: in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes, but yet offends not? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when gnashing 30
His tusks, and ripping up, from right to left,
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

Hen. No one's, I grant you. Do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

Eric. What do you mean?

Hen. You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our native fellow-vassals born 40
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As — — [*Pauses.*

Eric. What?

Hen. The war (you love so much) leaves living.
Like other parents, she spoils her worst children.

Eric. Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

Hen. And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourg — or, for that matter,
Wallenstein either; — they are gone to — —

Eric. Rest!
But what beyond 'tis not ours to pronounce.

Hen. I wish they had left us something of their rest:
The country (nominally now at peace) ⁵⁰
Is over-run with — God knows who: they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise; but
Leave us no less desolation, nay, even more,
Than the most open warfare.

Eric. But Count Ulric —
What has all this to do with him?

Hen. With him!
He — — might prevent it. As you say he's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders?

Eric. You'd better ask himself.

Hen. I would as soon
Ask the lion why he laps not milk.

Eric. And here he comes!

Hen. The devil! you'll hold your tongue? ⁶⁰

Eric. Why do you turn so pale?

Hen. 'Tis nothing — but

Be silent.

Eric. I will, upon what you have said.

Hen. I assure you I meant nothing, — a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late Baron's heiress;
And she, no doubt, will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon 70
The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said!

Enter Ulric and Rodolph.
Good morrow, count.

Ulr. Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?

Eric. The dogs are ordered
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your Excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

Ulr. The dun,

Walstein.

Eric. I fear he scarcely has recovered 80
The toils of Monday: 'twas a noble chase:
You speared *four* with your own hand.

Ulr. True, good Eric;
I had forgotten — let it be the grey, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.

Eric. He shall be straight caparisoned. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

Ulr. I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse.*[Exit Eric.*
Rodolph!

Rod. My Lord!

Ulr. The news
Is awkward from the — — *[Rodolph points to Henrick.*
How now, Henrick? why
Loiter you here?

Hen. For your commands, my Lord. 90

Ulr. Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount.*[Exit Henrick.*
Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'Tis rumoured that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthened. I must join them soon.

Rod. Best wait for further and more sure advices.

Ulr. I mean it — and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

Rod. It will be difficult 100
To excuse your absence to the Count your father.

Ulr. Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolffe leads — keep the forests on your route:

You know it well?

Rod. As well as on that night
When we — —

Ulr. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success:
And when you have joined, give Rosenberg this letter. 110
[Gives a letter.

Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida?

Ulr. Why,
I do so — but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years, 120
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 'twere that of Venus: — but I love her,
As woman should be loved — fairly and solely.

Rod. And constantly?

Ulr. I think so; for I love
Nought else. — But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! speed! good Rodolph!

Rod. On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?

Ulr. Perhaps: my father wishes it, and, sooth, 130
'Tis no bad policy: this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once

Unites the future and destroys the past.

Rod. Adieu.

Ulr. Yet hold — we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

Rod. I will. But to
Return — 'twas a most kind act in the count
Your father to send up to Konigsberg
For this fair orphan of the Baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

Ulr. Wondrous kind! ¹⁴⁰
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

Rod. The late Baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

Ulr. How should I know?

Rod. I have heard it whispered there was something strange
About his death — and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

Ulr. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

Rod. He
Has left no testament — no farewell words?

Ulr. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

Rod. Ah! here's the lady Ida. ¹⁵⁰
Enter Ida Stralenheim.

Ulr. You are early, my sweet cousin!

Ida. Not *too* early,
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me "*Cousin?*"

Ulr. (smiling). Are we not so?

Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weighed our blood.

Ulr. (starting). Blood!

Ida. Why does yours start from your cheeks?

Ulr. Aye! doth it?

Ida. It doth — but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

Ulr. (recovering himself). And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it 160
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet Cousin!

Ida. "Cousin" again.

Ulr. Nay, then, I'll call you sister.

Ida. I like that name still worse. — Would we had ne'er
Been aught of kindred!

Ulr. (gloomily). Would we never had!

Ida. Oh, heavens! and can you wish that?

Ulr. Dearest Ida!
Did I not echo your own wish?

Ida. Yes, Ulric,

But then I wished it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be
Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

Ulr. You shall be 170
All — all — —

Ida. And you to *me are* so already;
But I can wait.

Ulr. Dear *Ida*!

Ida. Call me *Ida*,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's —
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father —
[*She pauses.*

Ulr. You have *mine* — you have *me*.

Ida. Dear *Ulric*, how I wish
My father could but view my happiness,
Which wants but this!

Ulr. Indeed!

Ida. You would have loved him,
He you; for the brave ever love each other:
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative); but under 180
This grave exterior — — Would you had known each other!
Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

Ulr. Who says *that*?

Ida. What?

Ulr. That he *died alone*.

Ida. The general rumour,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er returned: that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

Ulr. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida. Alas! what is a menial to a death-bed, 190
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves? — They say he died of a fever.

Ulr. Say!
It *was* so.

Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulr. All dreams are false.

Ida. And yet I see him as
I see you.

Ulr. Where?

Ida. In sleep — I see him lie
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife
Beside him.

Ulr. But you do not see his *face*?

Ida (looking at him). No! Oh, my God! do *you*?

Ulr. Why do you ask?

Ida. Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

Ulr. (agitatedly). *Ida*, this is mere childishness; your weakness 200
Infects me, to my shame: but as all feelings

Of yours are common to me, it affects me.
Prithee, sweet child, change — —

Ida. Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers! [*A bugle sounds.*]

Rod. Hark, my Lord, the bugle!
Ida (*peevishly to Rodolph*).
Why need you tell him that? Can he not hear it
Without your echo?

Rod. Pardon me, fair Baroness!

Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count Ulric from the chase to-day.

Rod. You will not,
Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulr. I must not now 210
Forgo it.

Ida. But you shall!

Ulr. *Shall!*

Ida. Yes, or be
No true knight. — Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this, for this one day: the day looks heavy,
And you are turned so pale and ill.

Ulr. You jest.

Ida. Indeed I do not: — ask of Rodolph.

Rod. Truly,
My Lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than e'er I saw you change

In years.

Ulr. 'Tis nothing; but if 'twere, the air
Would soon restore me. I'm the true cameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts ²²⁰
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit — I'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.

Ida. Except his prey, I hope.

Ulr. Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

Ida. And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.

Ulr. Ida, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.

Ida. I do not wish
To be so; for I trust these wars are over, ²³⁰
And you will live in peace on your domains.
Enter Werner as Count Siegendorf.

Ulr. My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting. — You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.

Sieg. So let them. — You forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Returned, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshalled ranks.

Ulr. You, Count, ²⁴⁰

Will well supply the place of both — I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

Sieg. No, Ulric;
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility — —

Ida. And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanour.

Sieg. (to *Ida*). True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel. —
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,
So lately reinstated in our honours.
Believe me, 'twould be marked in any house,
But most in *ours*, that One should be found wanting 250
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven
Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving: first, for our country;
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

Ulr. (*aside*). Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at once.
(*Then aloud to a servant.*)
Ludwig, dismiss the train without! [*Exit Ludwig.*

Ida. And so
You yield, at once, to him what I for hours
Might supplicate in vain.

Sieg. (*smiling*). You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel! who 260
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not; thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

Ida. But I should like to govern *now*.

Sieg. You shall,

Your *harp*, which by the way awaits you with
The Countess in her chamber. She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.

Ida. Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you'll come and hear me?

Ulr. By and by.

Ida. Be sure I'll sound it better than your bugles; 270
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
I'll play you King Gustavus' march.

Ulr. And why not
Old Tilly's?

Ida. Not that monster's! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,
Could aught of *his* sound on it: — but come quickly;
Your mother will be eager to receive you.[*Exit Ida.*

Sieg. Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

Ulr. My time's your vassal. —
(*Aside to Rodolph.*) Rodolph, hence! and do
As I directed: and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply. 280

Rod. Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I am bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

Sieg. (*starts*). Ah! —
Where? on *what* frontier?

Rod. The Silesian, on
My way — (*Aside to Ulric.*) — *Where* shall I say?

Ulr. (*aside to Rodolph*). To Hamburg.

(Aside to himself). That
Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

Rod. Count, to Hamburg.

Sieg. (agitated). Hamburg! No, I have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!
[*Exit Rodolph.*]

Sieg. Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is 290
One of those strange companions whom I fain
Would reason with you on.

Ulr. My Lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

Sieg. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

Ulr. So they will do of most men. Even the monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

Sieg. If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph: 300
They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who still
Ravage the frontier.

Ulr. And will you believe
The world?

Sieg. In this case — yes.

Ulr. In *any* case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

Sieg. Son!

I understand you: you refer to — — but
My destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me: 310
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quenched them not — twenty thousand more, perchance,
Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which
Might date for years, did Anguish make the dial),
May not obliterate or expiate
The madness and dishonour of an instant.
Ulric, be warned by a father! — I was not
By mine, and you behold me!

Ulr. I behold
The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
Lord of a Prince's appanage, and honoured 320
By those he rules and those he ranks with.

Sieg. Ah!
Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
For thee? Belovéd, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me —
But if my son's is cold! — —

Ulr. Who *dare* say that?

Sieg. None else but I, who see it — *feel* it — keener
Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
The wound.

Ulr. You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling: how should it be so, 330

After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?

Sieg. And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years
In a like absence? But 'tis vain to urge you —
Nature was never called back by remonstrance.
Let's change the theme. I wish you to consider
That these young violent nobles of high name,
But dark deeds (aye, the darkest, if all Rumour
Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
Will lead thee — —

Ulr. (impatiently). I'll be *led* by no man.

Sieg. Nor
Be leader of such, I would hope: at once ³⁴⁰
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou shouldst wed the lady Ida — more
As thou appear'st to love her.

Ulr. I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with Hecate — can a son say more?

Sieg. He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is ³⁵⁰
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness,
(For Glory's pillow is but restless, if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service, to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient; else
Thou'dst say at once — "I love young Ida, and
Will wed her;" or, "I love her not, and all
The powers on earth shall never make me." — So
Would *I* have answered.

Ulr. Sir, you wed for love. 360

Sieg. I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.

Ulr. Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

Sieg. Still
Against your age and nature! Who at twenty
E'er answered thus till now?

Ulr. Did you not warn me
Against your own example?

Sieg. Boyish sophist!
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?

Ulr. What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her?

Sieg. As far
As you feel, nothing — but all life for her. 370
She's young — all-beautiful — adores you — is
Endowed with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue),
For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom;
And giving so much happiness, deserves
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart with a man who has none to break!
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose 380
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is — —

Ulr. The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:
I'll wed her, ne'ertheless; though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported

In favour of such unions.

Sieg. But she loves you.

Ulr. And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.

Sieg. Alas! Love never did so.

Ulr. Then 'tis time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps; till now 390
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

Sieg. But you consent?

Ulr. I did, and do.

Sieg. Then fix the day.

Ulr. Tis usual,
And, certes, courteous, to leave that to the lady.

Sieg. I will engage for *her*.

Ulr. So will not I
For any woman: and as what I fix,
I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I'll give mine.

Sieg. But 'tis your office
To woo.

Ulr. Count, 'tis a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but to please you,
I will now pay my duty to my mother, 400
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is. —
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,

To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
The eyes of feminine, as though they were
The stars receding early to our wish
Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle — 410
What can a son or man do more?[*Exit* Ulric.

Sieg. (solus). Too much! —
Too much of duty, and too little love!
He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
Ne'er left him, nor my eyes longed without tears
To see my child again, — and now I have found him!
But how! obedient, but with coldness; duteous
In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious — 420
Abstracted — distant — much given to long absence,
And where — none know — in league with the most riotous
Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,
He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
Yet there's some tie between them which I can not

Unravel. They look up to him — consult him —
Throng round him as a leader: but with me
He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
After — what! doth my father's curse descend
Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near 430
To shed more blood? or — Oh! if it should be!
Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
To wither him and his — who, though they slew not,
Unlatched the door of Death for thee? 'Twas not
Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,
And yet I spared thee when my own destruction
Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening!
And only took — Accurséd gold! thou liest
Like poison in my hands; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee; thou camest in such a guise, 440

Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villanous gold! and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida — cherished her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an Attendant.

Atten. The abbot, if it please
Your Excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. [*Exit Attendant.*

Enter the Prior Albert.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them!

Sieg. Welcome, welcome, holy father! 450
And may thy prayer be heard! — all men have need
Of such, and I — —

Prior. Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

Sieg. Yes, good father;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

Prior. To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe, 460
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal and the worm which dieth not!

Sieg. True, father: and to avert those pangs from one,
Who, though of our most faultless holy Church,

Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smooth the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.
[*Siegenderdorf offers the gold which he had taken from Stralenheim.*

Prior. Count, if I
Receive it, 'tis because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured 470
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our House needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endowed it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 'tis fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

Sieg. (faltering). For — for — the dead.

Prior. His name?

Sieg. 'Tis from a soul, and not a name,
I would avert perdition.

Prior. I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest. 480

Sieg. Secret! I have none: but, father, he who's gone
Might *have* one; or, in short, he did bequeath —
No, not bequeath — but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

Prior. A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.

Sieg. But he who's gone was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the stanchest.

Prior. Better still!

To employ our means to obtain Heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

Sieg. But I did not ⁴⁹⁰
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But — —

Prior. Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell —
An evangelical compassion — with
Your own gold too!

Sieg. Father, 'tis not my gold.

Prior. Whose, then? You said it was no legacy.

Sieg. No matter whose — of this be sure, that he
Who owned it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars: ⁵⁰⁰
'Tis yours, or theirs.

Prior. Is there no blood upon it?

Sieg. No; but there's worse than blood — eternal shame!

Prior. Did he who owned it die in his *bed*?

Sieg. Alas!
He did.

Prior. Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

Sieg. His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

Prior. You said he died in his bed, not battle.

Sieg. He

Died, I scarce know — but — he was stabbed i' the dark,
And now you have it — perished on his pillow
By a cut-throat! — Aye! — you may look upon me! 510
I am not the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.

Prior. Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?

Sieg. No! by the God who sees and strikes!

Prior. Nor know you
Who slew him?

Sieg. I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemployed. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.

Prior. Then you are free from guilt.

Sieg. (eagerly). Oh! *am* I? — say!

Prior. You have said so, and know best.

Sieg. Father! I have spoken 520
The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole*;
Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood
Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,
Though, by the Power who abhorreth human blood,
I did not! — nay, once spared it, when I might
And *could* — aye, perhaps, *should* (if our self-safety
Be e'er excusable in such defences
Against the attacks of over-potent foes):
But pray for him, for me, and all my house;
For, as I said, though I be innocent,
I know not why, a like remorse is on me,
As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,
Father! I have prayed myself in vain.

Prior. I will.

Be comforted! You are innocent, and should
Be calm as innocence.

Sieg. But calmness is not
Always the attribute of innocence.
I feel it is not.

Prior. But it will be so,
When the mind gathers up its truth within it.
Remember the great festival to-morrow,
In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,
As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect,
Nor in the general orison of thanks
For bloodshed stopt, let blood you shed not rise,
A cloud, upon your thoughts. This were to be
Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget
Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty.[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

Scene I. — *A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.*

Enter Arnheim and Meister, attendants of Count Siegendorf.

Arn. Be quick! the Count will soon return: the ladies
Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators, —
I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arn. Go to! my Lady Countess comes.

Meis. I'd rather ¹⁰
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man,
In these dull pageantries.

Arn. Begone! and rail

Within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the Countess Josephine Siegendorf and Ida Stralenheim.

Jos. Well, Heaven be praised! the show is over.

Ida. How can you say so? Never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stained windows, even the *tombs*, ²⁰

Which looked so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seemed as if they rather came from Heaven
Than mounted there — the bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;
The white robes and the lifted eyes; the world
At peace! and all at peace with one another!
Oh, my sweet mother! [*Embracing Josephine.*

Jos. My beloved child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida. Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

Jos. It does, my love; and never may it throb 30
With aught more bitter.

Ida. Never shall it do so!
How should it? What should make us grieve? I hate
To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely? You,
The Count, and Ulric, and your daughter *Ida*.

Jos. Poor child!

Ida. Do you pity me?

Jos. No: I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

Ida. I'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains 40
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
Aught like him? How he towered amongst them all!
How all eyes followed him! The flowers fell faster —
Rained from each lattice at his feet, methought,
Than before all the rest; and where he trod

I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.

Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

Ida. But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him — I fear him.

Jos. Why so? he loves you well.

Ida. But I can never 50
Shape my thoughts *of* him into words *to* him:
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

Jos. How so?

Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.

Jos. It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

Ida. But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.

Ida. I did not see him, 60
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet, methought,
Through my fast tears, though they were thick and warm,
I saw him smiling on me.

Jos. I could not

See aught save Heaven, to which my eyes were raised,
Together with the people's.

Ida. I thought too
Of Heaven, although I looked on Ulric.

Jos. Come,
Let us retire! they will be here anon,
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains. 70

Ida. And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you.
Enter Count Siegendorf, in full dress, from the solemnity, and Ludwig.

Sieg. Is he not found?

Lud. Strict search is making every where; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

Sieg. Where's Ulric?

Lud. He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his Excellency, with his train, 80
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.
Enter Ulric, splendidly dressed.

Sieg. (to Ludwig). See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described. [*Exit Ludwig.*
Oh, Ulric!
How have I longed for thee!

Ulr. Your wish is granted —
Behold me!

Sieg. I have seen the murderer.

Ulr. Whom? Where?

Sieg. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

Ulr. You dream.

Sieg. I live! and as I live, I saw him —
Heard him! he dared to utter even my name.

Ulr. What name?

Sieg. Werner! 'twas mine.

Ulr. It must be so
No more: forget it.

Sieg. Never! never! all
My destinies were woven in that name: 90
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

Ulr. To the point — — the Hungarian?

Sieg. Listen! — The church was thronged: the hymn was raised;
“*Te Deum*” pealed from nations rather than
From choirs, in one great cry of “God be praised”
For one day’s peace, after thrice ten dread years,
Each bloodier than the former: I arose,
With all the nobles, and as I looked down
Along the lines of lifted faces, — from
Our bannered and escutcheoned gallery, I 100
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
A moment and no more), what struck me sightless
To all else — the Hungarian’s face! I grew
Sick; and when I recovered from the mist
Which curled about my senses, and again
Looked down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving

Was over, and we marched back in procession.

Ulr. Continue.

Sieg. When we reached the Muldau's bridge,
The joyous crowd above, the numberless
Barks manned with revellers in their best garbs, 110
Which shot along the glancing tide below,
The decorated street, the long array,
The clashing music, and the thundering
Of far artillery, which seemed to bid
A long and loud farewell to its great doings,
The standards o'er me, and the tramlings round,
The roar of rushing thousands, — all — all could not
Chase this man from my mind, although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

Ulr. You saw him
No more, then?

Sieg. I looked, as a dying soldier 120
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;
But still I saw him not; but in his stead — —

Ulr. What in his stead?

Sieg. My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest.
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head,
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflowed the glittering streets of Prague.

Ulr. What's this to the Hungarian?

Sieg. Much! for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son;
When just as the artillery ceased, and paused 130
The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,

Distinct and keener far upon my ear
Than the late cannon's volume, this word — "Werner!"

Ulr. Uttered by — —

Sieg. Him! I turned — and saw — and fell.

Ulr. And wherefore? Were you seen?

Sieg. The officious care
Of those around me dragged me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause:
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children) 140
To aid me.

Ulr. But I'll aid you now.

Sieg. In what?

Ulr. In searching for this man, or — — When he's found,
What shall we do with him?

Sieg. I know not that.

Ulr. Then wherefore seek?

Sieg. Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem intertwined! nor can be
Unravell'd, till — —
Enter an Attendant.

Atten. A stranger to wait on
Your Excellency.

Sieg. Who?

Atten. He gave no name.

Sieg. Admit him, ne'ertheless.
[*The Attendant introduces Gabor, and afterwards exit.*
Ah!

Gab. 'Tis then Werner!

Sieg. (haughtily).
The same you knew, sir, by that name; and *you!* 150

Gab. (looking round).
I recognise you both: father and son,
It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.

Sieg. I have sought you, and have found you: you are charged
(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as — — [*He pauses.*

Gab. Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

Sieg. You shall do so —
Unless — —

Gab. First, who accuses me?

Sieg. All things,
If not all men: the universal rumour —
My own presence on the spot — the place — the time — 160
And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

Gab. And on *me only*?
Pause ere you answer: is no other name,
Save mine, stained in this business?

Sieg. Trifling villain!
Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe
Thou best dost know the innocence of him

'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.
But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

Gab. 'Tis false! 170

Sieg. Who says so?

Gab. I.

Sieg. And how disprove it?

Gab. By
The presence of the murderer.

Sieg. Name him.

Gab. He
May have more names than one. Your Lordship had so
Once on a time.

Sieg. If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.

Gab. You may do so, and in safety;
I know the assassin.

Sieg. Where is he?

Gab. (*pointing to Ulric*).Beside you!
[*Ulric rushes forward to attack Gabor; Siegendorf interposes.*

Sieg. Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.
Ulric, repel this calumny, as I[*He turns to Ulric.*
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous, 180
I could not deem it earth-born: but be calm;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.

[Ulric endeavours to compose himself.

Gab. Look at *him*, Count, and then *hear me*.

Sieg. (*first to Gabor, and then looking at Ulric*).

I hear thee.

My God! you look — —

Ulr. How?

Sieg. As on that dread night,

When we met in the garden.

Ulr. (*composing himself*). It is nothing.

Gab. Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the people in the church, I dreamed not
To find the beggared Werner in the seat
Of Senators and Princes; but you have called me, 190
And we have met.

Sieg. Go on, sir.

Gab. Ere I do so,
Allow me to inquire, who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was't I — as poor as ever;
And poorer by suspicion on my name!
The Baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought. —
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates scarce less than princely.

Sieg. These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

Gab. I can't help that. 200
But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.

I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed — *dare* you protect me?
Dare you command me?

[Siegendorf *first looks at the Hungarian, and then at Ulric, who has unbuckled his sabre, and is drawing lines with it on the floor — still in its sheath.*

Ulr. (*looks at his father, and says,*) Let the man go on!

Gab. I am unarmed, Count, bid your son lay down
His sabre.

Ulr. (*offers it to him contemptuously*). Take it.

Gab. No, sir, 'tis enough
That we are both unarmed — I would not choose
To wear a steel which may be stained with more 210
Blood than came there in battle.

Ulr. (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*). It — or some
Such other weapon in my hand — spared yours
Once, when disarmed and at my mercy.

Gab. True —
I have not forgotten it: you spared me for
Your own especial purpose — to sustain
An ignominy not my own.

Ulr. Proceed.
The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further?[*To Siegendorf.*

Sieg. (*takes his son by the hand*).
My son, I know my own innocence, and doubt not
Of yours — but I have promised this man patience; 220
Let him continue.

Gab. I will not detain you,
By speaking of myself much: I began

Life early — and am what the world has made me.
At Frankfort on the Oder, where I passed
A winter in obscurity, it was
My chance at several places of resort
(Which I frequented sometimes, but not often)
To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance, 230
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp. — They proved,
However, not to be so — but banditti,
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt — the forests
Which skirt Bohemia — even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank — and martial law slept for a time.
At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction 240
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate
I know no more.

Sieg. And what is this to Ulric?

Gab. Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments: — birth and fortune,
Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivalled, were proclaimed
His by the public rumour; and his sway,
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft,
Such was his influence: — I have no great faith 250
In any magic save that of the mine —
I therefore deemed him wealthy. — But my soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Sieg. And did you so?

Gab. You'll hear. Chance favoured me:

A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together — it was one of those
Occasions where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are — even in their faces:
The moment my eye met his, I exclaimed, ²⁶⁰
“This is the man!” though he was then, as since,
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
I had not erred, and watched him long and nearly;
I noted down his form — his gesture — features,
Stature, and bearing — and amidst them all,
‘Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
And gladiator's heart.

Ulr. (smiling). The tale sounds well.

Gab. And may sound better. — He appeared to me
One of those beings to whom Fortune bends, ²⁷⁰
As she doth to the daring — and on whom
The fates of others oft depend; besides,
An indescribable sensation drew me
Near to this man, as if my point of fortune
Was to be fixed by him. — There I was wrong.

Sieg. And may not be right now.

Gab. I followed him,
Solicited his notice — and obtained it —
Though not his friendship: — it was his intention
To leave the city privately — we left it
Together — and together we arrived ²⁸⁰
In the poor town where Werner was concealed,
And Stralenheim was succoured — — Now we are on
The verge — *dare* you hear further?

Sieg. I must do so —
Or I have heard too much.

Gab. I saw in you

A man above his station — and if not
So high, as now I find you, in my then
Conceptions, 'twas that I had rarely seen
Men such as you appeared in height of mind,
In the most high of worldly rank; you were
Poor, even to all save rags: I would have shared 290
My purse, though slender, with you — you refused it.

Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
That thus you urge it?

Gab. Still you owe me something,
Though not for that; and I owed you my safety,
At least my seeming safety, when the slaves
Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
That *I* had robbed him.

Sieg. I concealed you — I,
Whom and whose house you arraign, reviving viper!

Gab. I accuse no man — save in my defence.
You, Count, have made yourself accuser — judge: 300
Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
Be just, and *I'll* be merciful!

Sieg. You merciful? —
You! Base calumniator!

Gab. I. 'Twill rest
With me at last to be so. You concealed me —
In secret passages known to yourself,
You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
Of tracing back my way, I saw a glimmer,
Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light:
I followed it, and reached a door — a secret 310
Portal — which opened to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,

I looked through and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim! —

Sieg. Asleep! And yet
You slew him! — Wretch!

Gab. He was already slain,
And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.

Sieg. But he was all alone!
You saw none else? You did not see the — —
[*He pauses from agitation.*]

Gab. No,
He, whom you dare not name, nor even I 320
Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in
The chamber.

Sieg. (to Ulric). Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still —
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once. — Oh! now
Do thou as much.

Gab. Be patient! I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, — or
If not, your son does, — that the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had entered
He best knows — but within an antechamber, 330
The door of which was half ajar, I saw
A man who washed his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon —
The bleeding body — but it moved no more.

Sieg. Oh! God of fathers!

Gab. I beheld his features
As I see yours — but yours they were not, though

Resembling them — behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct as I beheld them, though the expression
Is not now what it then was! — but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime — so lately. 340

Sieg. This is so —

Gab. (interrupting him). Nay — but hear me to the end!
Now you must do so. — I conceived myself
Betrayed by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt; and my first thought
Was vengeance: but though armed with a short poniard
(Having left my sword without), I was no match
For him at any time, as had been proved
That morning — either in address or force. 350
I turned and fled — i' the dark: chance rather than
Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept: if I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted;
But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.

Sieg. And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief sleep,
The stars had not gone down when I awoke.
Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father —
And now my dream is out!

Gab. 'Tis not my fault, 360
If I have read it. — Well! I fled and hid me —
Chance led me here after so many moons —
And showed me Werner in Count Siegendorf!
Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the palace of a sovereign!
You sought me and have found me — now you know
My secret, and may weigh its worth.

Sieg. (after a pause). Indeed!

Gab. Is it revenge or justice which inspires
Your meditation?

Sieg. Neither — I was weighing
The value of your secret.

Gab. You shall know it ³⁷⁰
At once: — When you were poor, and I, though poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty
As might have envied mine, I offered you
My purse — you would not share it: — I'll be franker
With you: you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The imperial powers — you understand me?

Sieg. Yes.

Gab. Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true:
'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present. You shall aid me:
I would have aided you — and also have ³⁸⁰
Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.

Sieg. Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation?

Gab. (*casts his eyes on Ulric, who is
leaning against a pillar*). If I should do so?

Sieg. I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into
This tower.[*Opens a turret-door.*

Gab. (*hesitatingly*). This is the second *safe* asylum
You have offered me.

Sieg. And was not the first so?

Gab. I know not that even now — but will approve
The second. I have still a further shield. —

I did not enter Prague alone; and should I 390
Be put to rest with Stralenheim, there are
Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.
Be brief in your decision!

Sieg. I will be so. —
My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

Gab. I'll take it for so much.

Sieg. (*points to Ulric's sabre, still upon the ground*).
Take also *that* —
I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.

Gab. (*takes up the sabre*). I will; and so provide
To sell my life — not cheaply.
[*Gabor goes into the turret, which Siegendorf closes.*

Sieg. (*advances to Ulric*). Now, Count Ulric!
For son I dare not call thee — What say'st thou? 400

Ulr. His tale is true.

Sieg. True, monster!

Ulr. Most true, father!
And you did well to listen to it: what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.

Sieg. Aye, with half of my domains;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

Ulr. It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

Sieg. How so?

Ulr. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before? 410
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death? Or had the Prince's household been
Then summoned, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I
Have loitered on the way? Or could *you*, *Werner*,
The object of the Baron's hate and fears,
Have fled, unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathomed you,
Doubting if you were false or feeble: I 420
Perceived you were the latter: and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.

Sieg. Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?

Ulr. Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured,
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard 430
This fellow's tale without some feeling? — You
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 'tis working now.

Ulr. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still! — If *you* condemn me, yet,

Remember *who* hath taught me once too often 440
To listen to him! *Who* proclaimed to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who showed me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamped
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself — a *felon's* brand! The man who is 450
At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have done
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Strahlenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe — but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us 460
And our true destination — but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life*: when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch — *you* showed the path; now trace me that
Of safety — or let me!

Sieg. I have done with life!

Ulr. Let us have done with that which cankers life —
Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We have 470
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men who
(Although you know them not) dare venture all things.
You stand high with the state; what passes here

Will not excite her too great curiosity:
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not; — leave the rest to me:
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.
[Exit Ulric.

Sieg. (solus). Am I awake? are these my father's halls?
And *you* — my son? *My son! mine!* I who have ever 480
Abhorred both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed —
The Hungarian's! — Ulric — he hath partisans,
It seems: I might have guessed as much. Oh fool!
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor! 490
[Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.
Scene II. — *The Interior of the Turret.*

Gabor and Siegendorf.

Gab. Who calls?

Sieg. I — Siegendorf! Take these and fly!
Lose not a moment!
[Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into Gabor's hand.

Gab. What am I to do
With these?

Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!

Gab. You pledged your honour for my safety!

Sieg. And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,

It seems, of my own castle — of my own
Retainers — nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by — —

Gab. Is it even so? 10
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!

Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still! — Begone!

Gab. By the same path I entered?

Sieg. Yes; that's safe still;
But loiter not in Prague; — you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

Gab. I know too well —
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy Sire! [*Exit Gabor.*
Farewell!

Sieg. (solus and listening).
He hath cleared the staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe! — Oh, my father's spirit! — I am faint — 20
[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter Ulric with others armed, and with weapons drawn.

Ulr. Despatch! — he's there!

Lud. The Count, my Lord!

Ulr. (recognizing Siegendorf). You here, sir!

Sieg. Yes: if you want another victim, strike!

Ulr. (seeing him stript of his jewels).

Where is the ruffian who hath plundered you?
Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'Twas as I said — the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a Prince's heir-loom!
Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

[Exeunt all but Siegendorf and Ulric.]

What's this?

Where is the villain?

Sieg. There are *two*, sir: which
Are you in quest of?

Ulr. Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him 30
Escape?

Sieg. He's gone.

Ulr. With your connivance?

Sieg. With
My fullest, freest aid.

Ulr. Then fare you well!
[Ulric is going.]

Sieg. Stop! I command — entreat — implore! Oh, Ulric!
Will you then leave me?

Ulr. What! remain to be
Denounced — dragged, it may be, in chains; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporizing pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, Count,
Henceforth you have no son!

Sieg. I never had one; 40
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!

Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

Ulr. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains; a thousand, aye, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands are mine.

Sieg. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort!

Ulr. Yes — men — who are worthy of the name! Go tell
Your Senators that they look well to Prague;
Their Feast of Peace was early for the times; ⁵⁰
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!
Enter Josephine and Ida.

Jos. What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heaven, I see you safe!

Sieg. Safe!

Ida. Yes, dear father!

Sieg. No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good Lord?

Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon!
Ida (taking Ulric's hand). Who shall dare say this of Ulric?

Sieg. Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.
Ida (stooping to kiss it). I'd kiss it off, though it were mine.

Sieg. It is so!

Ulr. Away! it is your father's! [*Exit Ulr.*

Ida. Oh, great God! 60

And I have loved this man!

[*Ida falls senseless — Josephine stands speechless with horror.*

Sieg. The wretch hath slain

Them both! — My Josephine! we are now alone!

Would we had ever been so! — All is over

For me! — Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;

Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son

In mine! — The race of Siegendorf is past.

The end of the fifth act and the Drama.

B. P. Jy 20, 1822.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

A DRAMA.

INTRODUCTION

The date of the original MS. of *The Deformed Transformed* is "Pisa, 1822." There is nothing to show in what month it was written, but it may be conjectured that it was begun and finished within the period which elapsed between the death of Allegra, April 20, and the death of Shelley, July 8, 1822. According to Medwin (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 227), an unfavourable criticism of Shelley's ("It is a bad imitation of *Faust*"), together with a discovery that "two entire lines" of Southey's —

"And water shall see thee,
And fear thee, and flee thee" —

were imbedded in one of his "Songs," touched Byron so deeply that he "threw the poem into the fire," and concealed the existence of a second copy for more than two years. It is a fact that Byron's correspondence does not contain the remotest allusion to *The Deformed Transformed*; but, with regard to the plagiarism from Southey, in the play as written in 1822 there is neither Song nor Incantation which could have contained two lines from *The Curse of Kehama*.

As a dramatist, Byron's function, or *métier*, was twofold. In *Manfred*, in *Cain*, in *Heaven and Earth*, he is concerned with the analysis and evolution of metaphysical or ethical notions; in *Marino Faliero*, in *Sardanapalus*, and *The Two Foscari*, he set himself "to dramatize striking passages of history;" in *The Deformed Transformed* he sought to combine the solution of a metaphysical puzzle or problem, the relation of personality to individuality, with the scenic rendering of a striking historical episode, the Sack of Rome in 1527.

In the note or advertisement prefixed to the drama, Byron acknowledges that "the production" is founded partly on the story of a forgotten novel, *The Three Brothers*, and partly on "the *Faust* of the great Goethe."

Arnaud, or Julian, the hero of *The Three Brothers* (by Joshua Pickersgill, jun., 4 vols., 1803), "sells his soul to the Devil, and becomes an arch-fiend in order to avenge himself for the taunts of strangers on the deformity of his person" (see *Gent. Mag.*, November, 1804, vol. 74, p. 1047; and *post*, pp. 473-479). The idea

of an escape from natural bonds or disabilities by supernatural means and at the price of the soul or will, the *un*-Christlike surrender to the tempter, which is the *grund-stoff* of the Faust-legend, was brought home to Byron, in the first instance, not by Goethe, or Calderon, or Marlowe, but by Joshua Pickersgill. A fellow-feeling lent an intimate and peculiar interest to the theme. He had suffered all his life from a painful and inconvenient defect, which his proud and sensitive spirit had magnified into a deformity. He had been stung to the quick by his mother's taunts and his sweetheart's ridicule, by the jeers of the base and thoughtless, by slanderous and brutal paragraphs in newspapers. He could not forget that he was lame. If his enemies had but possessed the wit, they might have given him "the sobriquet of *Le Diable Boiteux*" (letter to Moore, April 2, 1823, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 179). It was no wonder that so poignant, so persistent a calamity should be "reproduced in his poetry" (*Life*, p. 13), or that his passionate impatience of such a "thorn in the flesh" should picture to itself a mysterious and unhallowed miracle of healing. It is true, as Moore says (*Life*, pp. 45, 306), that "the trifling deformity of his foot" was the embittering circumstance of his life, that it "haunted him like a curse;" but it by no means follows that he seriously regarded his physical peculiarity as a stamp of the Divine reprobation, that "he was possessed by an *idée fixe* that every blessing would be 'turned into a curse' to him" (letter of Lady Byron to H. C. Robinson, *Diary, etc.*, 1869, in. 435, 436). No doubt he indulged himself in morbid fancies, played with the extravagances of a restless imagination, and wedded them to verse; but his intellect, "brooding like the day, a master o'er a slave," kept guard. He would never have pleaded on his own behalf that the tyranny of an *idée fixe*, a delusion that he was predestined to evil, was an excuse for his short-comings or his sins.

Byron's very considerable obligations to *The Three Brothers* might have escaped notice, but the resemblance between his "Stranger," or "Cæsar," and the Mephistopheles of "the great Goethe" was open and palpable.

If Medwin may be trusted (*Conversations*, 1824, p. 210), Byron had read "*Faust* in a sorry French translation," and it is probable that Shelley's inspired rendering of "May-day Night," which was published in *The Liberal* (No. i., October 14, 1822, pp. 123-137), had been read to him, and had attracted his attention. *The Deformed Transformed* is "a *Faustish* kind of drama;" and Goethe, who maintained that Byron's play as a whole was "no imitation," but "new and original, close, genuine, and spirited," could not fail to perceive that "his devil was suggested by my Mephistopheles" (*Conversations*, 1874, p. 174). The tempter who cannot resist the temptation of sneering at his own wiles, who mocks for mocking's sake, is not Byron's creation, but Goethe's. Lucifer talked

at the clergy, if he did not “talk like a clergyman;” but the “bitter hunchback,” even when he is *solus*, sneers as the river wanders, “at his own sweet will.” He is not a doctor, but a spirit of unbelief!

The second part of *The Deformed Transformed* represents, in three scenes, the Siege and Sack of Rome in 1527. Byron had read Robertson’s *Charles the Fifth* (ed. 1798, ii. 313-329) in his boyhood (*Life*, p. 47), but it is on record that he had studied, more or less closely, the narratives of contemporary authorities. A note to *The Prophecy of Dante* (*Poetical Works*, 1901, iv. 258) refers to the *Sacco di Roma*, descritto da Luigi Guicciardini, and the *Ragguaglio Storico ... sacco di Roma dell’ anno MDXXVII.* of Jacopo Buonaparte; and it is evident that he was familiar with Cellini’s story of the marvellous gests and exploits *quorum maxima pars fuit*, which were wrought at “the walls by the Campo Santo,” or on the ramparts of the Castle of San Angelo.

The Sack of Rome was a great national calamity, and it was something more: it was a profanation and a sacrilege. The literature which it evoked was a cry of anguish, a prophetic burden of despair. “Chants populaires,” writes M. Emile Gebhart (*De l’Italie*, “Le Sac de Rome en 1527,” 1876, pp. 267, *sq.*), “*Nouvelles de Giraldi Cintio, en forme de Décaméron ... récits historiques ... de César Grollier, Dialogues anonymes ... poésies de Pasquin, toute une littérature se developpa sur ce thème douloureux.... Le Lamento di Roma, œuvre étrange, d’inspiration gibeline, rappelle les espérances politiques exprimées jadis par Dante ... ‘Bien que César m’ait dépouillé’e de liberté, nous avons toujours été d’accord dans une même volonté. Je ne me lamenterais pas si lui régnait; mais je crois qu’il est ressuscité, ou qu’il ressuscitera véritablement, car souvent un Ange m’a annoncé qu’un César viendrait me délivrer.’... Enfin, voici une chanson française que répétaient en repassant les monts les soldats du Marquis de Saluces: —*

“Parlons de la déffaiete
De ces pouvres Rommains,
Aussi de la complainete
De notre père saint.
“O noble roy de France,
Regarde en pitié
L’Eglise en ballance ...
Pour Dieu! ne tarde plus,
C’est ta mère, ta substance;
O fils, n’en faictz reffus.”

“Le dernier monument,” adds M. Gebhart, in a footnote, “de cette littérature, est le singulier drame de Byron, *The Deformed Transformed*, dont Jules César est le héros, et le Sac de Rome le cadre.”

It is unlikely that Byron, who read everything he could lay his hands upon, and spared no trouble to master his “period,” had not, either at first or second hand, acquainted himself with specimens of this popular literature. (For *La Presa e Lamento di Roma*, *Romæ Lamentatio*, etc., see *Lamenti Storici dei Secoli* xiv., xv. (Medin e Fratri), *Scelta di Curiosità*, etc., 235, 236, 237, Bologna, 1890, vol. iii. See, too, for “Chanson sur la Mort du Connétable de Bourbon,” *Recueil de Chants historiques français*, par A. J. V. Le Roux de Lincy, 1842, ii. 99.) *The Deformed Transformed* was published by John Hunt, February 20, 1824. A third edition appeared February 23, 1824.

It was reviewed, unfavourably, in the *London Magazine*, March, 1824, vol. 9, pp. 315-321; the *Scots Magazine*, March, 1824, N.S. vol. xiv. pp. 353-356; and in the *Monthly Review*, March, 1824, Enlarged Series, 103, pp. 321, 324. One reviewer, however (*London Magazine*), had the candour to admit that “Lord Byron may write below himself, but he can never write below us!”

For the unfinished third part, *vide post*, pp. -534.

ADVERTISEMENT

This production is founded partly on the story of a novel called “The Three Brothers,” published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis’s “Wood Demon” was also taken; and partly on the “Faust” of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Stranger, *afterwards* Cæsar

Arnold.

Bourbon.

Philibert.

Cellini.

Bertha.

Olimpia.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, etc.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED

PART I

Scene I. — *A Forest.*

Enter Arnold and his mother Bertha.

Bert. Out, Hunchback!

Arn. I was born so, Mother!

Bert. Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!

Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Bert. I would so, too!
But as thou *hast* — hence, hence — and do thy best!
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 'tis
More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn. It *bears* its burthen; — but, my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, Mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing ¹⁰
Save You, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me — do not kill me!

Bert. Yes — I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of Nature. But get hence,
And gather wood!

Arn. I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are

So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me:
Our milk has been the same.

Bert. As is the hedgehog's, ²⁰
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple, next day, sore, and udder dry.
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out!
[*Exit Bertha.*

Arn. (solus). Oh, mother! — — She is gone, and I must do
Her bidding; — wearily but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope ³⁰
A kind word in return. What shall I do?
[*Arnold begins to cut wood: in doing this he wounds one of his hands.*
My labour for the day is over now.
Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home — What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind — not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed, too,
Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!
Or that the Devil, to whom they liken me, ⁴⁰
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.
[*Arnold goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he starts back.*
They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me,
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch

That I am! The very waters mock me with 50
My horrid shadow — like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein. [*He pauses.*

And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life? Thou blood,
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not, in a fuller stream,
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore, at once,
This hateful compound of her atoms, and 60
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new worms!
This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
This withered slip of Nature's nightshade — my
Vile form — from the creation, as it hath
The green bough from the forest.

[*Arnold places the knife in the ground, with the point upwards.*

Now 'tis set,
And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
Myself, and the sweet sun which warmed me, but 70
In vain. The birds — how joyously they sing!
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell;
The fallen leaves my monument; the murmur
Of the near fountain my sole elegy.

Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall!

[*As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the fountain, which seems in motion.*

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
The ripple of a spring change my resolve?

No. Yet it moves again! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterranean 80
And rocking Power of the internal world.

What's here? A mist! No more? —

[A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it: it is dispelled, and a tall black man comes towards him.]

Arn. What would you? Speak!
Spirit or man?

Stran. As man is both, why not
Say both in one?

Arn. Your form is man's, and yet
You may be devil.

Stran. So many men are that
Which is so called or thought, that you may add me
To which you please, without much wrong to either.
But come: you wish to kill yourself; — pursue
Your purpose.

Arn. You have interrupted me.

Stran. What is that resolution which can e'er 90
Be interrupted? If I be the devil
You deem, a single moment would have made you
Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;
And yet my coming saves you.

Arn. I said not
You *were* the Demon, but that your approach
Was like one.

Stran. Unless you keep company
With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
Society) you can't tell how he approaches;
And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
And then on me, and judge which of us twain 100
Looks likest what the boors believe to be
Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn. Do you — dare *you*
To taunt me with my born deformity?

Stran. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
With thy Sublime of Humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet
Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind 110
With thee. Thy form is natural: 'twas only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
The gifts which are of others upon man.

Arn. Give me the strength then of the buffalo's foot,
When he spurns high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long
And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
The helmless dromedary! — and I'll bear
Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.

Stran. I will.

Arn. (*with surprise*). Thou *canst*?

Stran. Perhaps. Would you aught else? 120

Arn. Thou mockest me.

Stran. Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That's poor sport, methinks.
To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
Or wolf, or lion — leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household cauldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee, —
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.

Arn. Then waste not ¹³⁰
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.

Stran. Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I'm not so easily recalled to do
Good service.

Arn. What wilt thou do for me?

Stran. Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;
Or form you to your wish in any shape.

Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the Demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

Stran. I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.

Arn. On what condition?

Stran. There's a question! ¹⁴⁰
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.

Stran. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcase?

Arn. 'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be signed in blood?

Stran. Not in your own.

Arn. Whose blood then?

Stran. We will talk of that hereafter.

But I'll be moderate with you, for I see 150
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?

Arn. I take thee at thy word.

Stran. Now then! —

[*The Stranger approaches the fountain, and turns to Arnold.*
A little of your blood.

Arn. For what?

Stran. To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.

Arn. (*holding out his wounded arm*). Take it all.

Stran. Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

[*The Stranger takes some of Arnold's blood in his hand, and casts it into the fountain.*

Shadows of Beauty!

Shadows of Power!

Rise to your duty — 160

This is the hour!

Walk lovely and pliant

From the depth of this fountain,

As the cloud-shapen giant

Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.

Come as ye were,

That our eyes may behold

The model in air

Of the form I will mould,

Bright as the Iris 170

When ether is spanned; —

Such *his* desire is, [*Pointing to Arnold.*

Such *my* command!
Demons heroic —
Demons who wore
The form of the Stoic
Or sophist of yore —
Or the shape of each victor —
From Macedon's boy,
To each high Roman's picture, 180
Who breathed to destroy —
Shadows of Beauty!
Shadows of Power!
Up to your duty —
This is the hour!
[*Various phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and Arnold.*

Arn. What do I see?

Stran. The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or looked along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heired his very name. 190

Arn. The phantom's bald; *my* quest is beauty. Could I
Inherit but his fame with his defects!

Stran. His brow was girt with laurels more than hairs.
You see his aspect — choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.

Arn. I will fight, too,
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass:
His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

Stran. Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus's mother, 200
Or Cleopatra at sixteen — an age

When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!
[*The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.*

Arn. And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,
And left no footstep?

Stran. There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory;
But for his shadow — 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crooked
I' the sun. Behold another! [*A second phantom passes.*

Arn. Who is he? 210

Stran. He was the fairest and the bravest of
Athenians. Look upon him well.

Arn. He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful!

Stran. Such was the curled son of Clinias; — wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?

Arn. Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will look further. [*The shade of Alcibiades disappears.*

Stran. Lo! behold again!

Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed, round-eyed satyr,
With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
The splay feet and low stature! I had better 220
Remain that which I am.

Stran. And yet he was

The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
And personification of all virtue.
But you reject him?

Arn. If his form could bring me
That which redeemed it — no.

Stran. I have no power
To promise that; but you may try, and find it
Easier in such a form — or in your own.

Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
Though I have that about me which has need on't.
Let him fleet on.

Stran. Be air, thou Hemlock-drinker! 230
[The shadow of Socrates disappears: another rises.]

Arn. What's here? whose broad brow and whose curly beard
And manly aspect look like Hercules,
Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
As if he knew the worthlessness of those
For whom he had fought.

Stran. It was the man who lost
The ancient world for love.

Arn. I cannot blame him,
Since I have risked my soul because I find not
That which he exchanged the earth for.

Stran. Since so far 240
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?

Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult.
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else, on this side of the dim shore,

Whence they float back before us.

Stran. Hence, Triumvir,
Thy Cleopatra's waiting.
[*The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.*

Arn. Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs, ²⁵⁰
Which he wears as the Sun his rays — a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was *he e'er human only?*

Stran. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that formed his urn.

Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?

Stran. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war —
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

Arn. Yet one shadow more. ²⁶⁰

Stran. (*addressing the shadow*). Get thee to Lamia's lap!
[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes: another rises.*
I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my Hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment

Arn. Content! I will fix here.

Stran. I must commend
Your choice. The godlike son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, rolled o'er sands of gold, 270
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vowed to Sperchius as they were — behold them!
And *him* — as he stood by Polixena,
With sanctioned and with softened love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion
For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So 280
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece looked her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn. I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

Stran. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty — if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that Extremes meet.

Arn. Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.

Stran. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not, 290
But dream it is what must be.

Arn. Must I wait?

Stran. No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far

Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

Arn. Why not?

Stran. Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show 300
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and, yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found Mammoth; and their curséd engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the Adulterer's arrow through his heel
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize 310
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Stran. Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou seest,
And strong as what it was, and — —

Arn. I ask not
For Valour, since Deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal —
Aye, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate 320
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

Stran. Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt remain
Formed as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to incase
This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

Arn. Had no power presented me
The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make 330
Its way with all Deformity's dull, deadly,
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders —
A hateful and unsightly molehill to
The eyes of happier men. I would have looked
On Beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful,
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh —
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me 340
In turn, because of this vile crookéd clog,
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurned me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape; — my Dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley, — happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus — the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind — what courage 350
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something — as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
And he who is so is the master of
Whatever dreads to die.

Stran. Decide between
What you have been, or will be.

Arn. I have done so.
You have opened brighter prospects to my eyes,
And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be feared — admired — respected — loved 360
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be belovéd. As thou showest me
A choice of forms, I take the one I view.
Haste! haste!

Stran. And what shall *I* wear?

Arn. Surely, he
Who can command all forms will choose the highest,
Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris: or — still higher —
The Poet's God, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

Stran. Less will content me; 370
For I, too, love a change.

Arn. Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

Stran. If I chose,
I might be whiter; but I have a *penchant*
For black — it is so honest, and, besides,
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear;
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.

Arn. Mine!

Stran. Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha,
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes;
You have yours — I mine.

Arn. Despatch! despatch!

Stran. Even so. 380

[The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along the turf, and then addresses the phantom of Achilles.]

Beautiful shadow

Of Thetis's boy!

Who sleeps in the meadow

Whose grass grows o'er Troy:

From the red earth, like Adam,

Thy likeness I shape,

As the Being who made him,

Whose actions I ape.

Thou Clay, be all glowing,

Till the Rose in his cheek 390

Be as fair as, when blowing,

It wears its first streak!

Ye Violets, I scatter,

Now turn into eyes!

And thou, sunshiny Water,

Of blood take the guise!

Let these Hyacinth boughs

Be his long flowing hair,

And wave o'er his brows,

As thou wavest in air! 400

Let his heart be this marble

I tear from the rock!

But his voice as the warble

Of birds on yon oak!

Let his flesh be the purest

Of mould, in which grew

The Lily-root surest,

And drank the best dew!

Let his limbs be the lightest

Which clay can compound, 410

And his aspect the brightest

On earth to be found!

Elements, near me,

Be mingled and stirred,

Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation! 420

[Arnold falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.]

Arn. (in his new form). I love, and I shall be beloved! Oh, life!
At last I feel thee! Glorious Spirit!

Stran. Stop!
What shall become of your abandoned garment,
Yon hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?

Arn. Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.

Stran. And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.

Arn. Let us but leave it there;
No matter what becomes on't.

Stran. That's ungracious; 430
If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustained your soul full many a day.

Arn. Aye, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

Stran. But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long

Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your Interlopers. The Devil may take men,
Not make them, — though he reap the benefit 440
Of the original workmanship: — and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.

Arn. Who would do so?

Stran. That I know not,
And therefore I must.

Arn. You!

Stran. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.

Arn. True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.

Stran. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

Arn. I would be spared this.

Stran. But it cannot be. 450
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?

Arn. Do as thou wilt.

Stran. (*to the late form of Arnold, extended on the earth*).
Clay! not dead, but soul-less!
Though no man would choose thee,
An Immortal no less
Deigns not to refuse thee.
Clay thou art; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.

Fire! *without* which nought can live;
Fire! but *in* which nought can live, 460
Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls, which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot:
Fire! the only element
Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
Save the Worm which dieth not,
Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent: 470
Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:
Fire! Creation's first-born Daughter,
And Destruction's threatened Son,
When Heaven with the world hath done:
Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
Stiff and cold!
His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame —
And he again shall seem the same; 480
But I his Spirit's place shall hold!
*[An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests on the brow of the body. The
Stranger disappears: the body rises.]*

Arn. (*in his new form*). Oh! horrible!

Stran. (*in Arnold's late shape*). What! tremblest thou?

Arn. Not so —
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worest?

Stran. To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?

Arn. Must thou be my companion?

Stran. Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.

Arn. My betters!

Stran. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;
You improve apace; — two changes in an instant, 490
And you are old in the World's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

Arn. Where the World
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

Stran. That's to say, where there is War
And Woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain — Italy — the new Atlantic world —
Afric with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now 500
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.

Stran. A goodly choice —
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, are at play along
The sunny shores of the World's garden.

Arn. How
Shall we proceed?

Stran. Like gallants, on good coursers.
What, ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po. 510

Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn. A noble sight!

Stran. And of

A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,

Or your Kochlini race of Araby,

With these!

Arn. The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.

Stran. Mount, my lord:

They and I are your servitors.

Arn. And these

Our dark-eyed pages — what may be their names? 520

Stran. You shall baptize them.

Arn. What! in holy water?

Stran. Why not? The deeper sinner, better saint.

Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons.

Stran. True; the devil's always ugly: and your beauty
Is never diabolical.

Arn. I'll call him

Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright

And blooming aspect, *Huon*; for he looks

Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,

And never found till now. And for the other

And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not, 530

But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?

Stran. I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.

Arn. More human than the shape (though it was mine once)
I trust.

Stran. Then call me Cæsar.

Arn. Why, that name
Belongs to Empire, and has been but borne
By the World's lords.

Stran. And therefore fittest for ⁵⁴⁰
The Devil in disguise — since so you deem me,
Unless you call me Pope instead.

Arn. Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.

Cæs. We'll add a title —
“Count Arnold:” it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.

Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field.

Cæs. (*sings*).
To horse! to horse! my coal-black steed
Paws the ground and snuffs the air!
There's not a foal of Arab's breed ⁵⁵⁰
More knows whom he must bear;
On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher;

In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he'll not faint;
On the stones he will not stumble, 560
Time nor toil shall make him humble;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be wingèd as a Griffin,
Only flying with his feet:
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground!
From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly!
For we'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.
[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*]
Scene II. — *A Camp before the walls of Rome.*

Arnold *and* Cæsar.

Cæs. You are well entered now.

Arn. Aye; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæs. Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France; and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been Earth's Lord
Under its emperors, and — changing sex,
Not sceptre, an Hermaphrodite of Empire —
Lady of the old world.

Arn. How *old*? What! are there 10
New worlds?

Cæs. To *you*. You'll find there are such shortly,

By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn. I'll trust them.

Cæs. Do! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

Arn. Dog!

Cæs. Man!

Arn. Devil!

Cæs. Your obedient humble servant.

Arn. Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here. 20

Cæs. And where wouldst thou be?

Arn. Oh, *at* peace — *in* peace!

Cæs. And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die. 30
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fixed Necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.

Arn. And when it prospers — —

Cæs. 'Tis no rebellion.

Arn. Will it prosper now?

Cæs. The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.

Arn. Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross, 40
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him), —
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge!

Cæs. 'Tis there, and shall be.

Arn. What?

Cæs. The Crucifix
Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not; besides
The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

Arn. And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall, 50
The theatre where Emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood — the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena — as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquered —
Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death 60

For a sole instant's pastime, and "Pass on
To a new gladiator!" — Must it fall?

Cæs. The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.

Arn. To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

Cæs. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges;
For men must have their prey after long toil.

Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps 70
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæs. I saw him.

Arn. You!

Cæs. Yes, Sir! You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape,
And a worse name. I'm Cæsar and a hunch-back

Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am) 80
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('twas then no wall,
Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 'twas yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the Ocean and the Earth,

Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter,
For ages.

Arn. But what have these done, their far 90
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of Heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

Cæs. And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept? — Hark!

Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

Cæs. And why should they not sing as well as swans?
They are black ones, to be sure.

Arn. So, you are learned,
I see, too?

Cæs. In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times, 100
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and — were I so minded —
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.

Arn. And wherefore do you not?

Cæs. It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze, 110
Who failed and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.

They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth — their Koran — Talmud — their
Cabala — their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more — —

Arn. (interrupting him). Oh, thou everlasting sneerer!
Be silent! How the soldier's rough strain seems
Softened by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!

Cæs. Yes. I have heard the angels sing. 120

Arn. And demons howl.

Cæs. And man, too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They passed the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a King,
We have turned back on no men,
And so let us sing! 130
Here's the Bourbon for ever!
Though penniless all,
We'll have one more endeavour
At yonder old wall.
With the Bourbon we'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder,
As mounts each firm foot, 140
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And Death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we'll mount o'er

The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?
Up! up with the Lily!
And down with the Keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We'll revel at ease. 150
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red,
And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes; 160
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couched at their mother;
But our leader from France is,
Who warred with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome. 170

Cæs. An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here comes
The general with his chiefs and men of trust.
A goodly rebel.
Enter the Constable Bourbon "cum suis," etc., etc.

Phil. How now, noble Prince,
You are not cheerful?

Bourb. Why should I be so?

Phil. Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

Bourb. If I were secure!

Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant,
They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery. 180

Bourb. That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on — were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans; —
But now — —

Phil. They are but men who war with mortals.

Bourb. True: but those walls have girded in great ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome 190
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal City's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!

Phil. So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?

Bourb. They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and deathlike hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fixed eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there!

Phil. I look upon 200
A lofty battlement.

Bourb. And there!

Phil. Not even

A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Sheltered by the grey parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

Bourb. You are blind.

Phil. If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.

Bourb. A thousand years have manned the walls
With all their heroes, — the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave. 210
And the first Cassar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquered and be greater!

Bourb. True: so I will, or perish.

Phil. You can *not*.

In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.
[*Count Arnold and Cæsar advance.*

Cæs. And the mere men — do they, too, sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?

Bourb. Ah!

Welcome the bitter Hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous, 220
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæs. You will find,
So please your Highness, no less for yourself.

Bourb. And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, Hunchback!

Cæs. You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back — as general,
Placed in the rear in action — but your foes
Have never seen it.

Bourb. That's a fair retort,
For I provoked it: — but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced ²³⁰
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil*.

Cæs. And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.

Phil. Why so?

Cæs. One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

Bourb. Arnold, your
Slight crooked *friend's* as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.

Cæs. Your Highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer — I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung. ²⁴⁰

Bourb. You are brave, and *that's* enough for me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action — and that's more.
I am not alone the soldier, but the soldiers'

Comrade.

Cæs. They are but bad company, your Highness;
And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.

Phil. How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

Cæs. You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie — it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

Bourb. Philibert! ²⁵⁰
Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and mountain shoulder,
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famished sullen grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few Maravedis, ²⁶⁰
With which he deems him rich.

Cæs. It would be well
If the earth's princes asked no more.

Bourb. Be silent!

Cæs. Aye, but not idle. Work yourself with words!
You have few to speak.

Phil. What means the audacious prater?

Cæs. To prate, like other prophets.

Bourb. Philibert!
Why will you vex him? Have we not enough

To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn. I have heard as much, my Lord.

Bourb. And you will follow?

Arn. Since I must not lead.

Bourb. 'Tis necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.

Cæs. Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.

Bourb. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hilled city hath
Retained her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest.
Still the world's masters! Civilised, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an Empire. Well!
'Twas *their* turn — now 'tis ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.

Cæs. No doubt, the camp's the school of civic rights.
What would you make of Rome?

Bourb. That which it was.

Cæs. In Alaric's time?

Bourb. No, slave! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs — —

Cæs. And kings!
'Tis a great name for blood-hounds.

Bourb. There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious?

Cæs. On the eve of battle, no; —
That were not soldier-like. 'Tis for the general
To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think?
Our tutelar Deity, in a leader's shape,
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.

Bourb. You may sneer, since
'Tis lucky for you that you fight no worse for 't.

Cæs. I thank you for the freedom; 'tis the only 300
Pay I have taken in your Highness' service.

Bourb. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
Look on those towers; they hold my treasury:
But, Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

Arn. Prince! my service
Is yours, as in the field.

Bourb. In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

Cæs. And mine?

Bourb. To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!

Arn. (to Cæsar). Prepare our armour for the assault,

And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt* Bourbon, Arnold, Philibert, *etc.*]

Cæs. (*solus*). Within thy tent! 310

Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?

Or that this crooked coffer, which contained

Thy principle of life, is aught to me

Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!

Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!

This is the consequence of giving matter

The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,

And thinks chaotically, as it acts,

Ever relapsing into its first elements.

Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 'tis 320

The Spirit's pastime in his idler hours.

When I grow weary of it, I have business

Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem

Were made for them to look at. 'Twere a jest now

To bring one down amongst them, and set fire

Unto their anthill: how the pismires then

Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing

From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth

One universal orison! ha! ha! [*Exit* Caesar.]

PART II

Scene I. — *Before the walls of Rome. — The Assault: the Army in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; Bourbon with a white scarf over his armour, foremost.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

I.

‘Tis the morn, but dim and dark.
Whither flies the silent lark?
Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
Is the day indeed begun?
Nature’s eye is melancholy
O’er the city high and holy:
But without there is a din
Should arouse the saints within,
And revive the heroic ashes
Round which yellow Tiber dashes. 10
Oh, ye seven hills! awaken,
Ere your very base be shaken!

II.

Hearken to the steady stamp!
Mars is in their every tramp!
Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon!
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high-waves o’ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order, 20
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armour’s clank!
Look down o’er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier:
Look on each step of each ladder,

As the stripes that streak an adder.

III.

Look upon the bristling wall,
Manned without an interval!
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear, 30
Lit match, bell-mouthed Musquetoon,
Gaping to be murderous soon;
All the warlike gear of old,
Mixed with what we now behold,
In this strife 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew.
Shade of Remus! 'tis a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine: —
Must its lot be like to thine? 40

IV.

Near — and near — and nearer still,
As the Earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce awakened ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crushed to powder, —
Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty Chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows 50
Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not — *strike!* for Rome is mourning!

V.

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.
To the wall, with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger, 60
On they sweep. Oh, glorious City!
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Matched with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal City;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thine own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot. 70

VI.

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inexpiable sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourned thy fall. 80
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?
Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

VII.

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,

Downward then the ladder crashes, 90
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome! — 100
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

VIII.

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quenched hearts be Atés!
Yet again, ye shadowy Heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother:
'Twas the Roman curbed the Roman; —
Brennus was a baffled foeman. 110
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty Gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier Founders of those altars,
True and Christian, — strike the assaulters!
Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even Nature's self abhorrent.
Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited! 120
Rome be crashed to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome!
[Bourbon, Arnold, Cæsar, and others, arrive at the foot of the wall. Arnold is
about to plant his ladder.]

Bourb. Hold, Arnold! I am first.

Arn. Not so, my Lord.

Bourb. Hold, sir, I charge you! Follow! I am proud
Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.

[*Bourbon plants his ladder, and begins to mount.*

Now, boys! On! on!

[*A shot strikes him, and Bourbon falls.*

Cæs. And off!

Arn. Eternal powers!

The host will be appalled, — but vengeance! vengeance!

Bourb. 'Tis nothing — lend me your hand.

[*Bourbon takes Arnold by the hand, and rises; but as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.*

Arnold! I am sped.

Conceal my fall — all will go well — conceal it!

Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon; 130

Let not the soldiers see it.

Arn. You must be

Removed; the aid of — —

Bourb. No, my gallant boy!

Death is upon me. But what is *one* life?

The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.

Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,

Till they are conquerors — then do as you may.

Cæs. Would not your Highness choose to kiss the cross?

We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword

May serve instead: — it did the same for Bayard.

Bourb. Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time! 140

But I deserve it.

Arn. (to Cæsar). Villain, hold your peace!

Cæs. What, when a Christian dies? Shall I not offer
A Christian “Vade in pace?”

Arn. Silence! Oh!
Those eyes are glazing which o’erlooked the world,
And saw no equal.

Bourb. Arnold, shouldst thou see
France — — But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer — Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life,
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold, hence!
You lose time — they will conquer Rome without thee.

Arn. And without *thee*.

Bourb. Not so; I’ll lead them still 150
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious.

Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.

Bourb. You must — farewell — Up! up! the world is winning.
[*Bourbon dies*.

Cæs. (to Arnold). Come, Count, to business.

Arn. True. I’ll weep hereafter.
[*Arnold covers Bourbon’s body with a mantle, mounts the ladder, crying*
The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!

Cæs. Good night, Lord Constable! thou wert a Man.
[*Cæsar follows Arnold; they reach the battlement; Arnold and Cæsar are struck down*.

Cæs. A precious somerset! Is your countship injured?

Arn. No.[*Remounts the ladder.*

Cæs. A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!
And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them down! 160
His hand is on the battlement — he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and — — What have we here? — a Roman?
The first bird of the covey! he has fallen[*A man falls.*
On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?
Wounded Man. A drop of water!

Cæs. Blood's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.
Wounded Man. I have died for Rome.[*Dies.*

Cæs. And so did Bourbon, in another sense.
Oh, these immortal men! and their great motives!
But I must after my young charge. He is 170
By this time i' the Forum. Charge! charge!
[*Cæsar mounts the ladder; the scene closes.*
Scene II. — *The City. — Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.*

Enter Cæsar.

Cæs. I cannot find my hero; he is mixed
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A Cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doffed their hats, 'twould be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire 10
Is of the self-same purple hue.
Enter a Party fighting — Arnold at the head of the Besiegers.
He comes,

Hand in hand with the mild twins — Gore and Glory.
Holla! hold, Count!

Arn. Away! they must not rally.

Cæs. I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipped thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe 20
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel; why, then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar?
[*Arnold rushes into the combat.*]

Cæs. A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood's up; and, if a little's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.
[*Arnold engages with a Roman, who retires towards a portico.*]

Arn. Yield thee, slave!
I promise quarter.

Rom. That's soon said.

Arn. And done — — 30
My word is known.

Rom. So shall be my deeds.
[*They re-engage. Cæsar comes forward.*]

Cæs. Why, Arnold! hold thine own: thou hast in hand

A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;
Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.
Not so, my musqueteer; 'twas he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.

Arn. Aye, did he so?
Then he hath carved his monument.

Rom. I yet
May live to carve your better's.

Cæs. Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he 40
Who slays Cellini will have worked as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.
*[Arnold disarms and wounds Cellini, hit slightly: the latter draws a pistol, and
fires; then retires, and disappears through the portico.]*

Cæs. How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.

Arn. (staggers). 'Tis a scratch.
Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.

Cæs. Where is it?

Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword arm —
And that's enough. I am thirsty: would I had
A helm of water!

Cæs. That's a liquid now
In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.

Arn. And my thirst increases; — but 50
I'll find a way to quench it.

Cæs. Or be quenched

Thyself.

Arn. The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating;
Prithee be quick.[*Cæsar binds on the scarf.*
And what dost thou so idly?
Why dost not strike?

Cæs. Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.

Arn. Aye, 'gainst an oak.

Cæs. A forest, when it suits me:
I combat with a mass, or not at all. 60
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers
Will reap my harvest gratis.

Arn. Thou art still
A fiend!

Cæs. And thou — a man.

Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.

Cæs. True — as men are.

Arn. And what is that?

Cæs. Thou feelest and thou see'st.
[*Exit Arnold, joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*

Scene III. — *St. Peter's — The interior of the Church — The Pope at the Altar — Priests, etc., crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.*

Enter Cæsar.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them, comrades, seize upon those lamps!

Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!

His rosary's of gold!

Lutheran Soldier. Revenge! revenge!

Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now —

Yonder stands Anti-Christ!

Cæs. (interposing). How now, schismatic?

What wouldst thou?

Luth. Sold. In the holy name of Christ,

Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.

Cæs. Yea, a disciple that would make the founder

Of your belief renounce it, could he see

Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder. 10

Luth. Sold. I say he is the Devil.

Cæs. Hush! keep that secret,

Lest he should recognise you for his own.

Luth. Sold. Why would you save him? I repeat he is

The Devil, or the Devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæs. And that's the reason: would you make a quarrel

With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;

His hour is not yet come.

Luth. Sold. That shall be seen!

[The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward: a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot of the Altar.]

Cæs. (to the Lutheran). I told you so.

Luth. Sold. And will you not avenge me?

Cæs. Not I! You know that "Vengeance is the Lord's:"

You see he loves no interlopers.

Luth. Sold. (dying). Oh! 20

Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crowned with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reached him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*]

Cæs. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.

Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.*]

Cæs. Ha! right nobly battled!

Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions, 30
Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.

Soldiers. He hath escaped!

Follow!

Another Sold. They have barred the narrow passage up,
And it is clogged with dead even to the door.

Cæs. I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank me for't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolished —

'Twere worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return; no, no, he must not 40
Fall; — and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility. [*To the Spanish Soldiery.*]

Well, cut-throats!

What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.

And you, too, Catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip the shrines!

Soldiers. By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear 50
The best away.

Cæs. And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion.
[*The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.*

Cæs. They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call Eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the Ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another!
Enter Olimpia, flying from the pursuit — She springs upon the Altar.

Sold. She's mine!
Another Sold. (*opposing the former*).
You lie, I tracked her first: and were she
The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her.[*They fight.*
3d Sold. (*advancing towards Olimpia*). You may settle
Your claims; I'll make mine good.

Olimp. Infernal slave! 60
You touch me not alive.
3d Sold. Alive or dead!

Olimp. (*embracing a massive crucifix*). Respect your God!
3d Sold. Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.
[*As he advances, Olimpia, with a strong and sudden effort, casts down the
crucifix; it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*
3d Sold. Oh, great God!

Olimp. Ah! now you recognise him.
3d Sold. My brain's crushed!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness! [He dies.
Other Soldiers (coming up).
Slay her, although she had a thousand lives:
She hath killed our comrade.

Olimp. Welcome such a death!
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as 70
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and thee!
Enter Arnold.

Arn. What do I see? Accurséd jackals! Forbear!

Cæs. (aside and laughing). Ha! ha! here's equity! The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!

Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our comrade.

Arn. With what weapon?

Sold. The cross, beneath which he is crushed; behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.

Arn. Even so: there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honoured her. But get ye hence, 80
And thank your meanness, other God you have none,
For your existence. Had you touched a hair
Of those dishevelled locks, I would have thinned
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
But not even these till he permits.
A Sold. (murmuring). The lion
Might conquer for himself then.

Arn. (cuts him down). Mutineer!
Rebel in hell — you shall obey on earth!
[*The Soldiers assault Arnold.*]

Arn. Come on! I'm glad on't! I will show you, slaves,
How you should be commanded, and who led you 90
First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.
[*Arnold mows down the foremost; the rest throw down their arms.*]

Soldiers. Mercy! mercy!

Arn. Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers. We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest —
The conquest which you led to.

Arn. Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them fixed
In the Colonna palace.

Olimp. (aside). In my father's 100
House!

Arn. (to the Soldiers). Leave your arms; ye have no further need
Of such: the city's rendered. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.
Soldiers (deposing their arms and departing). We obey!

Arn. (to Olimpia). Lady, you are safe.

Olimp. I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not —
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down

Upon destruction, shall my head be dashed,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man! 110

Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.

Olimp. No! Thou hast only sacked my native land, —
No injury! — and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury! — this temple —
Slippery with Roman and with holy gore!
No injury! And now thou wouldst preserve me,
To be — — but that shall never be!

[She raises her eyes to Heaven, folds her robe round her, and prepares to dash herself down on the side of the Altar opposite to that where Arnold stands.]

Arn. Hold! hold!
I swear.

Olimp. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even Hell would loathe thee. 120
I know thee.

Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though — —

Olimp. I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeem'd infant) than the holy water 130
The saints have sanctified!

[Olimpia waves her hand to Arnold with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.]

Arn. Eternal God!

I feel thee now! Help! help! she's gone.

Cæs. (*approaches*). I am here.

Arn. Thou! but oh, save her!

Cæs. (*assisting him to raise Olimpia*). She hath done it well!
The leap was serious.

Arn. Oh! she is lifeless!

Cæs. If
She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.

Arn. Slave!

Cæs. Aye, slave or master, 'tis all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.

Arn. Words! — Canst thou aid her?

Cæs. I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful. 140
[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*

Arn. 'Tis mixed with blood.

Cæs. There is no cleaner now
In Rome.

Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou Essence of all Beauty,
I love but thee!

Cæs. Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea; with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

Arn. She breathes! But no, 'twas nothing, or the last

Faint flutter Life disputes with Death.

Cæs. She breathes.

Arn. *Thou* say'st it? Then 'tis truth.

Cæs. You do me right —

The Devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed: 150
He hath an ignorant audience.

Arn. (*without attending to him*). Yes! her heart beats.

Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wished to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.

Cæs. A sage reflection,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear her?
I say she lives.

Arn. And will she live?

Cæs. As much
As dust can.

Arn. Then she is dead!

Cæs. Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life —
Such as you think so, such as you now are;
But we must work by human means.

Arn. We will 160
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitched my banner.

Cæs. Come then! raise her up!

Arn. Softly!

Cæs. As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.

Arn. But doth she live indeed?

Cæs. Nay, never fear!
But, if you rue it after, blame not me.

Arn. Let her but live!

Cæs. The Spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,
And this is a new office: — 'tis not oft ¹⁷⁰
I am employed in such; but you perceive
How staunch a friend is what you call a fiend.
On earth you have often only fiends for friends;
Now *I* desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence,
The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamoured of her, as
Of old the Angels of her earliest sex.

Arn. Thou!

Cæs. I! But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

Arn. Rival!

Cæs. I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of ¹⁸⁰
Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue: 'tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or — what is more difficult —
Getting rid of your prize again; for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.

Arn. Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes open!

Cæs. Like stars, no doubt; for that's a metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn. To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!

Cæs. Oh! I know 190
My way through Rome.

Arn. Now onward, onward! Gently!
[*Exeunt, bearing Olimpia. The scene closes.*]

PART III

Scene I. — *A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling Country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.*

Chorus.

I.

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

II.

The spring is come; the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower, 10
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

III.

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

IV.

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December —
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthened hours; 20
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget

The virgin — virgin Violet.
Enter Cæsar.

Cæs. (singing).
The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle,
The casque's on the wall.
There's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall. 30
He drinks — but what's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death call.

Chorus.
But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble 40
With birds from their nest.

Cæs.
Oh! shadow of Glory!
Dim image of War!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star,
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young, 50
In the pride of his might,
Then 'twas sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;

To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine
At the foaming behemoth;
While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first born of Nature, 60
And, like her, sublime!

Chorus.

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every voice!
[Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.]

FRAGMENT OF THE THIRD PART

Chorus.

When the merry bells are ringing,
And the peasant girls are singing,
And the early flowers are flinging
Their odours in the air;
And the honey bee is clinging
To the buds; and birds are winging
Their way, pair by pair:
Then the earth looks free from trouble
With the brightness of a bubble:
Though I did not make it, ¹⁰
I could breathe on and break it;
But too much I scorn it,
Or else I would mourn it,
To see despots and slaves
Playing o'er their own graves.

Enter Count Arnold.

Mem. Jealous — Arnold of Cæsar.
Olympia at first not liking Cæsar
— then? — Arnold jealous of himself
under his former figure, owing to
the power of intellect, etc., etc., etc.

Arnold. You are merry, Sir — what? singing too?

Cæsar. It is
The land of Song — and Canticles you know
Were once my avocation.

Arn. Nothing moves you;
You scoff even at your own calamity —
And such calamity! how wert thou fallen ²⁰
Son of the Morning! and yet Lucifer
Can smile.

Cæs. His shape can — would you have me weep,
In the fair form I wear, to please you?

Arn. Ah!

Cæs. You are grave — what have you on your spirit!

Arn. Nothing.

Cæs. How mortals lie by instinct! If you ask
A disappointed courtier — What's the matter?
"Nothing" — an outshone Beauty what has made
Her smooth brow crisp — "Oh, Nothing!" — a young heir
When his Sire has recovered from the Gout,
What ails him? "Nothing!" or a Monarch who 30
Has heard the truth, and looks imperial on it —
What clouds his royal aspect? "Nothing," "Nothing!"
Nothing — eternal nothing — of these nothings
All are a lie — for all to them are much!
And they themselves alone the real "Nothings."
Your present Nothing, too, is something to you —
What is it?

Arn. Know you not?

Cæs. I only know
What I desire to know! and will not waste
Omniscience upon phantoms. Out with it!
If you seek aid from me — or else be silent. 40
And eat your thoughts — till they breed snakes within you.

Arn. Olimpia!

Cæs. I thought as much — go on.

Arn. I thought she had loved me.

Cæs. Blessings on your Creed!
What a good Christian you were found to be!

But what cold Sceptic hath appalled your faith
And transubstantiated to crumbs again
The *body* of your Credence?

Arn. No one — but —
Each day — each hour — each minute shows me more
And more she loves me not —

Cæs. Doth she rebel?

Arn. No, she is calm, and meek, and silent with me, 50
And coldly dutiful, and proudly patient —
Endures my Love — not meets it.

Cæs. That seems strange.
You are beautiful and brave! the first is much
For passion — and the rest for Vanity.

Arn. I saved her life, too; and her Father's life,
And Father's house from ashes.

Cæs. These are nothing.
You seek for Gratitude — the Philosopher's stone.

Arn. And find it not.

Cæs. You cannot find what is not.
But *found* would it content you? would you owe
To thankfulness what you desire from Passion? 60
No! No! you would be *loved* — what you call loved —
Self-loved — loved for *yourself* — for neither health,
Nor wealth, nor youth, nor power, nor rank, nor beauty —
For these you may be stript of — but *beloved*
As an abstraction — for — you know not what!
These are the wishes of a moderate lover —
And so you love.

Arn. Ah! could I be beloved,
Would I ask wherefore?

Cæs. Yes! and not believe
The answer — You are jealous.

Arn. And of whom?

Cæs. It may be of yourself, for Jealousy 70
Is as a shadow of the Sun. The Orb
Is mighty — as you mortals deem — and to
Your little Universe seems universal;
But, great as He appears, and is to you,
The smallest cloud — the slightest vapour of
Your humid earth enables you to look
Upon a Sky which you revile as dull;
Though your eyes dare not gaze on it when cloudless.
Nothing can blind a mortal like to light.
Now Love in you is as the Sun — a thing 80
Beyond you — and your Jealousy's of Earth —
A cloud of your own raising.

Arn. Not so always!
There is a cause at times.

Cæs. Oh, yes! when atoms jostle,
The System is in peril. But I speak
Of things you know not. Well, to earth again!
This precious thing of dust — this bright Olimpia —
This marvellous Virgin, is a marble maid —
An Idol, but a cold one to your heat
Promethean, and unkindled by your torch.

Arn. Slave!

Cæs. In the victor's Chariot, when Rome triumphed, 90
There was a Slave of yore to tell him truth!
You are a Conqueror — command your Slave.

Arn. Teach me the way to win the woman's love.

Cæs. Leave her.

Arn. Where that the path — I'd not pursue it.

Cæs. No doubt! for if you did, the remedy
Would be for a disease already cured.

Arn. All wretched as I am, I would not quit
My unrequited love, for all that's happy.

Cæs. You have possessed the woman — still possess.
What need you more?

Arn. To be myself possessed — 100
To be her heart as she is mine.

BEPPPO



A VENETIAN STORY.

Written at Venice in 1817, *Beppo* is Byron's first attempt at writing in the Italian ottava rima metre, which he favoured for the use of satiric digression. The writing of this poem laid the foundations for his masterpiece *Don Juan*. The ballad is notable for its comparison of English and Italian morals, where Byron argues that the English aversion to adultery is hypocrisy, compared to how Italians view it.

Beppo tells the story of Laura, a Venetian lady whose husband, Beppo has been lost at sea for three years. According to Venetian customs, she finally takes a new husband, Cavalier Servente. But when the two of them attend the Venetian Carnival, she is closely observed by a Turk, who he is not what he seems...



Byron's house in Venice, where he wrote 'Beppo'

INTRODUCTION

Beppo was written in the autumn (September 6 — October 12, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 172) of 1817, whilst Byron was still engaged on the additional stanzas of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*. His new poem, as he admitted from the first, was “after the excellent manner” of John Hookham Frere’s *jeu d’esprit*, known as *Whistlecraft* (*Prospectus and Specimen of an intended National Work* by William and Robert Whistlecraft, London, 1818), which must have reached him in the summer of 1817. Whether he divined the identity of “Whistlecraft” from the first, or whether his guess was an after-thought, he did not hesitate to take the water and shoot ahead of his unsuspecting rival. It was a case of plagiarism *in excelsis*, and the superiority of the imitation to the original must be set down to the genius of the plagiary, unaided by any profound study of Italian literature, or an acquaintance at first hand with the parents and inspirers of *Whistlecraft*.

It is possible that he had read and forgotten some specimens of Pulci’s *Morgante Maggiore*, which J. H. Merivale had printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for 1806-1807, vol. xxi. pp. 304, 510, etc., and it is certain that he was familiar with his *Orlando in Roncesvalles*, published in 1814. He distinctly states that he had not seen W. S. Rose’s translation of Casti’s *Animali Parlanti* (first edition [anonymous], 1816), but, according to Pryse Gordon (*Personal Memoirs*, ii. 328), he had read the original. If we may trust Ugo Foscolo (see “Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians” in the *Quart. Rev.*, April, 1819, vol. xxi. pp. 486-526), there is some evidence that Byron had read Forteguerri’s *Ricciardetto* (translated in 1819 by Sylvester (Douglas) Lord Glenbervie, and again, by John Herman Merivale, under the title of *The Two First Cantos of Richardetto*, 1820), but the parallel which he adduces (*vide post*,) is not very striking or convincing.

On the other hand, after the poem was completed (March 25, 1818), he was under the impression that “Berni was the original of *all* ... the father of that kind [i.e. the mock-heroic] of writing;” but there is nothing to show whether he had or had not read the *rifacimento* of Orlando’s *Innamorato*, or the more distinctively Bernesque *Capitoli*. Two years later (see Letter to Murray, February 21, 1820, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 407; and “Advertisement” to *Morgante Maggiore*) he had discovered that “Pulci was the parent of *Whistlecraft*, and the precursor and model of Berni,” but, in 1817, he was only at the commencement of his studies. A time came long before the “year or two” of his promise (March 25, 1818) when he had learned to simulate the *vera imago* of the Italian Muse, and was able not only to surpass his “immediate model,” but to rival his model’s

forerunners and inspirers. In the meanwhile a tale based on a “Venetian anecdote” (perhaps an “episode” in the history of Colonel Fitzgerald and the Marchesa Castiglione, — see Letter to Moore, December 26, 1816, *Letters*, 1900, iv. 26) lent itself to “the excellent manner of Mr. Whistlecraft,” and would show “the knowing ones,” that is, Murray’s advisers, Gifford, Croker, Frere, etc., that “he could write cheerfully,” and “would repel the charge of monotony and mannerism.”

Eckermann, mindful of Goethe’s hint that Byron had too much *empeiria* (an excess of *mondanité* — a *this-worldliness*), found it hard to read *Beppo* after *Macbeth*. “I felt,” he says, “the predominance of a nefarious, empirical world, with which the mind which introduced it to us has in a certain measure associated itself” (*Conversations of Goethe, etc.*, 1874, p. 175). But *Beppo* must be taken at its own valuation. It is *A Venetian Story*, and the action takes place behind the scenes of “a comedy of Goldoni.” A less subtle but a more apposite criticism may be borrowed from “Lord Byron’s Combolio” (*sic*), *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 1822, xi. 162-165.

“The story that’s in it
May be told in a minute;
But *par parenthèse* chatting,
On this thing and that thing,
Keeps the shuttlecock flying,
And attention from dying.”

Beppo, a Venetian Story (xcv. stanzas) was published February 28, 1818; and a fifth edition, consisting of xcix. stanzas, was issued May 4, 1818.

Jeffrey, writing in the *Edinburgh Review* (February, 1818, vol. xxix. pp. 302-310), is unconcerned with regard to *Whistlecraft*, or any earlier model, but observes “that the nearest approach to it [*Beppo*] is to be found in some of the tales and lighter pieces of Prior — a few stanzas here and there among the trash and burlesque of Peter Pindar, and in several passages of Mr. Moore, and the author of the facetious miscellany entitled the *Twopenny Post Bag*.”

Other notices, of a less appreciative kind, appeared in the *Monthly Review*, March, 1818, vol. 85, pp. 285-290; and in the *Eclectic Review*, N.S., June, 1818, vol. ix. pp. 555-557.

BEPPPO.

I.

'Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The People take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank, or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,
And other things which may be had for asking.

II.

The moment night with dusky mantle covers
The skies (and the more duskily the better),
The Time less liked by husbands than by lovers
Begins, and Prudery flings aside her fetter;
And Gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the gallants who beset her;
And there are songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

III.

And there are dresses splendid, but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos;
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the Clergy, —
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.

IV.

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,
Instead of coat and smallclothes, than put on

A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the cauldron's bubble
That boiled your bones, unless you paid them double.

V.

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Rag Fair,
Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
And even in Italy such places are,
With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.

VI.

This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies "farewell to flesh:"
So called, because the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting,
In the Stage-Coach or Packet, just at starting.

VII.

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dressed fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their stews;
A thing which causes many "poohs" and "pishes,"
And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse),
From travellers accustomed from a boy
To eat their salmon, at the least, with soy;

VIII.

And therefore humbly I would recommend
“The curious in fish-sauce,” before they cross
The sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross
(Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss),
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well nigh starve ye;

IX.

That is to say, if your religion’s Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
According to the proverb, — although no man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast; and you,
If Protestant, or sickly, or a woman,
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout —
Dine and be d — d! I don’t mean to be coarse,
But that’s the penalty, to say no worse.

X.

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And Masque, and Mime, and Mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore, —
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory.

XI.

They’ve pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arched brows, and sweet expressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimicked ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian’s

(The best's at Florence — see it, if ye will,)
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepped from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII.

Whose tints are Truth and Beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
Tis but a portrait of his Son, and Wife,
And self; but *such* a Woman! Love in life!

XIII.

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet Model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Wer't not impossible, besides a shame:
The face recalls some face, as 'twere with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV.

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the Loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The Youth, the Bloom, the Beauty which agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV.

I said that like a picture by Giorgione

Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony,
(For beauty's sometimes best set off afar)
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
And truth to say, they're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more's the pity!

XVI.

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heeled Mercuries,
Who do such things because they know no better;
And then, God knows what mischief may arise,
When Love links two young people in one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows, and hearts, and heads.

XVII.

Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a "Cavalier Servente."

XVIII.

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's,
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows,
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,

But takes at once another, or *another's*.

XIX.

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I'll describe it you exactly:
'Tis a long covered boat that's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly,
Rowed by two rowers, each call'd "Gondolier,"
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX.

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe, —
But not to them do woeful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's done.

XXI.

But to my story. — 'Twas some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The Carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease.

XXII.

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a "*certain age*,"
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,

Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on page,
The period meant precisely by that word, —
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII.

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of Time, and Time returned the compliment,
And treated her genteelly, so that, dressed,
She looked extremely well where'er she went;
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed, she shone all smiles, and seemed to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her.

XXIV.

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient,
Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool,
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool)
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV.

Her husband sailed upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in Quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease:
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, called more briefly, Beppo.

XXVI.

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though coloured, as it were, within a tanyard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour —
A better seaman never yet did man yard;
And she, although her manners showed no rigour,
Was deemed a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII.

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some
That he had somehow blundered into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home;
And there were several offered any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come;
For most men (till by losing rendered sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII.

‘Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic,
That they should never more each other see,
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three,)
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

XXIX.

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at night;
She deemed the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,

And so she thought it prudent to connect her
With a vice-husband, *chiefly to protect her.*

XXX.

She chose, (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?)
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise,
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse —
A Coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said as well as quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality.

XXXI.

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you,
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a critic upon operas, too,
And knew all niceties of sock and buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried “seccatura!”

XXXII.

His “bravo” was decisive, for that sound
Hushed “Academie” sighed in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he looked around,
For fear of some false note’s detected flaw;
The “Prima Donna’s” tuneful heart would bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his “Bah!”
Soprano, Basso, even the Contra-Alto,
Wished him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII.

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas,

Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
In short, he was a perfect Cavaliero,
And to his very valet seemed a hero.

XXXIV.

Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous;
So that no sort of female could complain,
Although they're now and then a little clamorous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain:
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

XXXV.

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady —
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor showed the least concern,
And she had waited several years already:
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead* — or should be so.

XXXVI.

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman,
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin,)
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But "Cavalier Serventes" are quite common,
And no one notices or cares a pin;
An we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*.

XXXVII.

The word was formerly a “Cicisbeo,”
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a “*Cortejo*,”
For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o’er the sea sent:
But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII.

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête à tête* or general conversation —
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation —
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX.

‘Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarmed, that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush; half Pertness, and half Pout;
And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there’s harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about:
The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter —
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL.

But “Cavalier Servente” is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,
Her word the only law which he obeys.

His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XL I.

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nailed to walls) from tree to tree
Festooned, much like the back scene of a play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the South of France.

XL II.

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapped about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopped upon my route,
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way, —
In England 'twould be dung, dust, or a dray.

XL III.

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t'himself; the day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky cauldron simmers.

XL IV.

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,

Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV.

I like the women too (forgive my folly!),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high Dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian Beauty didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeathed us? — in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the Lyre,
Would words describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII.

“England! with all thy faults I love thee still,”
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);
I like a Parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

XLVIII.

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather, — when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX.

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L.

But to my tale of Laura, — for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease —
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the Author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means — a hard
And hapless situation for a Bard.

LI.

Oh! that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,

How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mixed with western Sentimentalism,
Some samples of the *finest Orientalism*.

LII.

But I am but a nameless sort of person,
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels)
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion — so here goes!

LIII.

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV.

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them;
The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth while to break them:
The World beheld them with indulgent air;
The pious only wished "the Devil take them!"
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV.

But they were young: Oh! what without our Youth
Would Love be! What would Youth be without Love!
Youth lends its joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth —
One of few things Experience don't improve;
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LVI.

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator, or Partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the cases
Is — *here*, we have six weeks of "varnished faces."

LVII.

Laura, when dressed, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month wore,
Coloured, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the Press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII.

They went to the Ridotto; 'tis a hall
Where People dance, and sup, and dance again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued ball,
But that's of no importance to my strain;
'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain;
The company is "mixed" (the phrase I quote is

As much as saying, they're below your notice);

LIX.

For a "mixed company" implies that, save
Yourself and friends, and half a hundred more,
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the Bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, called "*The World*;" but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX.

This is the case in England; at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated Imitators: — how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The Demagogues of fashion: all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By Love, or War, and, now and then, — by Frost!

LXI.

Crushed was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knocked his army down with icy hammer,
Stopped by the *Elements* — like a Whaler — or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune — but I dare not d — n her,
Because, were I to ponder to Infinity,
The more I should believe in her Divinity.

LXII.

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage;
I cannot say that she's done much for me yet;

Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We've not yet closed accounts, and we shall see yet
How much she'll make amends for past miscarriage;
Meantime the Goddess I'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she's made my fortune.

LXIII.

To turn, — and to return; — the Devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my fingers,
Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be — and so it rather lingers;
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm next at leisure.

LXIV.

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space
Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind.)

LXV.

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and this complaint avowed,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dressed so ill.

LXVI.

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third — where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears, — "I'll see no more!"
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII.

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were levelling their looks at her;
She heard the men's half-whispered mode of praising
And, till 'twas done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were
Admirers still, — but "Men are so debased,
Those brazen Creatures always suit their taste."

LXVIII.

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women — but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

LXIX.

While Laura thus was seen, and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why, and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs, and triumph, and all that;
And well-dressed males still kept before her filing,
And passing bowed and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest one person seemed to stare

With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX.

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire philogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad:
They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines "ad libitum."

LXXI.

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely;
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either passed in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII.

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the Muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —
In Harams learning soon would make a pretty schism,
But luckily these Beauties are no "Blues;"
No bustling *Botherby* have they to show 'em
"That charming passage in the last new poem:"

LXXIII.

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for Fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,

Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small "Triton of the minnows," the sublime
Of Mediocrity, the furious tame,
The Echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards — in short, a fool!

LXXIV.

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means good in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV.

One hates an author that's *all author* — fellows
In foolscap uniforms turned up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of Coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquenched snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI.

Of these same we see several, and of others.
Men of the world, who know the World like Men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the "Mighty Mother's,"
The would-be wits, and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready,"
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII.

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* would seem to them a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 'twould almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A missionary author — just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII.

No Chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No Metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No Circulating Library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No Exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in Mathematics.

LXXIX.

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for Satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though Laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX.

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise:
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy! — -

Meantime I drink to your return in brandy.

LXXXI.

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, "Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay."
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this Stranger's most outlandish ogle.

LXXXII.

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The ball-room ere the Sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII.

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stayed them over for some silly reason,
And then I looked (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season;
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the Dawn.

LXXXIV.

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was nought to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,

A charming woman, whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *She*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV.

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those curséd Gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI.

In this they're like our coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same — the crowd, and pulling, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,
They make a never intermitted bawling.
At home, our Bow-street gem'men keep the laws,
And here a sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII.

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The danciers and their dresses, too, beside;
Some little scandals eke; but all aghast
(As to their palace-stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her adorer,
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her!

LXXXVIII.

“Sir,” said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
“Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import? But perhaps ‘tis a mistake;
I hope it is so; and, at once to waive
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake;
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*.”
“Sir,” (quoth the Turk) “‘tis no mistake at all:

LXXXIX.

“That Lady is *my wife!*” Much wonder paints
The lady’s changing cheek, as well it might;
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
Italian females don’t do so outright;
They only call a little on their Saints,
And then come to themselves, almost, or quite;
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC.

She said, — what could she say? Why, not a word;
But the Count courteously invited in
The Stranger, much appeased by what he heard:
“Such things, perhaps, we’d best discuss within,”
Said he; “don’t let us make ourselves absurd
In public, by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.”

XCI.

They entered, and for Coffee called — it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it’s not the same.
Now Laura, much recovered, or less loth
To speak, cries “Beppo! what’s your pagan name?
Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!

And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong?

XCII.

“And are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest Shawl — as I'm alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To — Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your liver?

XCIII.

“Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day older:
Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot —
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder?
How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord! how grey it's grown!”

XCIV.

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and nothing stands;
Became a slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands
Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He joined the rogues and prospered, and became
A renegade of indifferent fame.

XCV.

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
Keen the desire to see his home again,

He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the main;
Lonely he felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Manned with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVI.

Himself, and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash,
He then embarked, with risk of life and limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt was rash;
He said that *Providence* protected him —
For my part, I say nothing — lest we clash
In our opinions: — well — the ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII.

They reached the Island, he transferred his lading,
And self and live stock to another bottom,
And passed for a true Turkey-merchant, trading
With goods of various names — but I've forgot 'em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;
And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII.

His wife received, the Patriarch re-baptised him,
(He made the Church a present, by the way;)
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
And borrowed the Count's smallclothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories — but *I* don't believe the half of them.

XCIX.

Whate'er his youth had suffered, his old age
With wealth and talking made him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I've heard the Count and he were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finished, here the story ends:
'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

DON JUAN



Byron's masterpiece *Don Juan* is part epic, part satirical poem, in which the poet portrays the traditional character as a man easily seduced by women, rather than a womaniser himself. The poet began the first canto in the autumn of 1818, and he was still at work on a seventeenth canto in the spring of 1823. The poem was issued in parts, with intervals of unequal duration. Interruptions in the composition and publication of *Don Juan* were caused by the discouragement of friends, as well as the publisher's hesitation.

Like the previous poem *Beppo*, *Don Juan* is written in ottava rima, a stanza that consists of eight iambic pentameters. Each stanza consists of three alternate rhymes and one double rhyme, following the a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c pattern. Byron completed 16 cantos, leaving the 17th canto unfinished before his death in 1824. He claimed he had no idea as to what would happen in the end of the poem. On the anonymous publication of the first two cantos in 1819, the poem was very popular, although criticised by many for its immorality, fuelling more interest in the work.

The poem opens in Seville, where Don Juan lives with his father José and his mother Doña Inez, a well-read scholarly woman in an unhappy marriage. Doña Julia, 23 years old and married to a much older Don Alfonso, desires Don Juan when he is 16 years old, heralding the protagonist's first misadventure.



'La

Barque de don Juan' by Eugène Delacroix, 1840



'The Finding of Don Juan by Haidee' by Ford Madox Brown, 1873

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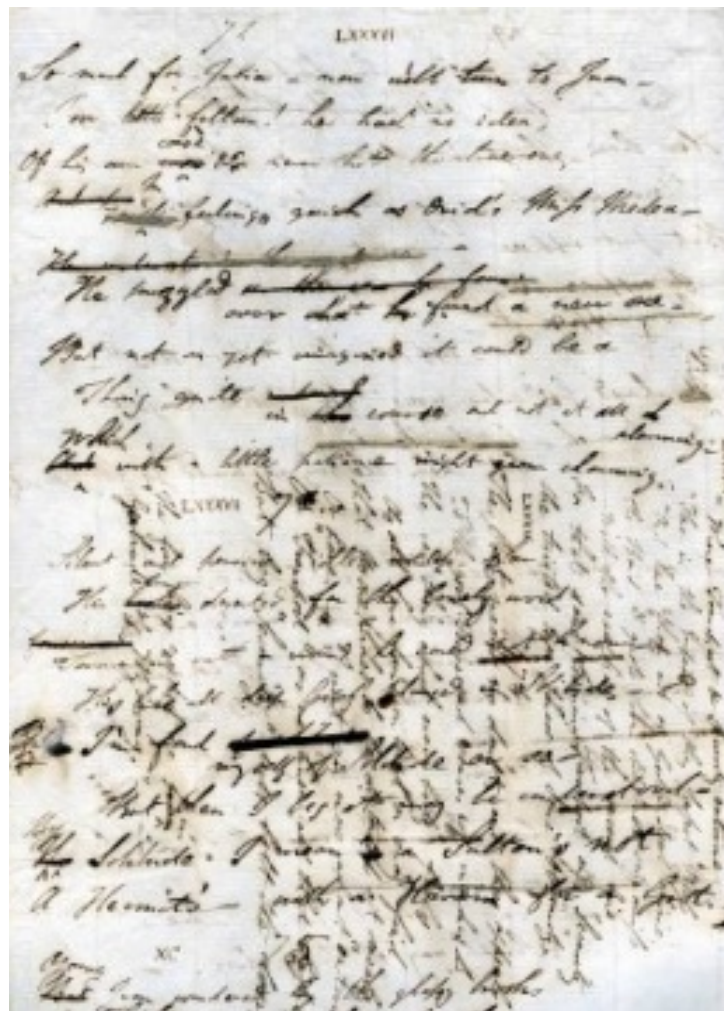
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A page of the original manuscript — Byron had a fluent hand, making minimal revisions, in spite of the complex ottava rima form

FRAGMENT ON THE BACK OF THE MS. OF CANTO I.

I would to Heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling —
Because at least the past were passed away,
And for the future — (but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say — the future is a serious matter —
And so — for God's sake — hock and soda-water!

DON JUAN: DEDICATION

I

Bob Southey! You're a poet — Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race,
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last, — yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like “four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;

II

“Which pye being open'd they began to sing”
(This old song and new simile holds good),
“A dainty dish to set before the King,”
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food; —
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood, —
Explaining metaphysics to the nation —
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a-dry, Bob!

IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long Excursion

(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;
'T is poetry — at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star rages —
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

V

You — Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
From better company, have kept your own
At Keswick, and, through still continued fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you'd change your lakes for ocean.

VI

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been its price.
You have your salary; was 't for that you wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.
You're shabby fellows — true — but poets still,
And duly seated on the immortal hill.

VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows —
Perhaps some virtuous blushes; — let them go —
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs —
And for the fame you would engross below,
The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow:
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and Crabbe will try

‘Gainst you the question with posterity.

VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,
Contend not with you on the winged steed,
I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,
The fame you envy and the skill you need;
And recollect a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.

IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it, he
Being only injured by his own assertion;
And although here and there some glorious rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea’s immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To — God knows where — for no one else can know.

X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appeal’d to the Avenger, Time,
If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word ‘Miltonic’ mean ‘*sublime*,’
He deign’d not to belie his soul in songs
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

XI

Think’st thou, could he — the blind Old Man — arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more

The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again — again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes,
And heartless daughters — worn — and pale — and poor;
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

XIII

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably — legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes — all nations — condescend to smile, —
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind
Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd and thoughts to be confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made —
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind —
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters, — blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless — because no feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

XVI

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds,
For I will never *feel* them? — Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed o'er thee —
Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices, tongues to cry aloud for me.
Europe has slaves, allies, kings, armies still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVII

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'T is that I still retain my "buff and blue;"
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy 's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite Herculean;
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

DON JUAN: CANTO THE FIRST

I

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan —
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

II

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, "nine farrow" of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

III

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Petion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know:
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

IV

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'T is with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd;
Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

V

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten: — I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan.

VI

Most epic poets plunge “*in medias res*”
 (Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
And then your hero tells, whene’er you please,
 What went before — by way of episode,
While seated after dinner at his ease,
 Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

VII

That is the usual method, but not mine —

My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design

Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
And therefore I shall open with a line

(Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you'd rather.

VIII

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women — he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb — and I quite agree;
Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
Cadiz perhaps — but that you soon may see;
Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and call'd the Guadalquivir.

IX

His father's name was Jóse — *Don*, of course, —
A true Hidalgo, free from every stain
Of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his source
Through the most Gothic gentlemen of Spain;
A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
Or, being mounted, e'er got down again,
Than Jóse, who begot our hero, who
Begot — but that's to come — Well, to renew: X

His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone,
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.

XI

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
She could have served him for the prompter's copy;
For her Feinagle's were an useless art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop — he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna Inez.

XII

Her favourite science was the mathematical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
A prodigy — her morning dress was dimity,
Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

XIII

She knew the Latin — that is, “the Lord’s prayer,”
And Greek — the alphabet — I’m nearly sure;
She read some French romances here and there,
Although her mode of speaking was not pure;
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem,
As if she deem’d that mystery would ennoble ‘em.

XIV

She liked the English and the Hebrew tongue,
And said there was analogy between 'em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those who've seen 'em;
But this I heard her say, and can't be wrong
And all may think which way their judgments lean 'em,
“‘T is strange — the Hebrew noun which means ‘I am,’
The English always used to govern d — n.”

XV

Some women use their tongues — she *look'd* a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a homily,
An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel Romilly,
The Law's expounder, and the State's corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly —
One sad example more, that "All is vanity"
(The jury brought their verdict in "Insanity").

XVI

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or "Coelebs' Wife" set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let "female errors fall,"
For she had not even one — the worst of all.

XVII

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel —
Of any modern female saint's comparison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison;
Even her minutest motions went as well
As those of the best time-piece made by Harrison:
In virtues nothing earthly could surpass her,
Save thine "incomparable oil," Macassar!

XVIII

Perfect she was, but as perfection is
 Insipid in this naughty world of ours,
Where our first parents never learn'd to kiss
 Till they were exiled from their earlier bowers,
Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss
 (I wonder how they got through the twelve hours),
Don José, like a lineal son of Eve,
Went plucking various fruit without her leave.

XIX

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
 With no great love for learning, or the learn'd,
Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
 And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;
The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
 To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd,
Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said *two* —
But for domestic quarrels *one* will do.

XX

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good qualities;
Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
And such, indeed, she was in her moralities;
But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with realities,
And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

XXI

This was an easy matter with a man
 Oft in the wrong, and never on his guard;
And even the wisest, do the best they can,
 Have moments, hours, and days, so unprepared,
That you might “brain them with their lady’s fan;”
 And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one understands.

XXII

'T is pity learnéd virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation:
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
But — Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?

XXIII

Don Jóse and his lady quarrell'd — *why*,
Not any of the many could divine,
Though several thousand people chose to try,
'T was surely no concern of theirs nor mine;
I loathe that low vice — curiosity;
But if there's anything in which I shine,
'T is in arranging all my friends' affairs,
Not having of my own domestic cares.

XXIV

And so I interfered, and with the best
Intentions, but their treatment was not kind;
I think the foolish people were possess'd,
For neither of them could I ever find,
Although their porter afterwards confess'd —
But that's no matter, and the worst's behind,
For little Juan o'er me threw, down stairs,
A pail of housemaid's water unawares.

XXV

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
And mischief-making monkey from his birth;
His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
Upon the most unquiet imp on earth;
Instead of quarrelling, had they been but both in
Their senses, they'd have sent young master forth
To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at home,
To teach him manners for the time to come.

XXVI

Don Jóse and the Donna Inez led

For some time an unhappy sort of life,
Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;

They lived respectably as man and wife,
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,

And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
And put the business past all kind of doubt.

XXVII

For Inez call'd some druggists and physicians,
And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*;
But as he had some lucid intermissions,
She next decided he was only *bad*;
Yet when they ask'd her for her depositions,
No sort of explanation could be had,
Save that her duty both to man and God
Required this conduct — which seem'd very odd.

XXVIII

She kept a journal, where his faults were noted,
And open'd certain trunks of books and letters,
All which might, if occasion served, be quoted;
And then she had all Seville for abettors,
Besides her good old grandmother (who doted);
The hearers of her case became repeaters,
Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,
Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

XXIX

And then this best and weakest woman bore
 With such serenity her husband's woes,
Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
 Who saw their spouses kill'd, and nobly chose
Never to say a word about them more —
 Calmly she heard each calumny that rose,
And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,
That all the world exclaim'd, "What magnanimity!"

XXX

No doubt this patience, when the world is damning us,
Is philosophic in our former friends;
'T is also pleasant to be deem'd magnanimous,
The more so in obtaining our own ends;
And what the lawyers call a "*malus animus*"
Conduct like this by no means comprehends;
Revenge in person's certainly no virtue,
But then 't is not *my* fault, if *others* hurt you.

XXXI

And if your quarrels should rip up old stories,
And help them with a lie or two additional,
I'm not to blame, as you well know — no more is
Any one else — they were become traditional;
Besides, their resurrection aids our glories
By contrast, which is what we just were wishing all:
And science profits by this resurrection —
Dead scandals form good subjects for dissection.

XXXII

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
Then their relations, who made matters worse.
(‘T were hard to tell upon a like occasion
To whom it may be best to have recourse —
I can’t say much for friend or yet relation):
The lawyers did their utmost for divorce,
But scarce a fee was paid on either side
Before, unluckily, Don José died.

XXXIII

He died: and most unluckily, because,
According to all hints I could collect
From counsel learned in those kinds of laws
(Although their talk's obscure and circumspect),
His death contrived to spoil a charming cause;
A thousand pities also with respect
To public feeling, which on this occasion
Was manifested in a great sensation.

XXXIV

But, ah! he died; and buried with him lay
The public feeling and the lawyers' fees:
His house was sold, his servants sent away,
A Jew took one of his two mistresses,
A priest the other — at least so they say:
I ask'd the doctors after his disease —
He died of the slow fever call'd the tertian,
And left his widow to her own aversion.

XXXV

Yet Jóse was an honourable man,
That I must say who knew him very well;
Therefore his frailties I'll no further scan
Indeed there were not many more to tell;
And if his passions now and then outran
Discretion, and were not so peaceable
As Numa's (who was also named Pompilius),
He had been ill brought up, and was born bilious.

XXXVI

Whate'er might be his worthlessness or worth,
 Poor fellow! he had many things to wound him.
Let's own — since it can do no good on earth —
 It was a trying moment that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
 Where all his household gods lay shiver'd round him:
No choice was left his feelings or his pride,
Save death or Doctors' Commons — so he died.

XXXVII

Dying intestate, Juan was sole heir
To a chancery suit, and messuages, and lands,
Which, with a long minority and care,
Promised to turn out well in proper hands:
Inez became sole guardian, which was fair,
And answer'd but to nature's just demands;
An only son left with an only mother
Is brought up much more wisely than another.

XXXVIII

Sagest of women, even of widows, she
 Resolved that Juan should be quite a paragon,
And worthy of the noblest pedigree
 (His sire was of Castile, his dam from Aragon):
Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
 In case our lord the king should go to war again,
He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress — or a nunnery.

XXXIX

But that which Donna Inez most desired,
And saw into herself each day before all
The learned tutors whom for him she hired,
Was, that his breeding should be strictly moral;
Much into all his studies she inquired,
And so they were submitted first to her, all,
Arts, sciences, no branch was made a mystery
To Juan's eyes, excepting natural history.

XL

The languages, especially the dead,
The sciences, and most of all the abstruse,
The arts, at least all such as could be said
To be the most remote from common use,
In all these he was much and deeply read;
But not a page of any thing that's loose,
Or hints continuation of the species,
Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious.

XLI

His classic studies made a little puzzle,
Because of filthy loves of gods and goddesses,
Who in the earlier ages raised a bustle,
But never put on pantaloons or bodices;
His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,
And for their *Æneids*, *Iliads*, and *Odysseys*,
Were forced to make an odd sort of apology,
For Donna Inez dreaded the Mythology.

XLII

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,
Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
I don't think Sappho's *Ode* a good example,
Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn
Where the sublime soars forth on wings more ample:
But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
Beginning with "*Formosum Pastor Corydon*."

XLIII

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong,
For early stomachs, to prove wholesome food;
I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,
Although no doubt his real intent was good,
For speaking out so plainly in his song,
So much indeed as to be downright rude;
And then what proper person can be partial
To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?

XLIV

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
Expurgated by learned men, who place
Judiciously, from out the schoolboy's vision,
The grosser parts; but, fearful to deface
Too much their modest bard by this omission,
And pitying sore his mutilated case,
They only add them all in an appendix,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;

XLV

For there we have them all “at one fell swoop,”
 Instead of being scatter’d through the Pages;
They stand forth marshall’d in a handsome troop,
 To meet the ingenuous youth of future ages,
Till some less rigid editor shall stoop
 To call them back into their separate cages,
Instead of standing staring all together,
Like garden gods — and not so decent either.

XLVI

The Missal too (it was the family Missal)
Was ornamented in a sort of way
Which ancient mass-books often are, and this all
Kinds of grotesques illumined; and how they,
Who saw those figures on the margin kiss all,
Could turn their optics to the text and pray,
Is more than I know — But Don Juan's mother
Kept this herself, and gave her son another.

XLVII

Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints;
But how faith is acquired, and then ensured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader envy his transgressions.

XLVIII

This, too, was a seal'd book to little Juan —

I can't but say that his mamma was right,
If such an education was the true one.

She scarcely trusted him from out her sight;
Her maids were old, and if she took a new one,

You might be sure she was a perfect fright;
She did this during even her husband's life —
I recommend as much to every wife.

XLIX

Young Juan wax'd in goodliness and grace;
At six a charming child, and at eleven
With all the promise of as fine a face
As e'er to man's maturer growth was given:
He studied steadily, and grew apace,
And seem'd, at least, in the right road to heaven,
For half his days were pass'd at church, the other
Between his tutors, confessor, and mother.

L

At six, I said, he was a charming child,
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy;
Although in infancy a little wild,
They tamed him down amongst them: to destroy
His natural spirit not in vain they toil'd,
At least it seem'd so; and his mother's joy
Was to declare how sage, and still, and steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already.

LI

I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still,
But what I say is neither here nor there:
I knew his father well, and have some skill
In character — but it would not be fair
From sire to son to augur good or ill:
He and his wife were an ill-sorted pair —
But scandal's my aversion — I protest
Against all evil speaking, even in jest.

LII

For my part I say nothing — nothing — but
 This I will say — my reasons are my own —
That if I had an only son to put
 To school (as God be praised that I have none),
‘T is not with Donna Inez I would shut
 Him up to learn his catechism alone,
No — no — I’d send him out betimes to college,
For there it was I pick’d up my own knowledge.

LIII

For there one learns — 't is not for me to boast,
 Though I acquired — but I pass over that,
As well as all the Greek I since have lost:
 I say that there's the place — but *Verbum sat*.
I think I pick'd up too, as well as most,
 Knowledge of matters — but no matter *what* —
I never married — but, I think, I know
That sons should not be educated so.

LIV

Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit: he seem'd
Active, though not so sprightly, as a page;
And everybody but his mother deem'd
Him almost man; but she flew in a rage
And bit her lips (for else she might have scream'd)
If any said so, for to be precocious
Was in her eyes a thing the most atrocious.

LV

Amongst her numerous acquaintance, all
Selected for discretion and devotion,
There was the Donna Julia, whom to call
Pretty were but to give a feeble notion
Of many charms in her as natural
As sweetness to the flower, or salt to ocean,
Her zone to Venus, or his bow to Cupid
(But this last simile is trite and stupid).

LVI

The darkness of her Oriental eye
 Accorded with her Moorish origin
(Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by;
 In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin);
When proud Granada fell, and, forced to fly,
 Boabdil wept, of Donna Julia's kin
Some went to Africa, some stay'd in Spain,
Her great-great-grandmamma chose to remain.

LVII

She married (I forget the pedigree)
With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down
His blood less noble than such blood should be;
At such alliances his sires would frown,
In that point so precise in each degree
That they bred *in and in*, as might be shown,
Marrying their cousins — nay, their aunts, and nieces,
Which always spoils the breed, if it increases.

LVIII

This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
 Ruin'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
For from a root the ugliest in Old Spain
 Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh;
The sons no more were short, the daughters plain:
 But there's a rumour which I fain would hush,
'T is said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
Produced her Don more heirs at love than law.

LIX

However this might be, the race went on
Improving still through every generation,
Until it centred in an only son,
Who left an only daughter; my narration
May have suggested that this single one
Could be but Julia (whom on this occasion
I shall have much to speak about), and she
Was married, charming, chaste, and twenty-three.

LX

Her eye (I'm very fond of handsome eyes)
Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
Until she spoke, then through its soft disguise
Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire,
And love than either; and there would arise
A something in them which was not desire,
But would have been, perhaps, but for the soul
Which struggled through and chasten'd down the whole.

LXI

Her glossy hair was cluster'd o'er a brow
Bright with intelligence, and fair, and smooth;
Her eyebrow's shape was like th' aerial bow,
Her cheek all purple with the beam of youth,
Mounting at times to a transparent glow,
As if her veins ran lightning; she, in sooth,
Possess'd an air and grace by no means common:
Her stature tall — I hate a dumpy woman.

LXII

Wedded she was some years, and to a man
Of fifty, and such husbands are in plenty;
And yet, I think, instead of such a *one*
’T were better to have *two* of five-and-twenty,
Especially in countries near the sun:
And now I think on ‘t, “*mi vien in mente*”,
Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty.

LXIII

'T is a sad thing, I cannot choose but say,
And all the fault of that indecent sun,
Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay,
But will keep baking, broiling, burning on,
That howsoever people fast and pray,
The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:
What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
Is much more common where the climate's sultry.

LXIV

Happy the nations of the moral North!

Where all is virtue, and the winter season
Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth

(‘T was snow that brought St. Anthony to reason);
Where juries cast up what a wife is worth,

By laying whate’er sum in mulct they please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice.

LXV

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,
A man well looking for his years, and who
Was neither much beloved nor yet abhorr'd:
They lived together, as most people do,
Suffering each other's foibles by accord,
And not exactly either *one* or *two*;
Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it,
For jealousy dislikes the world to know it.

LXVI

Julia was — yet I never could see why —
 With Donna Inez quite a favourite friend;
Between their tastes there was small sympathy,
 For not a line had Julia ever penn'd:
Some people whisper but no doubt they lie,
 For malice still imputes some private end)
That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's marriage,
Forgot with him her very prudent carriage; **LXVII**

And that still keeping up the old connection,
 Which time had lately render'd much more chaste,
She took his lady also in affection,
 And certainly this course was much the best:
She flatter'd Julia with her sage protection,
 And complimented Don Alfonso's taste;
And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal,
At least she left it a more slender handle.

LXVIII

I can't tell whether Julia saw the affair
With other people's eyes, or if her own
Discoveries made, but none could be aware
Of this, at least no symptom e'er was shown;
Perhaps she did not know, or did not care,
Indifferent from the first or callous grown:
I'm really puzzled what to think or say,
She kept her counsel in so close a way.

LXIX

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty child,
 Caress'd him often — such a thing might be
Quite innocently done, and harmless styled,
 When she had twenty years, and thirteen he;
But I am not so sure I should have smiled
 When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-three;
These few short years make wondrous alterations,
Particularly amongst sun-burnt nations.

LXX

Whate'er the cause might be, they had become
 Changed; for the dame grew distant, the youth shy,
Their looks cast down, their greetings almost dumb,
 And much embarrassment in either eye;
There surely will be little doubt with some
 That Donna Julia knew the reason why,
But as for Juan, he had no more notion
Than he who never saw the sea of ocean.

LXXI

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,
And tremulously gentle her small hand
Withdrew itself from his, but left behind
A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland
And slight, so very slight, that to the mind
'T was but a doubt; but ne'er magician's wand
Wrought change with all Armida's fairy art
Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart.

LXXII

And if she met him, though she smiled no more,
 She look'd a sadness sweeter than her smile,
As if her heart had deeper thoughts in store
 She must not own, but cherish'd more the while
For that compression in its burning core;
 Even innocence itself has many a wile,
And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

LXXIII

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays
Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky
Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
Its workings through the vainly guarded eye,
And in whatever aspect it arrays
Itself, 't is still the same hypocrisy;
Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,
Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

LXXIV

Then there were sighs, the deeper for suppression,
And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,
And burning blushes, though for no transgression,
Tremblings when met, and restlessness when left;
All these are little preludes to possession,
Of which young passion cannot be bereft,
And merely tend to show how greatly love is
Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

LXXV

Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward state;
 She felt it going, and resolved to make
The noblest efforts for herself and mate,
 For honour's, pride's, religion's, virtue's sake;
Her resolutions were most truly great,
 And almost might have made a Tarquin quake:
She pray'd the Virgin Mary for her grace,
As being the best judge of a lady's case.

LXXVI

She vow'd she never would see Juan more,
And next day paid a visit to his mother,
And look'd extremely at the opening door,
Which, by the Virgin's grace, let in another;
Grateful she was, and yet a little sore —
Again it opens, it can be no other,
'T is surely Juan now — No! I'm afraid
That night the Virgin was no further pray'd.

LXXVII

She now determined that a virtuous woman
Should rather face and overcome temptation,
That flight was base and dastardly, and no man
Should ever give her heart the least sensation;
That is to say, a thought beyond the common
Preference, that we must feel upon occasion
For people who are pleasanter than others,
But then they only seem so many brothers.

LXXVIII

And even if by chance — and who can tell?

The devil's so very sly — she should discover
That all within was not so very well,

And, if still free, that such or such a lover
Might please perhaps, a virtuous wife can quell

Such thoughts, and be the better when they're over;
And if the man should ask, 't is but denial:
I recommend young ladies to make trial.

LXXIX

And then there are such things as love divine,
Bright and immaculate, unmix'd and pure,
Such as the angels think so very fine,
And matrons who would be no less secure,
Platonic, perfect, "just such love as mine;"
Thus Julia said — and thought so, to be sure;
And so I'd have her think, were I the man
On whom her reveries celestial ran.

LXXX

Such love is innocent, and may exist
Between young persons without any danger.
A hand may first, and then a lip be kist;
For my part, to such doings I'm a stranger,
But hear these freedoms form the utmost list
Of all o'er which such love may be a ranger:
If people go beyond, 't is quite a crime,
But not my fault — I tell them all in time.

LXXXI

Love, then, but love within its proper limits,
Was Julia's innocent determination
In young Don Juan's favour, and to him its
Exertion might be useful on occasion;
And, lighted at too pure a shrine to dim its
Ethereal lustre, with what sweet persuasion
He might be taught, by love and her together —
I really don't know what, nor Julia either.

LXXXII

Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced
In mail of proof — her purity of soul —
She, for the future of her strength convinced.
And that her honour was a rock, or mole,
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
With any kind of troublesome control;
But whether Julia to the task was equal
Is that which must be mention'd in the sequel.

LXXXIII

Her plan she deem'd both innocent and feasible,
And, surely, with a stripling of sixteen
Not scandal's fangs could fix on much that's seizable,
Or if they did so, satisfied to mean
Nothing but what was good, her breast was peaceable —
A quiet conscience makes one so serene!
Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded
That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

LXXXIV

And if in the mean time her husband died,
But Heaven forbid that such a thought should cross
Her brain, though in a dream! (and then she sigh'd)
Never could she survive that common loss;
But just suppose that moment should betide,
I only say suppose it — *inter nos*.
(This should be *entre nous*, for Julia thought
In French, but then the rhyme would go for naught.) LXXXV

I only say suppose this supposition:
Juan being then grown up to man's estate
Would fully suit a widow of condition,
Even seven years hence it would not be too late;
And in the interim (to pursue this vision)
The mischief, after all, could not be great,
For he would learn the rudiments of love,
I mean the *seraph* way of those above.

LXXXVI

So much for Julia. Now we'll turn to Juan.
Poor little fellow! he had no idea
Of his own case, and never hit the true one;
In feelings quick as Ovid's Miss Medea,
He puzzled over what he found a new one,
But not as yet imagined it could be
Thing quite in course, and not at all alarming,
Which, with a little patience, might grow charming.

LXXXVII

Silent and pensive, idle, restless, slow,
His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tormented with a wound he could not know,
His, like all deep grief, plunged in solitude:
I'm fond myself of solitude or so,
But then, I beg it may be understood,
By solitude I mean a sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a haram for a grot.

LXXXVIII

“Oh Love! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art a god indeed divine.”
The bard I quote from does not sing amiss,
With the exception of the second line,
For that same twining “transport and security”
Are twisted to a phrase of some obscurity.

LXXXIX

The poet meant, no doubt, and thus appeals
 To the good sense and senses of mankind,
The very thing which every body feels,
 As all have found on trial, or may find,
That no one likes to be disturb'd at meals
 Or love. — I won't say more about "entwined"
Or "transport," as we knew all that before,
But beg'security' will bolt the door.

XC

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,
Thinking unutterable things; he threw
Himself at length within the leafy nooks
Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;
There poets find materials for their books,
And every now and then we read them through,
So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

XCI

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
His self-communion with his own high soul,
Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
Had mitigated part, though not the whole
Of its disease; he did the best he could
With things not very subject to control,
And turn'd, without perceiving his condition,
Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

XCII

He thought about himself, and the whole earth
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
How many miles the moon might have in girth,
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies; —
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

XCIII

In thoughts like these true wisdom may discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know not why:
'T was strange that one so young should thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If *you* think 't was philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

XCIV

He pored upon the leaves, and on the flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then
He thought of wood-nymphs and immortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to men:
He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch again,
He found how much old Time had been a winner —
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

XCIV

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his book,
 Boscan, or Garcilasso; — by the wind
Even as the page is rustled while we look,
 So by the poesy of his own mind
Over the mystic leaf his soul was shook,
 As if 't were one whereon magicians bind
Their spells, and give them to the passing gale,
According to some good old woman's tale.

XCVI

Thus would he while his lonely hours away
Dissatisfied, nor knowing what he wanted;
Nor glowing reverie, nor poet's lay,
Could yield his spirit that for which it panted,
A bosom whereon he his head might lay,
And hear the heart beat with the love it granted,
With — several other things, which I forget,
Or which, at least, I need not mention yet.

XCVII

Those lonely walks, and lengthening reveries,
 Could not escape the gentle Julia's eyes;
She saw that Juan was not at his ease;
 But that which chiefly may, and must surprise,
Is, that the Donna Inez did not tease
 Her only son with question or surmise:
Whether it was she did not see, or would not,
Or, like all very clever people, could not.

XCVIII

This may seem strange, but yet 't is very common;
For instance — gentlemen, whose ladies take
Leave to o'erstep the written rights of woman,
And break the — Which commandment is 't they break?
(I have forgot the number, and think no man
Should rashly quote, for fear of a mistake.)
I say, when these same gentlemen are jealous,
They make some blunder, which their ladies tell us.

XCIX

A real husband always is suspicious,
But still no less suspects in the wrong place,
Jealous of some one who had no such wishes,
Or pandering blindly to his own disgrace,
By harbouring some dear friend extremely vicious;
The last indeed's infallibly the case:
And when the spouse and friend are gone off wholly,
He wonders at their vice, and not his folly.

C

Thus parents also are at times short-sighted;
 Though watchful as the lynx, they ne'er discover,
The while the wicked world beholds delighted,
 Young Hopeful's mistress, or Miss Fanny's lover,
Till some confounded escapade has blighted
 The plan of twenty years, and all is over;
And then the mother cries, the father swears,
And wonders why the devil he got heirs.

CI

But Inez was so anxious, and so clear
Of sight, that I must think, on this occasion,
She had some other motive much more near
For leaving Juan to this new temptation;
But what that motive was, I sha'n't say here;
Perhaps to finish Juan's education,
Perhaps to open Don Alfonso's eyes,
In case he thought his wife too great a prize.

CII

It was upon a day, a summer's day; —

Summer's indeed a very dangerous season,
And so is spring about the end of May;

The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing reason;
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,

And stand convicted of more truth than treason,
That there are months which nature grows more merry in, —
March has its hares, and May must have its heroine.

CIII

‘T was on a summer’s day — the sixth of June: —

I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;

They are a sort of post-house, where the Fates
Change horses, making history change its tune,

Then spur away o’er empires and o’er states,
Leaving at last not much besides chronology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

CIV

'T was on the sixth of June, about the hour
Of half-past six — perhaps still nearer seven —
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish heaven
Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have been given,
With all the trophies of triumphant song —
He won them well, and may he wear them long!

CV

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken place,
And even if I knew, I should not tell —
People should hold their tongues in any case;
No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to face —
When two such faces are so, 't would be wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

CVI

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious heart
 Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong.
Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
 Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong,
How self-deceitful is the sagest part
 Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along —
The precipice she stood on was immense,
So was her creed in her own innocence.

CVII

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
And of the folly of all prudish fears,
Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
I wish these last had not occur'd, in sooth,
Because that number rarely much endears,
And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

CVIII

When people say, "I've told you *fifty* times,"
 They mean to scold, and very often do;
When poets say, "I've written *fifty* rhymes,"
 They make you dread that they'll recite them too;
In gangs of *fifty*, thieves commit their crimes;
 At *fifty* love for love is rare, 't is true,
But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.

CIX

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love,
For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,
She never would disgrace the ring she wore,
Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake — she thought it was her own; CX

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair:
And to contend with thoughts she could not smother
She seem'd by the distraction of her air.
'T was surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so —
I'm very certain *mine* would not have done so.

CXI

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees

Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
As if it said, "Detain me, if you please;"

Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze:

She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

CXII

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
 But what he did, is much what you would do;
His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,
 And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew
In deep despair, lest he had done amiss, —
 Love is so very timid when 't is new:
She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,
And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

CXIII

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way
On which three single hours of moonshine smile —
And then she looks so modest all the while.

CXIV

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;
The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.

CXV

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
And half retiring from the glowing arm,
Which trembled like the bosom where 't was placed;
Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
Or else 't were easy to withdraw her waist;
But then the situation had its charm,
And then — — God knows what next — I can't go on;
I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

CXVI

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controulless core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers: — You're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb — and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

CXVII

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
I wish indeed they had not had occasion,
But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
A little still she strove, and much repented
And whispering "I will ne'er consent" — consented.

CXVIII

'T is said that Xerxes offer'd a reward
To those who could invent him a new pleasure:
Methinks the requisition's rather hard,
And must have cost his majesty a treasure:
For my part, I'm a moderate-minded bard,
Fond of a little love (which I call leisure);
I care not for new pleasures, as the old
Are quite enough for me, so they but hold.

CXIX

Oh Pleasure! you are indeed a pleasant thing,
Although one must be damn'd for you, no doubt:
I make a resolution every spring
Of reformation, ere the year run out,
But somehow, this my vestal vow takes wing,
Yet still, I trust it may be kept throughout:
I'm very sorry, very much ashamed,
And mean, next winter, to be quite reclaim'd.

CXX

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take —
Start not! still chaster reader — she'll be nice hence —
Forward, and there is no great cause to quake;
This liberty is a poetic licence,
Which some irregularity may make
In the design, and as I have a high sense
Of Aristotle and the Rules, 't is fit
To beg his pardon when I err a bit.

CXXI

This licence is to hope the reader will

Suppose from June the sixth (the fatal day,
Without whose epoch my poetic skill

For want of facts would all be thrown away),
But keeping Julia and Don Juan still

In sight, that several months have pass'd; we'll say
'T was in November, but I'm not so sure
About the day — the era's more obscure.

CXXII

We'll talk of that anon. — 'T is sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters sweep;
'T is sweet to see the evening star appear;
'T is sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 't is sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

CXXIII

'T is sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
 Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
'T is sweet to know there is an eye will mark
 Our coming, and look brighter when we come;
'T is sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
 Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

CXXIV

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing: sweet are our escapes
From civic revelry to rural mirth;
Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
Sweet to the father is his first-born's birth,
Sweet is revenge — especially to women,
Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

CXXV

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who've made "us youth" wait too — too long already
For an estate, or cash, or country seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits.

CXXVI

'T is sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 't is sweet to put an end
To strife; 't is sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

CXXVII

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
Is first and passionate love — it stands alone,
Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd — all's known —
And life yields nothing further to recall
Worthy of this ambrosial sin, so shown,
No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from heaven.

CXXVIII

Man's a strange animal, and makes strange use
Of his own nature, and the various arts,
And likes particularly to produce
Some new experiment to show his parts;
This is the age of oddities let loose,
Where different talents find their different marts;
You'd best begin with truth, and when you've lost your
Labour, there's a sure market for imposture.

CXXIX

What opposite discoveries we have seen!

(Signs of true genius, and of empty pockets.)

One makes new noses, one a guillotine,

One breaks your bones, one sets them in their sockets;

But vaccination certainly has been

A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,

With which the Doctor paid off an old pox,

By borrowing a new one from an ox.

CXXX

Bread has been made (indifferent) from potatoes;
And galvanism has set some corpses grinning,
But has not answer'd like the apparatus
Of the Humane Society's beginning
By which men are unsuffocated gratis:
What wondrous new machines have late been spinning!
I said the small-pox has gone out of late;
Perhaps it may be follow'd by the great.

CXXXI

'T is said the great came from America;
Perhaps it may set out on its return, —
The population there so spreads, they say
'T is grown high time to thin it in its turn,
With war, or plague, or famine, any way,
So that civilisation they may learn;
And which in ravage the more loathsome evil is —
Their real *lues*, or our pseudo-syphilis?

CXXXII

This is the patent-age of new inventions
For killing bodies, and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions;
Sir Humphry Davy's lantern, by which coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,
Tombuctoo travels, voyages to the Poles,
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

CXXXIII

Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,
And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
'T is pity though, in this sublime world, that
Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure;
Few mortals know what end they would be at,
But whether glory, power, or love, or treasure,
The path is through perplexing ways, and when
The goal is gain'd, we die, you know — and then — CXXXIV

What then? — I do not know, no more do you —
And so good night. — Return we to our story:
'T was in November, when fine days are few,
And the far mountains wax a little hoary,
And clap a white cape on their mantles blue;
And the sea dashes round the promontory,
And the loud breaker boils against the rock,
And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

CXXXV

'T was, as the watchmen say, a cloudy night;
No moon, no stars, the wind was low or loud
By gusts, and many a sparkling hearth was bright
With the piled wood, round which the family crowd;
There's something cheerful in that sort of light,
Even as a summer sky's without a cloud:
I'm fond of fire, and crickets, and all that,
A lobster salad, and champagne, and chat.

CXXXVI

'T was midnight — Donna Julia was in bed,
Sleeping, most probably, — when at her door
Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
If they had never been awoke before,
And that they have been so we all have read,
And are to be so, at the least, once more; —
The door was fasten'd, but with voice and fist
First knocks were heard, then “Madam — Madam — hist!

CXXXVII

“For God’s sake, Madam — Madam — here’s my master,
With more than half the city at his back —
Was ever heard of such a curst disaster!
’T is not my fault — I kept good watch — Alack!
Do pray undo the bolt a little faster —
They’re on the stair just now, and in a crack
Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly —
Surely the window’s not so *very* high!”

CXXXVIII

By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
With torches, friends, and servants in great number;
The major part of them had long been wived,
And therefore paused not to disturb the slumber
Of any wicked woman, who contrived
By stealth her husband's temples to encumber:
Examples of this kind are so contagious,
Were *one* not punish'd, *all* would be outrageous.

CXXXIX

I can't tell how, or why, or what suspicion
 Could enter into Don Alfonso's head;
But for a cavalier of his condition
 It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
Without a word of previous admonition,
 To hold a levee round his lady's bed,
And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
To prove himself the thing he most abhorr'd.

CXL

Poor Donna Julia, starting as from sleep
 (Mind — that I do not say — she had not slept),
Began at once to scream, and yawn, and weep;
 Her maid Antonia, who was an adept,
Contrived to fling the bed-clothes in a heap,
 As if she had just now from out them crept:
I can't tell why she should take all this trouble
To prove her mistress had been sleeping double.

CXLI

But Julia mistress, and Antonia maid,
 Appear'd like two poor harmless women, who
Of goblins, but still more of men afraid,
 Had thought one man might be deterr'd by two,
And therefore side by side were gently laid,
 Until the hours of absence should run through,
And truant husband should return, and say,
“My dear, I was the first who came away.”

CXLII

Now Julia found at length a voice, and cried,
 "In heaven's name, Don Alfonso, what d' ye mean?
Has madness seized you? would that I had died
 Ere such a monster's victim I had been!
What may this midnight violence betide,
 A sudden fit of drunkenness or spleen?
Dare you suspect me, whom the thought would kill?
Search, then, the room!" — Alfonso said, "I will."

CXLIII

He search'd, *they* search'd, and rummaged everywhere,
Closet and clothes' press, chest and window-seat,
And found much linen, lace, and several pair
Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs, complete,
With other articles of ladies fair,
To keep them beautiful, or leave them neat:
Arras they prick'd and curtains with their swords,
And wounded several shutters, and some boards.

CXLIV

Under the bed they search'd, and there they found —
 No matter what — it was not that they sought;
They open'd windows, gazing if the ground
 Had signs or footmarks, but the earth said nought;
And then they stared each other's faces round:
 'T is odd, not one of all these seekers thought,
And seems to me almost a sort of blunder,
Of looking in the bed as well as under.

CXLV

During this inquisition, Julia's tongue
Was not asleep — "Yes, search and search," she cried,
"Insult on insult heap, and wrong on wrong!
It was for this that I became a bride!
For this in silence I have suffer'd long
A husband like Alfonso at my side;
But now I'll bear no more, nor here remain,
If there be law or lawyers in all Spain.

CXLVI

“Yes, Don Alfonso! husband now no more,
If ever you indeed deserved the name,
Is ‘t worthy of your years? — you have threescore —
Fifty, or sixty, it is all the same —
Is ‘t wise or fitting, causeless to explore
For facts against a virtuous woman’s fame?
Ungrateful, perjured, barbarous Don Alfonso,
How dare you think your lady would go on so?

CXLVII

“Is it for this I have disdain’d to hold
The common privileges of my sex?
That I have chosen a confessor so old
And deaf, that any other it would vex,
And never once he has had cause to scold,
But found my very innocence perplex
So much, he always doubted I was married —
How sorry you will be when I’ve miscarried!

CXLVIII

“Was it for this that no Cortejo e’er
I yet have chosen from out the youth of Seville?
Is it for this I scarce went anywhere,
Except to bull-fights, mass, play, rout, and revel?
Is it for this, whate’er my suitors were,
I favor’d none — nay, was almost uncivil?
Is it for this that General Count O’Reilly,
Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?

CXLIX

“Did not the Italian *Musico* Cazzani
Sing at my heart six months at least in vain?
Did not his countryman, Count Corniani,
Call me the only virtuous wife in Spain?
Were there not also Russians, English, many?
The Count Strongstroganoff I put in pain,
And Lord Mount Coffeehouse, the Irish peer,
Who kill’d himself for love (with wine) last year.

CL

“Have I not had two bishops at my feet,
The Duke of Ichar, and Don Fernan Nunez?
And is it thus a faithful wife you treat?
I wonder in what quarter now the moon is:
I praise your vast forbearance not to beat
Me also, since the time so opportune is —
Oh, valiant man! with sword drawn and cock’d trigger,
Now, tell me, don’t you cut a pretty figure?

CLI

“Was it for this you took your sudden journey.
Under pretence of business indispensable
With that sublime of rascals your attorney,
Whom I see standing there, and looking sensible
Of having play’d the fool? though both I spurn, he
Deserves the worst, his conduct’s less defensible,
Because, no doubt, ‘t was for his dirty fee,
And not from any love to you nor me.

CLII

“If he comes here to take a deposition,
By all means let the gentleman proceed;
You’ve made the apartment in a fit condition:
There’s pen and ink for you, sir, when you need —
Let every thing be noted with precision,
I would not you for nothing should be fee’d —
But, as my maid’s undrest, pray turn your spies out.”
“Oh!” sobb’d Antonia, “I could tear their eyes out.”

CLIII

“There is the closet, there the toilet, there
The antechamber — search them under, over;
There is the sofa, there the great arm-chair,
The chimney — which would really hold a lover.
I wish to sleep, and beg you will take care
And make no further noise, till you discover
The secret cavern of this lurking treasure —
And when ‘t is found, let me, too, have that pleasure.

CLIV

“And now, Hidalgo! now that you have thrown
Doubt upon me, confusion over all,
Pray have the courtesy to make it known
Who is the man you search for? how d’ ye call
Him? what’s his lineage? let him but be shown —
I hope he’s young and handsome — is he tall?
Tell me — and be assured, that since you stain
My honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

CLV

“At least, perhaps, he has not sixty years,
At that age he would be too old for slaughter,
Or for so young a husband’s jealous fears
(Antonia! let me have a glass of water).
I am ashamed of having shed these tears,
They are unworthy of my father’s daughter;
My mother dream’d not in my natal hour
That I should fall into a monster’s power.

CLVI

“Perhaps ‘t is of Antonia you are jealous,
 You saw that she was sleeping by my side
When you broke in upon us with your fellows:
 Look where you please — we’ve nothing, sir, to hide;
Only another time, I trust, you’ll tell us,
 Or for the sake of decency abide
A moment at the door, that we may be
Drest to receive so much good company.

CLVII

“And now, sir, I have done, and say no more;
The little I have said may serve to show
The guileless heart in silence may grieve o’er
The wrongs to whose exposure it is slow:
I leave you to your conscience as before,
’T will one day ask you *why* you used me so?
God grant you feel not then the bitterest grief! —
Antonia! where’s my pocket-handkerchief?”

CLVIII

She ceased, and turn'd upon her pillow; pale
 She lay, her dark eyes flashing through their tears,
Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil,
 Waved and o'ershading her wan cheek, appears
Her streaming hair; the black curls strive, but fail,
 To hide the glossy shoulder, which uprears
Its snow through all; — her soft lips lie apart,
And louder than her breathing beats her heart.

CLIX

The Senhor Don Alfonso stood confused;
 Antonia bustled round the ransack'd room,
And, turning up her nose, with looks abused
 Her master and his myrmidons, of whom
Not one, except the attorney, was amused;
 He, like Achates, faithful to the tomb,
So there were quarrels, cared not for the cause,
Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

CLX

With prying snub-nose, and small eyes, he stood,
Following Antonia's motions here and there,
With much suspicion in his attitude;
For reputations he had little care;
So that a suit or action were made good,
Small pity had he for the young and fair,
And ne'er believed in negatives, till these
Were proved by competent false witnesses.

CLXI

But Don Alfonso stood with downcast looks,
And, truth to say, he made a foolish figure;
When, after searching in five hundred nooks,
And treating a young wife with so much rigour,
He gain'd no point, except some self-rebukes,
Added to those his lady with such vigour
Had pour'd upon him for the last half-hour,
Quick, thick, and heavy — as a thunder-shower.

CLXII

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
To which the sole reply was tears and sobs,
And indications of hysterics, whose
Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,
Gasps, and whatever else the owners choose:
Alfonso saw his wife, and thought of Job's;
He saw too, in perspective, her relations,
And then he tried to muster all his patience.

CLXIII

He stood in act to speak, or rather stammer,
But sage Antonia cut him short before
The anvil of his speech received the hammer,
With "Pray, sir, leave the room, and say no more,
Or madam dies." — Alfonso mutter'd, "D — n her,"
But nothing else, the time of words was o'er;
He cast a rueful look or two, and did,
He knew not wherefore, that which he was bid.

CLXIV

With him retired his “*posse comitatus*,”
The attorney last, who linger’d near the door
Reluctantly, still tarrying there as late as
Antonia let him — not a little sore
At this most strange and unexplain’d “*hiatus*”
In Don Alfonso’s facts, which just now wore
An awkward look; as he revolved the case,
The door was fasten’d in his legal face.

CLXV

No sooner was it bolted, than — Oh shame!
Oh sin! Oh sorrow! and oh womankind!
How can you do such things and keep your fame,
Unless this world, and t' other too, be blind?
Nothing so dear as an unfilch'd good name!
But to proceed — for there is more behind:
With much heartfelt reluctance be it said,
Young Juan slipp'd half-smother'd, from the bed.

CLXVI

He had been hid — I don't pretend to say
How, nor can I indeed describe the where —
Young, slender, and pack'd easily, he lay,
No doubt, in little compass, round or square;
But pity him I neither must nor may
His suffocation by that pretty pair;
'T were better, sure, to die so, than be shut
With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey butt.

CLXVII

And, secondly, I pity not, because
 He had no business to commit a sin,
Forbid by heavenly, fined by human laws,
 At least 't was rather early to begin;
But at sixteen the conscience rarely gnaws
 So much as when we call our old debts in
At sixty years, and draw the accompts of evil,
And find a deuced balance with the devil.

CLXVIII

Of his position I can give no notion:

'T is written in the Hebrew Chronicle,
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
Prescribed, by way of blister, a young belle,
When old King David's blood grew dull in motion,
And that the medicine answer'd very well;
Perhaps 't was in a different way applied,
For David lived, but Juan nearly died.

CLXIX

What's to be done? Alfonso will be back
The moment he has sent his fools away.
Antonia's skill was put upon the rack,
But no device could be brought into play —
And how to parry the renew'd attack?
Besides, it wanted but few hours of day:
Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak,
But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's cheek.

CLXX

He turn'd his lip to hers, and with his hand
 Call'd back the tangles of her wandering hair;
Even then their love they could not all command,
 And half forgot their danger and despair:
Antonia's patience now was at a stand —
 "Come, come, 't is no time now for fooling there,"
She whisper'd, in great wrath — "I must deposit
This pretty gentleman within the closet: **CLXXI**

"Pray, keep your nonsense for some luckier night —
 Who can have put my master in this mood?
What will become on 't — I'm in such a fright,
 The devil's in the urchin, and no good —
Is this a time for giggling? this a plight?
 Why, don't you know that it may end in blood?
You'll lose your life, and I shall lose my place,
My mistress all, for that half-girlish face.

CLXXII

“Had it but been for a stout cavalier
Of twenty-five or thirty (come, make haste) —
But for a child, what piece of work is here!
I really, madam, wonder at your taste
(Come, sir, get in) — my master must be near:
There, for the present, at the least, he’s fast,
And if we can but till the morning keep
Our counsel — (Juan, mind, you must not sleep).”

CLXXIII

Now, Don Alfonso entering, but alone,
 Closed the oration of the trusty maid:
She loiter'd, and he told her to be gone,
 An order somewhat sullenly obey'd;
However, present remedy was none,
 And no great good seem'd answer'd if she stay'd:
Regarding both with slow and sidelong view,
She snuff'd the candle, curtsied, and withdrew.

CLXXIV

Alfonso paused a minute — then begun
Some strange excuses for his late proceeding;
He would not justify what he had done,
To say the best, it was extreme ill-breeding;
But there were ample reasons for it, none
Of which he specified in this his pleading:
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn'd call "*rigmarole*."

CLXXV

Julia said nought; though all the while there rose
A ready answer, which at once enables
A matron, who her husband's foible knows,
By a few timely words to turn the tables,
Which, if it does not silence, still must pose, —
Even if it should comprise a pack of fables;
'T is to retort with firmness, and when he
Suspects with *one*, do you reproach with *three*.

CLXXVI

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds, —

Alfonso's loves with Inez were well known,
But whether 't was that one's own guilt confounds —

But that can't be, as has been often shown,
A lady with apologies abounds; —

It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was dear.

CLXXVII

There might be one more motive, which makes two;
Alfonso ne'er to Juan had alluded, —
Mention'd his jealousy but never who
Had been the happy lover, he concluded,
Conceal'd amongst his premises; 't is true,
His mind the more o'er this its mystery brooded;
To speak of Inez now were, one may say,
Like throwing Juan in Alfonso's way.

CLXXVIII

A hint, in tender cases, is enough;
Silence is best, besides there is a *tact* —
(That modern phrase appears to me sad stuff,
But it will serve to keep my verse compact) —
Which keeps, when push'd by questions rather rough,
A lady always distant from the fact:
The charming creatures lie with such a grace,
There's nothing so becoming to the face.

CLXXIX

They blush, and we believe them; at least I
Have always done so; 't is of no great use,
In any case, attempting a reply,
For then their eloquence grows quite profuse;
And when at length they 're out of breath, they sigh,
And cast their languid eyes down, and let loose
A tear or two, and then we make it up;
And then — and then — and then — sit down and sup.

CLXXX

Alfonso closed his speech, and begg'd her pardon,
Which Julia half withheld, and then half granted,
And laid conditions he thought very hard on,
Denying several little things he wanted:
He stood like Adam lingering near his garden,
With useless penitence perplex'd and haunted,
Beseeching she no further would refuse,
When, lo! he stumbled o'er a pair of shoes.

CLXXXI

A pair of shoes! — what then? not much, if they
Are such as fit with ladies' feet, but these
(No one can tell how much I grieve to say)
Were masculine; to see them, and to seize,
Was but a moment's act. — Ah! well-a-day!
My teeth begin to chatter, my veins freeze —
Alfonso first examined well their fashion,
And then flew out into another passion.

CLXXXII

He left the room for his relinquish'd sword,
And Julia instant to the closet flew.
“Fly, Juan, fly! for heaven's sake — not a word —
The door is open — you may yet slip through
The passage you so often have explored —
Here is the garden-key — Fly — fly — Adieu!
Haste — haste! I hear Alfonso's hurrying feet —
Day has not broke — there's no one in the street:”

CLXXXIII

None can say that this was not good advice,
The only mischief was, it came too late;
Of all experience 't is the usual price,
A sort of income-tax laid on by fate:
Juan had reach'd the room-door in a trice,
And might have done so by the garden-gate,
But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
Who threaten'd death — so Juan knock'd him down.

CLXXXIV

Dire was the scuffle, and out went the light;

 Antonia cried out “Rape!” and Julia “Fire!”

But not a servant stirr’d to aid the fight.

 Alfonso, pommell’d to his heart’s desire,
Swore lustily he’d be revenged this night;

 And Juan, too, blasphemed an octave higher;
His blood was up: though young, he was a Tartar,
And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.

CLXXXV

Alfonso's sword had dropp'd ere he could draw it,
And they continued battling hand to hand,
For Juan very luckily ne'er saw it;

His temper not being under great command,
If at that moment he had chanced to claw it,
Alfonso's days had not been in the land
Much longer. — Think of husbands', lovers' lives!
And how ye may be doubly widows — wives!

CLXXXVI

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
And Juan throttled him to get away,
And blood ('t was from the nose) began to flow;
At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
And then his only garment quite gave way;
He fled, like Joseph, leaving it; but there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

CLXXXVII

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
 An awkward spectacle their eyes before;
Antonia in hysterics, Julia swoon'd,
 Alfonso leaning, breathless, by the door;
Some half-torn drapery scatter'd on the ground,
 Some blood, and several footsteps, but no more:
Juan the gate gain'd, turn'd the key about,
And liking not the inside, lock'd the out.

CLXXXVIII

Here ends this canto. — Need I sing, or say,
 How Juan naked, favour'd by the night,
Who favours what she should not, found his way,
 And reach'd his home in an unseemly plight?
The pleasant scandal which arose next day,
 The nine days' wonder which was brought to light,
And how Alfonso sued for a divorce,
Were in the English newspapers, of course.

CLXXXIX

If you would like to see the whole proceedings,
The depositions, and the cause at full,
The names of all the witnesses, the pleadings
Of counsel to nonsuit, or to annul,
There's more than one edition, and the readings
Are various, but they none of them are dull;
The best is that in short-hand ta'en by Gurney,
Who to Madrid on purpose made a journey.

CXC

But Donna Inez, to divert the train
Of one of the most circulating scandals
That had for centuries been known in Spain,
At least since the retirement of the Vandals,
First vow'd (and never had she vow'd in vain)
To Virgin Mary several pounds of candles;
And then, by the advice of some old ladies,
She sent her son to be shipp'd off from Cadiz.

CXCI

She had resolved that he should travel through
All European climes, by land or sea,
To mend his former morals, and get new,
Especially in France and Italy
(At least this is the thing most people do).

Julia was sent into a convent: she
Grieved, but, perhaps, her feelings may be better
Shown in the following copy of her Letter: —

CXCII

“They tell me ‘t is decided; you depart:
’T is wise — ’t is well, but not the less a pain;
I have no further claim on your young heart,
Mine is the victim, and would be again;
To love too much has been the only art
I used; — I write in haste, and if a stain
Be on this sheet, ‘t is not what it appears;
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

CXCIII

“I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
State, station, heaven, mankind’s, my own esteem,
And yet can not regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that dream;
Yet, if I name my guilt, ‘t is not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I deem:
I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest —
I’ve nothing to reproach, or to request.

CXCIV

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart,
’T is woman’s whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

CXCV

“You will proceed in pleasure, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o’er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart’s core;
These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before —
And so farewell — forgive me, love me — No,
That word is idle now — but let it go.

CXCVI

“My breast has been all weakness, is so yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit’s set,
As roll the waves before the settled wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget —
To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fix’d soul.

CXCVII

“I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete:
I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life, to love and pray for you!”

CXCVIII

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper
With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new:
Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,
It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sun-flower; "*Elle vous suit partout*,"
The motto cut upon a white cornelian;
The wax was superfine, its hue vermillion.

CXCIX

This was Don Juan's earliest scrape; but whether
I shall proceed with his adventures is
Dependent on the public altogether;
We'll see, however, what they say to this:
Their favour in an author's cap's a feather,
And no great mischief's done by their caprice;
And if their approbation we experience,
Perhaps they'll have some more about a year hence.

CC

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

CCI

All these things will be specified in time,
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
Which makes so many poets, and some fools:
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,
Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

CCII

There's only one slight difference between
Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween
(Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 't is quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story's actually true.

CCIII

If any person doubt it, I appeal
 To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
 To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
 But that which more completely faith exacts
Is that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

CCIV

If ever I should condescend to prose,
 I'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
 That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one knows,
 And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I'll call the work "Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle."

CCV

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
Commit — flirtation with the muse of Moore.

CCVI

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;
Thou shalt not bear false witness like "the Blues"
(There's *one*, at least, is very fond of this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what I choose:
This is true criticism, and you may kiss —
Exactly as you please, or not, — the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G-d!

CCVII

If any person should presume to assert
 This story is not moral, first, I pray,
That they will not cry out before they're hurt,
 Then that they'll read it o'er again, and say
(But, doubtless, nobody will be so pert)
 That this is not a moral tale, though gay;
Besides, in Canto Twelfth, I mean to show
The very place where wicked people go.

CCVIII

If, after all, there should be some so blind
To their own good this warning to despise,
Led by some tortuosity of mind,
Not to believe my verse and their own eyes,
And cry that they “the moral cannot find,”
I tell him, if a clergyman, he lies;
Should captains the remark, or critics, make,
They also lie too — under a mistake.

CCIX

The public approbation I expect,
And beg they'll take my word about the moral,
Which I with their amusement will connect
(So children cutting teeth receive a coral);
Meantime, they'll doubtless please to recollect
My epical pretensions to the laurel:
For fear some prudish readers should grow skittish,
I've bribed my grandmother's review — the British.

CCX

I sent it in a letter to the Editor,
Who thank'd me duly by return of post —
I'm for a handsome article his creditor;
Yet, if my gentle Muse he please to roast,
And break a promise after having made it her,
Denying the receipt of what it cost,
And smear his page with gall instead of honey,
All I can say is — that he had the money.

CCXI

I think that with this holy new alliance
I may ensure the public, and defy
All other magazines of art or science,
Daily, or monthly, or three monthly; I
Have not essay'd to multiply their clients,
Because they tell me 't were in vain to try,
And that the Edinburgh Review and Quarterly
Treat a dissenting author very martyrly.

CCXII

“Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventâ

Consule Planco,” Horace said, and so

Say I; by which quotation there is meant a

Hint that some six or seven good years ago
(Long ere I dreamt of dating from the Brenta)

I was most ready to return a blow,
And would not brook at all this sort of thing
In my hot youth — when George the Third was King.

CCXIII

But now at thirty years my hair is grey
 (I wonder what it will be like at forty?
I thought of a peruke the other day) —
 My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I
Have squander'd my whole summer while 't was May,
 And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
Have spent my life, both interest and principal,
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul invincible.

CCXIV

No more — no more — Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we see
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee:
Think'st thou the honey with those objects grew?
Alas! 't was not in them, but in thy power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

CCXV

No more — no more — Oh! never more, my heart,
Canst thou be my sole world, my universe!
Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
Thou canst not be my blessing or my curse:
The illusion's gone for ever, and thou art
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,
And in thy stead I've got a deal of judgment,
Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgment.

CCXVI

My days of love are over; me no more
The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,
Can make the fool of which they made before, —
In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
The credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,
The copious use of claret is forbid too,
So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
I think I must take up with avarice.

CCXVII

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of Pleasure;
And the two last have left me many a token
O'er which reflection may be made at leisure:
Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've spoken,
"Time is, Time was, Time's past:" — a chymic treasure
Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes —
My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

CCXVIII

What is the end of Fame? 't is but to fill
A certain portion of uncertain paper:
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;
For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
And bards burn what they call their "midnight taper,"
To have, when the original is dust,
A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

CCXIX

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's King
Cheops erected the first pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
To keep his memory whole, and mummy hid;
But somebody or other rummaging,
Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

CCXX

But I being fond of true philosophy,
Say very often to myself, "Alas!
All things that have been born were born to die,
And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass;
You've pass'd your youth not so unpleasantly,
And if you had it o'er again — 't would pass —
So thank your stars that matters are no worse,
And read your Bible, sir, and mind your purse."

CCXXI

But for the present, gentle reader! and
Still gentler purchaser! the bard — that's I —
Must, with permission, shake you by the hand,
And so "Your humble servant, and good-b'ye!"
We meet again, if we should understand
Each other; and if not, I shall not try
Your patience further than by this short sample —
'T were well if others follow'd my example.

CCXXII

“Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters — go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.”
When Southey’s read, and Wordsworth understood,
I can’t help putting in my claim to praise —
The four first rhymes are Southey’s every line:
For God’s sake, reader! take them not for mine.

Nov. 1, 1818

DON JUAN: CANTO THE SECOND

I

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
The best of mothers and of educations
In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
Became divested of his native modesty.

II

Had he but been placed at a public school,
In the third form, or even in the fourth,
His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
At least, had he been nurtured in the north;
Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
But then exceptions always prove its worth - —
A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

III

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
If all things be consider'd: first, there was
His lady-mother, mathematical,
A — never mind; his tutor, an old ass;
A pretty woman (that's quite natural,
Or else the thing had hardly come to pass);
A husband rather old, not much in unity
With his young wife — a time, and opportunity.

IV

Well — well, the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust, — perhaps a name.

V

I said that Juan had been sent to Cadiz - —
A pretty town, I recollect it well - —
'T is there the mart of the colonial trade is
(Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel),
And such sweet girls — I mean, such graceful ladies,
Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
Nor liken it — I never saw the like:

VI

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
New broke, a cameleopard, a gazelle,
No — none of these will do; — and then their garb!
Their veil and petticoat — Alas! to dwell
Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto — then their feet and ankles, — well,
Thank Heaven I've got no metaphor quite ready
(And so, my sober Muse — come, let's be steady - —

VII

Chaste Muse! — well, if you must, you must) — the veil
 Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
 Flashes into the heart: — All sunny land
Of love! when I forget you, may I fail
 To — say my prayers — but never was there plann'd
A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.

VIII

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
To stay there had not answer'd her intent,
But why? — we leave the reader in the dark - —
'T was for a voyage that the young man was meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a dove of promise forth.

IX

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money: for four springs
He was to travel; and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve — perhaps believed:
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice — and two or three of credit.

X

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool;
Infants of three years old were taught that day,
Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
The great success of Juan's education,
Spurr'd her to teach another generation.

XI

Juan embark'd — the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing rough:
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well enough;
And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first — perhaps his last — farewell of Spain.

XII

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new:
I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
But almost every other country's blue,
When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

XIII

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck:

 The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,
 From which away so fair and fast they bore.

The best of remedies is a beef-steak

 Against sea-sickness: try it, sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer — so may you.

XIV

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far:
First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to war;
There is a sort of unexpressed concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.

XV

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in life;
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart endears —
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.

XVI

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
I'd weep, — but mine is not a weeping Muse,
And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
Young men should travel, if but to amuse
Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

XVII

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and thought,
While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt sea,
“Sweets to the sweet” (I like so much to quote;
You must excuse this extract, — 't is where she,
The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
Flowers to the grave); and, sobbing often, he
Reflected on his present situation,
And seriously resolved on reformation.

XVIII

“Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!” he cried,
 ”Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
 Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
Farewell, where Guadalquivir’s waters glide!
 Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o’er,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia! — (Here he drew
Her letter out again, and read it through.)

XIX

“And, oh! if e’er I should forget, I swear —
But that’s impossible, and cannot be —
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of any thing excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick).

XX

“Sooner shall heaven kiss earth (here he fell sicker),

Oh, Julia! what is every other woe?

(For God’s sake let me have a glass of liquor;

Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)

Julia, my love! (you rascal, Pedro, quicker) —

Oh, Julia! (this curst vessel pitches so) —

Belovéd Julia, hear me still beseeching!”

(Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)

XXI

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
Beyond the best apothecary's art,
The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we dote on, when a part
Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends:
No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

XXII

Love's a capricious power: I've known it hold
 Out through a fever caused by its own heat,
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
 And find a quincy very hard to treat;
Against all noble maladies he's bold,
 But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

XXIII

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
 About the lower region of the bowels;
Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
 Shrinks from the application of hot towels,
And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
 Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

XXIV

The ship, call'd the most holy "Trinidad,"
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born:
They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

XXV

His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,
His headache being increased by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

XXVI

'T was not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 't was not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind:
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

XXVII

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 't was time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

XXVIII

One gang of people instantly was put
 Upon the pumps and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not;
 But they could not come at the leak as yet;
At last they did get at it really, but
 Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

XXIX

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

XXX

As day advanced the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust — which all descriptive power transcends —
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends.

XXXI

There she lay motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks:
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

XXXII

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen; first the mizen went,
The main-mast follow'd: but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.
Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

XXXIII

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

XXXIV

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as bas
The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright cured the qualms
Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

XXXV

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

XXXVI

“Give us more grog,” they cried, “for it will be
All one an hour hence.” Juan answer’d, “No!
‘T is true that death awaits both you and me,
But let us die like men, not sink below
Like brutes;” — and thus his dangerous post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

XXXVII

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

XXXVIII

But now there came a flash of hope once more;
Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the masts were gone,
The leak increased; shoals round her, but no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her own.
They tried the pumps again, and though before
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless grown,
A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to bale —
The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd a sail.

XXXIX

Under the vessel's keel the sail was past,
And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they expect?
But still 't is best to struggle to the last,
'T is never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 't is true that man can only die once,
'T is not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

XL

There winds and waves had hurl'd them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away;
For they were forced with steering to dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even commence
A jurymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by good luck,
Still swam — though not exactly like a duck.

XLI

The wind, in fact, perhaps was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was used — nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

XLII

Again the weather threaten'd, — again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps: — a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.

XLIII

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain he
Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children, —
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

XLIV

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints — but there were none
To pay them with; and some look'd o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd — in his confusion.

XLV

Some lash'd them in their hammocks; some put on
 Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed the day on which they saw the sun,
 And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling, tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
 Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

XLVI

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
‘T was difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the weather’s stress:
Two casks of biscuit and a keg of butter
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

XLVII

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,
But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon —
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.

XLVIII

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
 Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
 As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
 Threw in by good luck over the ship's rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stored,
To save one half the people then on board.

XLIX

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail,
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
 With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
 If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
 And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical and half hysterical: —
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost — sunk, in short.

LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell —
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

LIII

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
 Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
 Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
 Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;
And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few —
Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat.

LV

All the rest perish'd; near two hundred souls
Had left their bodies; and what's worse, alas!
When over Catholics the ocean rolls,
They must wait several weeks before a mass
Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
Because, till people know what's come to pass,
They won't lay out their money on the dead —
It costs three francs for every mass that's said.

LVI

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
 Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place;
It seem'd as if they had exchanged their care,
 For Juan wore the magisterial face
Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
 Of eyes were crying for their owner's case:
Battista; though (a name call'd shortly Tita),
Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

LVII

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jump'd into the wave
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
They could not rescue him although so close,
Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat — the crew kept crowding in it.

LVIII

A small old spaniel, — which had been Don Jose's,
His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
For on such things the memory reposes
With tenderness — stood howling on the brink,
Knowing (dogs have such intellectual noses!),
No doubt, the vessel was about to sink;
And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepp'd
Off, threw him in, then after him he leap'd.

LIX

He also stuff'd his money where he could
About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
Who let him do, in fact, whate'er he would,
Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
As every rising wave his dread renew'd;
But Juan, trusting they might still get through,
And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.

LX

'T was a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalm'd between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze:
Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damp'd,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.

LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast:
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perish'd with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be done:
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who begun
To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.

LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

LXIV

'T is very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,
When patients, neither plagued with friends nor wife,
Survive through very desperate conditions,
Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
Nor shears of Atropos before their visions:
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men miseries miseries of alarming brevity.

LXV

'T is said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others, — God knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors, — yet so true it is,
That some, I really think, do never die;
Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And that's their mode of furnishing supply:
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

LXVI

'T is thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of life, and bear
More than can be believed, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear and tear;
And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and there;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the Argo.

LXVII

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way,
Your labouring people think beyond all question,
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

LXVIII

And thus it was with this our hapless crew;
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm,
Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.

LXIX

The consequence was easily foreseen —

They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then

On what, in fact, next day were they to dine?
They hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men!

And carry them to shore; these hopes were fine,
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual.

LXX

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child:
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild —
With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)
What could they do? and hunger's rage grew wild:
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd and portion'd out for present eating.

LXXI

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse received (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.

LXXII

The seventh day, and no wind — the burning sun
Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,
They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not; savagely
They glared upon each other — all was done,
Water, and wine, and food, — and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.

LXXIII

At length one whisper'd his companion, who
Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,
And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
'T was but his own, suppress'd till now, he found:
And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
And who should die to be his fellow's food.

LXXIV

But ere they came to this, they that day shared
 Some leathern caps, and what remain'd of shoes;
And then they look'd around them and despair'd,
 And none to be the sacrifice would choose;
At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,
 But of materials that much shock the Muse —
Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

LXXV

The lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd, and handed,
In silent horror, and their distribution
Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,
Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
'T was nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,
By which none were permitted to be neuter —
And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.

LXXVI

He but requested to be bled to death:

The surgeon had his instruments, and bled
Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,

You hardly could perceive when he was dead.
He died as born, a Catholic in faith,

Like most in the belief in which they're bred,
And first a little crucifix he kiss'd,
And then held out his jugular and wrist.

LXXVII

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
 Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;
But being thirstiest at the moment, he
 Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing veins:
Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
 And such things as the entrails and the brains
Regaled two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow —
The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

LXXVIII

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
Who were not quite so fond of animal food;
To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could
Feel now his appetite increased much more;
'T was not to be expected that he should,
Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.

LXXIX

'T was better that he did not; for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme;
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad — Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam and roll, with strange convulsions rack'd,
Drinking salt water like a mountain-stream,
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyaena-laughter, died despairing.

LXXX

Their numbers were much thinn'd by this infliction,
And all the rest were thin enough, Heaven knows;
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceived their woes;
But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly.

LXXXI

And next they thought upon the master's mate,
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons: the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late;
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies.

LXXXII

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain'd,
But was used sparingly, — some were afraid,
And others still their appetites constrain'd,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstain'd,
Chewing a piece of bamboo and some lead:
At length they caught two boobies and a noddy,
And then they left off eating the dead body.

LXXXIII

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
The moment after he politely ends
His tale: if foes be food in hell, at sea
'T is surely fair to dine upon our friends,
When shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
Without being much more horrible than Dante.

LXXXIV

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain
Men really know not what good water's worth;
If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You'd wish yourself where Truth is — in a well.

LXXXV

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deem'd its moisture was complete
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

LXXXVI

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd;
Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
To taste of heaven — If this be true, indeed
Some Christians have a comfortable creed.

LXXXVII

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
And with them their two sons, of whom the one
Was more robust and hardy to the view,
But he died early; and when he was gone,
His nearest messmate told his sire, who threw
One glance at him, and said, "Heaven's will be done!
I can do nothing," and he saw him thrown
Into the deep without a tear or groan.

LXXXVIII

The other father had a weaklier child,
Of a soft cheek and aspect delicate;
But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
And patient spirit held aloof his fate;
Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
As if to win a part from off the weight
He saw increasing on his father's heart,
With the deep deadly thought that they must part.

LXXXIX

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
And when the wish'd-for shower at length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
Into his dying child's mouth — but in vain.

XC

The boy expired — the father held the clay,
And look'd upon it long, and when at last
Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen lay
Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope were past,
He watch'd it wistfully, until away
'T was borne by the rude wave wherein 't was cast;
Then he himself sunk down all dumb and shivering,
And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering.

XCI

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd men.

XCII

It changed, of course; a heavenly chameleon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermillion,
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle).

XCIII

Our shipwreck'd seamen thought it a good omen —
It is as well to think so, now and then;
'T was an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
And may become of great advantage when
Folks are discouraged; and most surely no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves again
Than these, and so this rainbow look'd like hope —
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope.

XCIV

About this time a beautiful white bird,
 Webfooted, not unlike a dove in size
And plumage (probably it might have err'd
 Upon its course), pass'd oft before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and heard
 The men within the boat, and in this guise
It came and went, and flutter'd round them till
Night fell: this seem'd a better omen still.

XCV

But in this case I also must remark,
 'T was well this bird of promise did not perch,
Because the tackle of our shatter'd bark
 Was not so safe for roosting as a church;
And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
 Returning there from her successful search,
Which in their way that moment chanced to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch and all.

XCVI

With twilight it again came on to blow,
But not with violence; the stars shone out,
The boat made way; yet now they were so low,
They knew not where nor what they were about;
Some fancied they saw land, and some said "No!"
The frequent fog-banks gave them cause to doubt —
Some swore that they heard breakers, others guns,
And all mistook about the latter once.

XCVII

As morning broke, the light wind died away,
When he who had the watch sung out and swore,
If 't was not land that rose with the sun's ray,
He wish'd that land he never might see more;
And the rest rubb'd their eyes and saw a bay,
Or thought they saw, and shaped their course for shore;
For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

XCVIII

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears,
And seem'd as if they had no further care;
While a few pray'd (the first time for some years) —
And at the bottom of the boat three were
Asleep: they shook them by the hand and head,
And tried to awaken them, but found them dead.

XCIX

The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill kind,
And by good fortune, gliding softly, caught her,
Which yielded a day's life, and to their mind
Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
Because it left encouragement behind:
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.

C

The land appear'd a high and rocky coast,
And higher grew the mountains as they drew,
Set by a current, toward it: they were lost
In various conjectures, for none knew
To what part of the earth they had been tost,
So changeable had been the winds that blew;
Some thought it was Mount Ætna, some the highlands,
Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other islands.

CI

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
Still set them onwards to the welcome shore,
Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and pale:
Their living freight was now reduced to four,
And three dead, whom their strength could not avail
To heave into the deep with those before,
Though the two sharks still follow'd them, and dash'd
The spray into their faces as they splash'd.

CII

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one by one
They perish'd, until wither'd to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.

CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare —
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

CIV

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay:
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore, — and upset her.

CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
 Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
 Had often turn'd the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
 He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,
 He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
 The beach which lay before him, high and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
 That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

CVII

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 't was dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half-senseless, from the sea:

CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps in vain.

CIX

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he look'd for those
Who long had been his mates upon the sea;
But none of them appear'd to share his woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the famish'd three,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial ground.

CX

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses pass'd:
He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd hand
Droop'd dripping on the oar (their jurymast),
And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay.

CXI

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
 He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And Time had nothing more of night nor day
 For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
 He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquish'd, still retired with strife.

CXII

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
And wish'd it death in which he had reposed;
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
A lovely female face of seventeen.

CXIII

'T was bending dose o'er his, and the small mouth
Seem'd almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recall'd his answering spirits back from death;
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply.

CXIV

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle flung
 Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm
Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
 And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she wrung
 His dewy curls, long drench'd by every storm;
And watch'd with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom — and hers, too.

CXV

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl and her attendant, — one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure, — then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair.

CXVI

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair —
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
In braids behind; and though her stature were
Even of the highest for a female mould,
They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a lady in the land.

CXVII

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'T is as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

CXVIII

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip — sweet lips! that make us sigh
Ever to have seen such; for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
(A race of mere impostors, when all's done —
I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

CXIX

I'll tell you why I say so, for 't is just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

CXX

And such was she, the lady of the cave:

Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;

For, as you know, the Spanish women banish
Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave

Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
The basquiña and the mantilla, they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

CXXI

But with our damsel this was not the case:

Her dress was many-colour'd, finely spun;
Her locks curl'd negligently round her face,

But through them gold and gems profusely shone:
Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace

Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking.

CXXII

The other female's dress was not unlike,
But of inferior materials: she
Had not so many ornaments to strike,
Her hair had silver only, bound to be
Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
Was coarser; and her air, though firm, less free;
Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

CXXIII

And these two tended him, and cheer'd him both
 With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
Which are (as I must own) of female growth,
 And have ten thousand delicate inventions:
They made a most superior mess of broth,
 A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
But the best dish that e'er was cook'd since Homer's
Achilles ordered dinner for new comers.

CXXIV

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
Of clap-trap which your recent poets prize;
And so, in short, the girls they really were
They shall appear before your curious eyes,
Mistress and maid; the first was only daughter
Of an old man who lived upon the water.

CXXV

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
And still a sort of fisherman was he;
But other speculations were, in sooth,
Added to his connection with the sea,
Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:
A little smuggling, and some piracy,
Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.

CXXVI

A fisher, therefore, was he, — though of men,
Like Peter the Apostle, — and he fish'd
For wandering merchant-vessels, now and then,
And sometimes caught as many as he wish'd;
The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
He sought in the slave-market too, and dish'd
Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

CXXVII

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
 (One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
A very handsome house from out his guilt,
 And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
Heaven knows what cash he got or blood he spilt,
 A sad old fellow was he, if you please;
But this I know, it was a spacious building,
Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

CXXVIII

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidée,
The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;
Besides, so very beautiful was she,
Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles:
Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
Rejected several suitors, just to learn
How to accept a better in his turn.

CXXIX

And walking out upon the beach, below
The cliff, towards sunset, on that day she found,
Insensible, — not dead, but nearly so, —
Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half drown'd;
But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound,
As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
A stranger' dying, with so white a skin.

CXXX

But taking him into her father's house
Was not exactly the best way to save,
But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
Or people in a trance into their grave;
Because the good old man had so much "*nous*,"
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
And sold him instantly when out of danger.

CXXXI

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
 (A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
 And when, at last, he open'd his black eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest;
 And their compassion grew to such a size,
It open'd half the turnpike-gates to heaven
(St. Paul says, 't is the toll which must be given).

CXXXII

They made a fire, — but such a fire as they
 Upon the moment could contrive with such
Materials as were cast up round the bay, —
 Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch
Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay,
 A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnish'd twenty.

CXXXIII

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
For Haidée stripped her sables off to make
His couch; and, that he might be more at ease,
And warm, in case by chance he should awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
She and her maid — and promised by daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

CXXXIV

And thus they left him to his lone repose:

Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only knows),

Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
Not even a vision of his former woes

Throbb'd in accursed dreams, which sometimes spread
Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.

CXXXV

Young Juan slept all dreamless: — but the maid,
 Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the den
Look'd back upon him, and a moment stay'd,
 And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she said
 (The heart will slip, even as the tongue and pen),
He had pronounced her name — but she forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

CXXXVI

And pensive to her father's house she went,
 Enjoining silence strict to Zoë, who
Better than her knew what, in fact, she meant,
 She being wiser by a year or two:
A year or two's an age when rightly spent,
 And Zoë spent hers, as most women do,
In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
Which is acquired in Nature's good old college.

CXXXVII

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd upon
His rest; the rushing of the neighbouring rill,
And the young beams of the excluded sun,
Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;
And need he had of slumber yet, for none
Had suffer'd more — his hardships were comparative
To those related in my grand-dad's "Narrative."

CXXXVIII

Not so Haidée: she sadly toss'd and tumbled,
And started from her sleep, and, turning o'er
Dream'd of a thousand wrecks, o'er which she stumbled,
And handsome corpses strew'd upon the shore;
And woke her maid so early that she grumbled,
And call'd her father's old slaves up, who swore
In several oaths — Armenian, Turk, and Greek —
They knew not what to think of such a freak.

CXXXIX

But up she got, and up she made them get,
With some pretence about the sun, that makes
Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
And 't is, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phoebus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband, — or some other brute.

CXL

I say, the sun is a most glorious sight,
I've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
I have sat up on purpose all the night,
Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;
And so all ye, who would be in the right
In health and purse, begin your day to date
From daybreak, and when coffin'd at fourscore,
Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four.

CXLI

And Haidée met the morning face to face;
Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
From heart to cheek is curb'd into a blush,
Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
That overpowers some Alpine river's rush,
Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
Or the Red Sea — but the sea is not red.

CXLII

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew,
While the sun smiled on her with his first flame,
And young Aurora kiss'd her lips with dew,
Taking her for a sister; just the same
Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
Had all the advantage, too, of not being air.

CXLIII

And when into the cavern Haidée stepp'd
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept;
And then she stopp'd, and stood as if in awe
(For sleep is awful), and on tiptoe crept
And wrapt him closer, lest the air, too raw,
Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as death
Bent with hush'd lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

CXLIV

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
Who die in righteousness, she lean'd; and there
All tranquilly the shipwreck'd boy was lying,
As o'er him the calm and stirless air:
But Zoë the meantime some eggs was frying,
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
Must breakfast — and betimes, lest they should ask it,
She drew out her provision from the basket.

CXLV

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,
And that a shipwreck'd youth would hungry be;
Besides, being less in love, she yawn'd a little,
And felt her veins chill'd by the neighbouring sea;
And so, she cook'd their breakfast to a tittle;
I can't say that she gave them any tea,
But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,
With Scio wine, — and all for love, not money.

CXLVI

And Zoë, when the eggs were ready, and
The coffee made, would fain have waken'd Juan;
But Haidée stopp'd her with her quick small hand,
And without word, a sign her finger drew on
Her lip, which Zoë needs must understand;
And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,
Because her mistress would not let her break
That sleep which seem'd as it would ne'er awake.

CXLVII

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek
A purple hectic play'd like dying day
On the snow-tops of distant hills; the streak
Of sufferance yet upon his forehead lay,
Where the blue veins look'd shadowy, shrunk, and weak;
And his black curls were dewy with the spray,
Which weigh'd upon them yet, all damp and salt,
Mix'd with the stony vapours of the vault.

CXLVIII

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's breast,
Droop'd as the willow when no winds can breathe,
Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at rest,
Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
Although his woes had turn'd him rather yellow.

CXLIX

He woke and gazed, and would have slept again,
But the fair face which met his eyes forbade
Those eyes to close, though weariness and pain
Had further sleep a further pleasure made;
For woman's face was never form'd in vain
For Juan, so that even when he pray'd
He turn'd from grisly saints, and martyrs hairy,
To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary.

CL

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
And look'd upon the lady, in whose cheek
The pale contended with the purple rose,
As with an effort she began to speak;
Her eyes were eloquent, her words would pose,
Although she told him, in good modern Greek,
With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
That he was faint, and must not talk, but eat.

CLI

Now Juan could not understand a word,
Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
And her voice was the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why — an overpowering tone,
Whence Melody descends as from a throne.

CLII

And Juan gazed as one who is awoke
By a distant organ, doubting if he be
Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke
By the watchman, or some such reality,
Or by one's early valet's curséd knock;
At least it is a heavy sound to me,
Who like a morning slumber — for the night
Shows stars and women in a better light.

CLIII

And Juan, too, was help'd out from his dream,
Or sleep, or whatso'er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite: the steam
Of Zoë's cookery no doubt was stealing
Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
Of the new fire, which Zoë kept up, kneeling
To stir her viands, made him quite awake
And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

CLIV

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton;
And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint upon their barbarous spits they put on:
But this occurs but seldom, between whiles,
For some of these are rocks with scarce a hut on;
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the most rich.

CLV

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
That the old fable of the Minotaur —
From which our modern morals rightly shrinking
Condemn the royal lady's taste who wore
A cow's shape for a mask — was only (sinking
The allegory) a mere type, no more,
That Pasiphaë promoted breeding cattle,
To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.

CLVI

For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef — I won't say much of beer,
Because 't is liquor only, and being far
From this my subject, has no business here;
We know, too, they very fond of war,
A pleasure — like all pleasures — rather dear;
So were the Cretans — from which I infer
That beef and battles both were owing to her.

CLVII

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
His head upon his elbow, and he saw
A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
As all his latter meals had been quite raw,
Three or four things, for which the Lord he praised,
And, feeling still the famish'd vulture gnaw,
He fell upon whate'er was offer'd, like
A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

CLVIII

He ate, and he was well supplied: and she,
Who watch'd him like a mother, would have fed
Him past all bounds, because she smiled to see
Such appetite in one she had deem'd dead;
But Zoë, being older than Haidée,
Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had read)
That famish'd people must be slowly nurst,
And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst.

CLIX

And so she took the liberty to state,
Rather by deeds than words, because the case
Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose fate
Had made her mistress quit her bed to trace
The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his plate,
Unless he wish'd to die upon the place —
She snatch'd it, and refused another morsel,
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

CLX

Next they — he being naked, save a tatter'd
Pair of scarce decent trowsers — went to work,
And in the fire his recent rags they scatterd,
And dress'd him, for the present, like a Turk,
Or Greek — that is, although it not much matter'd,
Omitting turban, slippers, pistols, dirk, —
They furnish'd him, entire, except some stitches,
With a clean shirt, and very spacious breeches.

CLXI

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at speaking,
But not a word could Juan comprehend,
Although he listen'd so that the young Greek in
Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end;
And, as he interrupted not, went eking
Her speech out to her protégé and friend,
Till pausing at the last her breath to take,
She saw he did not understand Romaic.

CLXII

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,
And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,
And read (the only book she could) the lines
Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
The answer eloquent, where soul shines
And darts in one quick glance a long reply;
And thus in every look she saw exprest
A world of words, and things at which she guess'd.

CLXIII

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
And words repeated after her, he took
A lesson in her tongue; but by surmise,
No doubt, less of her language than her look:
As he who studies fervently the skies
Turns oftener to the stars than to his book,
Thus Juan learn'd his *alpha beta* better
From Haidée's glance than any graven letter.

CLXIV

'T is pleasing to be school'd in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes — that is, I mean,
When both the teacher and the taught are young,
As was the case, at least, where I have been;
They smile so when one's right, and when one's wrong
They smile still more, and then there intervene
Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss; —
I learn'd the little that I know by this:

CLXV

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and Greek,
Italian not at all, having no teachers;
Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
Learning that language chiefly from its preachers,
Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every week
I study, also Blair, the highest reachers
Of eloquence in piety and prose —
I hate your poets, so read none of those.

CLXVI

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
A wanderer from the British world of fashion,
Where I, like other “dogs, have had my day,”
Like other men, too, may have had my passion —
But that, like other things, has pass’d away,
And all her fools whom I *could* lay the lash on:
Foes, friends, men, women, now are nought to me
But dreams of what has been, no more to be.

CLXVII

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
To hear new words, and to repeat them; but
Some feelings, universal as the sun,
Were such as could not in his breast be shut
More than within the bosom of a nun:
He was in love, — as you would be, no doubt,
With a young benefactress, — so was she,
Just in the way we very often see.

CLXVIII

And every day by daybreak — rather early
For Juan, who was somewhat fond of rest —
She came into the cave, but it was merely
To see her bird reposing in his nest;
And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.

CLXIX

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
And every day help'd on his convalescence;
'T was well, because health in the human frame
Is pleasant, besides being true love's essence,
For health and idleness to passion's flame
Are oil and gunpowder; and some good lessons
Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,
Without whom Venus will not long attack us.

CLXX

While Venus fills the heart (without heart really
Love, though good always, is not quite so good),
Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli, —
For love must be sustain'd like flesh and blood, —
While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a jelly:
Eggs, oysters, too, are amatory food;
But who is their purveyor from above
Heaven knows, — it may be Neptune, Pan, or Jove.

CLXXI

When Juan woke he found some good things ready,
A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
That ever made a youthful heart less steady,
Besides her maid's as pretty for their size;
But I have spoken of all this already —
And repetition's tiresome and unwise, —
Well — Juan, after bathing in the sea,
Came always back to coffee and Haidée.

CLXXII

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
That bathing pass'd for nothing; Juan seem'd
To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
Of whom these two years she had nightly dream'd,
A something to be loved, a creature meant
To be her happiness, and whom she deem'd
To render happy; all who joy would win
Must share it, — Happiness was born a twin.

CLXXIII

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
 Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
 To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake:
To live with him forever were too much;
 But then the thought of parting made her quake;
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreck — her first love, and her last.

CLXXIV

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remain'd unknown within his craggy nook;
At last her father's prows put out to sea
For certain merchantmen upon the look,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
But three Ragusan vessels, bound for Scio.

CLXXV

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the incumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass;
I speak of Christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison.

CLXXVI

Now she prolong'd her visits and her talk
 (For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
So much as to propose to take a walk, —
 For little had he wander'd since the day
On which, like a young flower snapp'd from the stalk,
 Drooping and dewy on the beach he lay, —
And thus they walk'd out in the afternoon,
And saw the sun set opposite the moon.

CLXXVII

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
 With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
 With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
 And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

CLXXVIII

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
 Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
 That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
 Who please, — the more because they preach in vain, —
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

CLXXIX

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion:
But to return, — Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

CLXXX

Ring for your valet — bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the bless'd sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

CLXXXI

The coast — I think it was the coast that
Was just describing — Yes, it was the coast —
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untost,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

CLXXXII

And forth they wander'd, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoë, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.

CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
 Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
 Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
 On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

CLXXXIV

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

CLXXXV

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
 Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
 Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the wave's splash, and the wind so low,
 And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other — and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake, — for a kiss's strength,
I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.

CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long — no doubt they never reckon'd;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung —
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
 Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
 The twilight glow which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands and dropping caves, that lay
 Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

CLXXXIX

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,
They felt no terrors from the night, they were
All in all to each other: though their speech
Was broken words, *they* thought a language there, —
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle — first love, — that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird;
And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

CXCI

She loved, and was belovéd — she adored,
And she was worshipp'd; after nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion, —
But by degrees their senses were restored,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.

CXCII

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity can not annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire — all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

CXCIII

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
So loving and so lovely — till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damn'd for ever;
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And hell and purgatory — but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXCIV

They look upon each other, and their eyes
 Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
 Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
 He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

CXCV

And when those deep and burning moments pass'd,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,
Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's charms;
And now and then her eye to heaven is cast,
And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

CXCVI

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture; but not such true joy are reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

CXCVII

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
 All that it hath of life with us is living;
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
 And all unconscious of the joy 't is giving;
All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and proved,
 Hush'd into depths beyond the watcher's diving:
There lies the thing we love with all its errors
And all its charms, like death without its terrors.

CXCVIII

The lady watch'd her lover — and that hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
O'erflow'd her soul with their united power;
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude
She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
And all the stars that crowded the blue space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

CXCIX

Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 't is lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

CC

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage — and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over.

CCI

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

CCII

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had naught to fear,
Hope, care, nor love, beyond, her heart beat *here*.

CCIII

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!

How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,

That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchymy, and to repeat

Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
To make us understand each good old maxim,
So good — I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

CCIV

And now 't was done — on the lone shore were plighted
 Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
 Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
 Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

CCV

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho the sage blue-stockings, in whose grave
All those may leap who rather would be neuter
(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the wave) —
Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil,
For, after all, we cannot call thee devil.

CCVI

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest men:
Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
Have much employ'd the muse of history's pen;
Their lives and fortunes were extremely various,
Such worthies Time will never see again;
Yet to these four in three things the same luck holds,
They all were heroes, conquerors, and cuckolds.

CCVII

Thou mak'st philosophers; there's Epicurus
And Aristippus, a material crew!
Who to immoral courses would allure us
By theories quite practicable too;
If only from the devil they would insure us,
How pleasant were the maxim (not quite new),
"Eat, drink, and love, what can the rest avail us?"
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.

CCVIII

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
And should he have forgotten her so soon?
I can't but say it seems to me most truly
Perplexing question; but, no doubt, the moon
Does these things for us, and whenever newly
Strong palpitation rises, 't is her boon,
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human creatures?

CCIX

I hate inconstancy — I loathe, detest,
 Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
 No permanent foundation can be laid;
Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
 And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
Which gave me some sensations like a villain.

CCX

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
And whisper'd, "Think of every sacred tie!"
"I will, my dear Philosophy!" I said,
"But then her teeth, and then, oh, Heaven! her eye!
I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
Or neither — out of curiosity."
"Stop!" cried Philosophy, with air so Grecian
(Though she was masqued then as a fair Venetian);

CCXI

“Stop!” so I stopp’d. — But to return: that which
Men call inconstancy is nothing more
Than admiration due where nature’s rich
Profusion with young beauty covers o’er
Some favour’d object; and as in the niche
A lovely statue we almost adore,
This sort of adoration of the real
Is but a heightening of the “*beau ideal*.”

CCXII

'T is the perception of the beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties,
Platonic, universal, wonderful,
Drawn from the stars, and filter'd through the skies,
Without which life would be extremely dull;
In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
With one or two small senses added, just
To hint that flesh is form'd of fiery dust.

CCXIII

Yet 't is a painful feeling, and unwilling,
For surely if we always could perceive
In the same object graces quite as killing
As when she rose upon us like an Eve,
'T would save us many a heartache, many a shilling
(For we must get them any how or grieve),
Whereas if one sole lady pleased for ever,
How pleasant for the heart as well as liver!

CCXIV

The heart is like the sky, a part of heaven,
But changes night and day, too, like the sky;
Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
And darkness and destruction as on high:
But when it hath been scorch'd, and pierced, and riven,
Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye
Pours forth at last the heart's blood turn'd to tears,
Which make the English climate of our years.

CCXV

The liver is the lazaret of bile,
But very rarely executes its function,
For the first passion stays there such a while,
That all the rest creep in and form a junction,
Life knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil, —
Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, compunction, —
So that all mischiefs spring up from this entrail,
Like earthquakes from the hidden fire call'd "central,"

CCXVI

In the mean time, without proceeding more
In this anatomy, I've finish'd now
Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
That being about the number I'll allow
Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
For them and theirs with all who deign to read.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE THIRD

I

Hail, Muse! *et cetera*. — We left Juan sleeping,
Pillow'd upon a fair and happy breast,
And watch'd by eyes that never yet knew weeping,
And loved by a young heart, too deeply blest
To feel the poison through her spirit creeping,
Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
Had soil'd the current of her sinless years,
And turn'd her pure heart's purest blood to tears!

II

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah, why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast — but place to die —
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

III

In her first passion woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over,
And fits her loosely — like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

IV

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;

But one thing's pretty sure; a woman planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers)
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had *none*,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

V

'T is melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine —
A sad, sour, sober beverage — by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour
Down to a very homely household savour.

VI

There's something of antipathy, as 't were,
Between their present and their future state;
A kind of flattery that's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late —
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at such a rate;
For instance — passion in a lover's glorious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

VII

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond;
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then despond:
The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 't is "so nominated in the bond,"
That both are tied till one shall have expired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was adorning

Our days, and put one's servants into mourning.

VIII

There's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

IX

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

X

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar):
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

XI

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress — I,

Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's fantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

XII

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine; it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;
Then if you'd have them wedded, please to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'T is dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

XIII

Yet they were happy, — happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's;
When we have what we like, 't is hard to miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

XIV

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 't is nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honest vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

XV

The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some important captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
Although a squall or two had damp'd his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.

XVI

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots; some he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old);
The rest — save here and there some richer one,
Reserved for future ransom — in the hold
Were link'd alike, as for the common people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

XVII

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant;
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, teapot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

XVIII

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw —
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,

Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance;
These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one huge hamper altogether.

XIX

Then having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

XX

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way
About the time and place where he had been:
He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen;
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

XXI

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlook'd the white walls of his home,
He stopp'd. — What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill —
With love for many, and with fears for some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

XXII

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires —
A female family's a serious matter
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires —
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

XXIII

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory — and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches, —
And that his Argus — bites him by the breeches.

XXIV

If single, probably his plighted fair
Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;
But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,
He may resume his amatory care
As cavalier servente, or despise her;
And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

XXV

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste liaison of the kind — I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady —
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last — of all connections the most steady,
And the true Hymen (the first's but a screen) —

Yet for all that keep not too long away,
I've known the absent wrong'd four times a day.

XXVI

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

XXVII

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen
Of arms (in the East all arm) — and various dyes
Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

XXVIII

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears — alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

XXIX

And still more nearly to the place advancing,

Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches o'er the greensward glancing,
'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.

XXX

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand, and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls
(The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang — and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

XXXI

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow store.

XXXII

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreath his venerable horns with flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then

Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

XXXIII

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
 Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
 The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
 Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
Sigh'd for their sakes — that they should e'er grow older.

XXXIV

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
 To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
 Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,
 Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transform'd their lords to beasts (but that's a fact).

XXXV

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
 For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
 All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
 Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

XXXVI

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
 The happiest mortals even after dinner —

A day of gold from out an age of iron
Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least)'s a siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

XXXVII

He — being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter — had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd;
And long he paused to re-assure his eyes
In fact much more astonish'd than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

XXXVIII

He did not know (alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouch'd his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks, —
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had return'd to Haidée's cheeks,
Her tears, too, being return'd into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

XXXIX

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fiddling,
Which turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure;
The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond measure.
Her father's hospitality seem'd middling,
Compared with what Haidée did with his treasure;
'T was wonderful how things went on improving,
While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

XL

Perhaps you think in stumbling on this feast
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He show'd the royal penchants of a pirate.

XLI

You're wrong. — He was the mildest manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat:
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

XLII

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He ask'd the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had address'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

XLIII

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
"Talking's dry work, I have no time to spare."

A second hiccup'd, "Our old master's dead,
You 'd better ask our mistress who's his heir."
"Our mistress!" quoth a third: "Our mistress! — pooh! —
You mean our master — not the old, but new."

XLIV

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
They thus address'd — and Lambro's visage fell —
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to resume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into a matron.

XLV

"I know not," quoth the fellow, "who or what
He is, nor whence he came — and little care;
But this I know, that this roast capon's fat,
And that good wine ne'er wash'd down better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse."

XLVI

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he show'd the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

XLVII

Now in a person used to much command —
To bid men come, and go, and come again —
To see his orders done, too, out of hand —
Whether the word was death, or but the chain —
It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
Yet such things are, which I can not explain,
Though doubtless he who can command himself
Is good to govern — almost as a Guelf.

XLVIII

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;
With him it never was a word and blow,
His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his one blow left little work for two.

XLIX

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
So little they expected him that day;
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
For Haidée's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deem'd dead, returning,
This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.

L

If all the dead could now return to life
(Which God forbid!) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
(Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt whate'er might be their former strife,
The present weather would be much more rainy —

Tears shed into the grave of the connection
Would share most probably its resurrection.

LI

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turn'd into a tomb,
And round its once warm precincts palely lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

LII

He enter'd in the house — his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home; and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome; *there* he long had dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept o'er,
There his worn bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

LIII

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

LIV

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,

The hardness by long habitude produced,
The dangerous life in which he had grown old,
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accustom'd to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

LV

But something of the spirit of old Greece
Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days;
Tis true he had no ardent love for peace —
Alas! his country show'd no path to praise:
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

LVI

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime
Shed its Ionian elegance, which show'd
Its power unconsciously full many a time, —
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,
A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flow'd
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedew'd his spirit in his calmer hours.

LVII

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
On that beloved daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen;
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kindness,

And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness.

LVIII

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

LIX

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive — they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace,
Our little selves re-form'd in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company — the gout or stone.

LX

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner);
'T is beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't thin her);
Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shines like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces.

LXI

Old Lambro pass'd unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;

Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride:
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;
Gems, gold, and silver, form'd the service mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

LXII

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts — in short, all meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets,
Drest to a Sybarite's most pamper'd wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.

LXIII

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
The hand from burning underneath them placed,
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boil'd
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoil'd.

LXIV

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border too;
The upper border, richly wrought, display'd,
Embroider'd delicately o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

LXV

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.

LXVI

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic, or Eclectic
(For that's the name they like to pray beneath) —
But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath, —
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table.

LXVII

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue;
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment — and appear'd quite new;
The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet)
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew
A sun emboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

LXVIII

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats
And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,

And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things, that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites (that's
To say, by degradation) mingled there
As plentiful as in a court, or fair.

LXIX

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver: — by command,
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice — and wine —
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

LXX

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's:
She wore two jelicks — one was of pale yellow;
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise —
'Neath which her breast heaved like a little billow;
With buttons form'd of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd round her.

LXXI

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely arm,
Lockless — so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without harm,
The limb which it adorn'd its only mould;
So beautiful — its very shape would charm;
And, clinging as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

LXXII

Around, as princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand;
Her hair was starr'd with gems; her veil's fine fold
Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl'd
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

LXXIII

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her heel
Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light, — and would conceal
Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.

LXXIV

Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife —
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

LXXV

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but again

The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

LXXVI

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain tops more heavenly white than her:
The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakspeare also says, 't is very silly
"To gild refinéd gold, or paint the lily."

LXXVII

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent;
His turban, furl'd in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidée's hair in 't
Surmounted as its clasp — a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

LXXVIII

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it:
His verses rarely wanted their due feet;
And for his theme — he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the psalm says, "inditing a good matter."

LXXIX

He praised the present, and abused the past,

Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to no praise —
For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

LXXX

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd — he knew the way to wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention —
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

LXXXI

But he had genius, — when a turncoat has it,
The "*Vates irritabilis*" takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare: —
But to my subject — let me see — what was it? —
Oh! — the third canto — and the pretty pair —
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,

Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

LXXXIV

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions —
Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To “do at Rome as Romans do,” a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
‘T was all the same to him — “God save the king,”
Or “Ça ira,” according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six canto quarto tale;

In Spain, he'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war — much the same in Portugal;
In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on
Would be old Goethe's (see what says De Staël);
In Italy he'd ape the "Trecentisti;"
In Greece, he sing some sort of hymn like this t' ye: **THE ISLES OF GREECE**

1

The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!"
'T is but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling — right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours — like the hands of dyers.

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper — even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his.

LXXXIX

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

XC

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'T is something, nothing, words, illusion, wind —
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late life by Archdeacon Coxe.

XCI

Milton's the prince of poets — so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day —
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college — a harsh sire — odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

XCII

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspeare's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Caesar's earliest acts;
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);
Like Cromwell's pranks; — but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,

As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

XCIII

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of "Pantisocracy;"
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the "Excursion."
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

XCV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind, — so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

XCVI

But let me to my story: I must own,

If I have any fault, it is digression —
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression;
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

XCVII

I know that what our neighbours call “*longueurs*”
(We’ve not so good a word, but have the thing
In that complete perfection which ensures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but ‘t would not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the *epopée*,
To prove its grand ingredient is ennui.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, “Homer sometimes sleeps;”
We feel without him: Wordsworth sometimes wakes,
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear “*Waggoners*,” around his lakes.
He wishes for “a boat” to sail the deeps —
Of ocean? — No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for “a little boat,”
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o’er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his “*Waggon*,”
Could he not beg the loan of Charles’s Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear’d his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,

Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

C

“Pedlars,” and “Boats,” and “Waggons!” Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos’ vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss —
The “little boatman” and his “Peter Bell”
Can sneer at him who drew “Achitophel”!

CI

T’ our tale. — The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet’s song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight’s sky admired; —
Ave Maria! o’er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blesséd be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o’er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem’d stirr’d with prayer.

CIII

Ave Maria! ‘t is the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! ‘t is the hour of love!

Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove —
What though 't is but a pictured image? — strike —
That painting is no idol, — 't is too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print — that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, — all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

CV

Sweet Hour of Twilight! — in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Caesarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicadas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover, — shadow'd my mind's eye.

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

CIX

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

CX

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man — the moon's?

Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grown one of many “wooden spoons”
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

CXI

I feel this tediousness will never do —
’T is being too epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long canto into two;
They’ll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few;
And then as an improvement ‘t will be shown:
I ‘ll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle *passim*. — See *poietikes*.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE FOURTH

I

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

II

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man, -- and, as we would hope, -- perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this -- the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy "falls into the yellow
Leaf," and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,

'T is that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'T is that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

V

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be very fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic:
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wish'd to see:
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,

And tells me to resume my story here.

VIII

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
To their own hearts' most sweet society;
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms; he
Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
Though foe to love; and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

IX

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail
They were all summer: lightning might assail
And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them -- they had too little day.

X

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years -- the river
Damm'd from its fountain -- the child from the knee
And breast maternal wean'd at once for ever, --
Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart --

XI

The heart -- which may be broken: happy they!
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,

The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

XII

'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more --
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead --
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn:
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard:

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

XVI

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloy,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful
But theirs was love in which the mind delights
To lose itself when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a wh-re.

XVIII

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.
Enough. -- The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?

Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent -- what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

XX

They gazed upon the sunset; 't is an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to their eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,
When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;
Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 't were, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight;
And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate --
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too -- it might be in sport --
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied --
"If it should be so, -- but -- it cannot be --
Or I at least shall not survive to see."

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she press'd
His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 't is the best:
Some people prefer wine -- 't is not amiss;
I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

XXV

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,

And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,
And love too much, and yet can not love less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

XXVII

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die? -- they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit -- not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care:
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,

Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air.

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep dear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind --
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

XXXI

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

XXXII

Anon -- she was released, and then she stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made;
And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'T was white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed, and grasp'd,

And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

XXXIII

The dream changed; in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles, the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell, she thought.

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!),
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new --
Like to her father's features, till each trace --
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew --
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'T is -- 't is her father's -- fix'd upon the pair!

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see

Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind --
I have seen such -- but must not call to mind.

XXXVII

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, "Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword."

XXXVIII

And Haidée clung around him; "Juan, 't is --
'T is Lambro -- 't is my father! Kneel with me --
He will forgive us -- yes -- it must be -- yes.
Oh! dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain -- even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy."

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye --
Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die;
In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

XL

“Young man, your sword;” so Lambro once more said:

Juan replied, “Not while this arm is free.”

The old man’s cheek grew pale, but not with dread,

And drawing from his belt a pistol, he

Replied, “Your blood be then on your own head.”

Then look’d close at the flint, as if to see

‘T was fresh -- for he had lately used the lock --

And next proceeded quietly to cock.

XLI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,

That cocking of a pistol, when you know

A moment more will bring the sight to bear

Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;

A gentlemanly distance, not too near,

If you have got a former friend for foe;

But after being fired at once or twice,

The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more

Had stopp’d this Canto, and Don Juan’s breath,

When Haidée threw herself her boy before;

Stern as her sire: “On me,” she cried, “let death

Descend -- the fault is mine; this fatal shore

He found -- but sought not. I have pledged my faith;

I love him -- I will die with him: I knew

Your nature’s firmness -- know your daughter’s too.”

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,

And tenderness, and infancy; but now

She stood as one who champion’d human fears --

Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo’d the blow;

And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
 She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
Her father's face -- but never stopp'd his hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was strange
 How like they look'd! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
 In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
 If cause should be -- a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
 Their stature, differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
 There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
 In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
 His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
 "Not *I*," he said, "have sought this stranger's ill;
Not *I* have made this desolation: few
 Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;
But I must do my duty -- how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

XLVII

“Let him disarm; or, by my father’s head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!”
He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answer’d to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm’d from boot to turban, one and all,
Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, -- “Arrest or slay the Frank.”

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compress’d within his clasp,
‘Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father’s grasp --
His arms were like a serpent’s coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in; so well, ere you could look,
His man was floor’d, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red --
One on the arm, the other on the head.

L

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach’d some galliots, placed in line;

On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches.

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naiad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but rack
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe --

Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded?
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fountains; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

LVI

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human day is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,

Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermaster'd and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she view'd an instant and no more, --
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill --
With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul --
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,

But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

LXIII

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room -- but all forgot --
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he begun a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief! -- thought came too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its dose; --
Hers was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

LXVIII

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;

Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep -- the power seem'd gone for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes -- the beautiful, the black --
Oh! to possess such lustre -- and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one blight;
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

LXXI

Thus lived -- thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful -- such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
 And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
 No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
 Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
 Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her:
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong --
 A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

LXXIV

But let me change this theme which grows too sad,
 And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf;
I don't much like describing people mad,
 For fear of seeming rather touch'd myself --
Besides, I've no more on this head to add;
 And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.

LXXV

Wounded and fetter'd, "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,"
 Some days and nights elapsed before that he
Could altogether call the past to mind;
 And when he did, he found himself at sea,
Sailing six knots an hour before the wind;
 The shores of Ilion lay beneath their lee --

Another time he might have liked to see 'em,
But now was not much pleased with Cape Sigaeum.

LXXVI

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is
 (Flank'd by the Hellespont and by the sea)
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles;
 They say so (Bryant says the contrary):
And further downward, tall and towering still, is
 The tumulus -- of whom? Heaven knows! 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus --
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

LXXVII

High barrows, without marble or a name,
 A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
 And old Scamander (if 't is he) remain;
The situation seems still form'd for fame --
 A hundred thousand men might fight again
With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

LXXVIII

Troops of untended horses; here and there
 Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris) led to stare
 A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear.
 A Turk, with beads in hand and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there -- but the devil a Phrygian.

LXXIX

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge

From his dull cabin, found himself a slave;
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O'ershadow'd there by many a hero's grave;
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions; and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

LXXX

He saw some fellow captives, who appear'd
To be Italians, as they were in fact;
From them, at least, their destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one; a troop going to act
In Sicily (all singers, duly rear'd
In their vocation) had not been attack'd
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

LXXXI

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case;
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up -- at least his face;
The little fellow really look'd quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour,
Than did the prima donna and the tenor.

LXXXII

In a few words he told their hapless story,
Saying, "Our Machiavellian impresario,
Making a signal off some promontory,
Hail'd a strange brig -- Corpo di Caio Mario!
We were transferr'd on board her in a hurry,
Without a single scudo of salario;
But if the Sultan has a taste for song,

We will revive our fortunes before long.

LXXXIII

“The prima donna, though a little old,
And haggard with a dissipated life,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes; and then the tenor’s wife,
With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
Last carnival she made a deal of strife
By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
From an old Roman princess at Bologna.

LXXXIV

“And then there are the dancers; there’s the Nini,
With more than one profession, gains by all;
Then there’s that laughing slut the Pelegrini,
She, too, was fortunate last carnival,
And made at least five hundred good zecchini,
But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;
And then there’s the Grotesca -- such a dancer!
Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

LXXXV

“As for the figuranti, they are like
The rest of all that tribe; with here and there
A pretty person, which perhaps may strike,
The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
There’s one, though tall and stiffer than a pike,
Yet has a sentimental kind of air
Which might go far, but she don’t dance with vigour;
The more’s the pity, with her face and figure.

LXXXVI

“As for the men, they are a middling set;
The Musico is but a crack’d old basin,

But being qualified in one way yet,
May the seraglio do to set his face in,
And as a servant some preferment get;
His singing I no further trust can place in:
From all the Pope makes yearly 't would perplex
To find three perfect pipes of the *third* sex.

LXXXVII

“The tenor’s voice is spoilt by affectation,
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow;
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow;
But being the prima donna’s near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,
They hired him, though to hear him you’d believe
An ass was practising recitative.

LXXXVIII

“‘T would not become myself to dwell upon
My own merits, and though young -- I see, Sir -- you
Have got a travell’d air, which speaks you one
To whom the opera is by no means new:
You’ve heard of Raucocanti? -- I’m the man;
The time may come when you may hear me too;
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I’m engaged to sing there -- do go.

LXXXIX

“Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers’ parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.”

XC

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths; each threw
A rueful glance upon the waves (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun),
And then went down the hatchway one by one.

XCI

They heard next day -- that in the Dardanelles,
Waiting for his Sublimity's firmän,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which every body does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,
Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chain'd and lotted out per couple,
For the slave market of Constantinople.

XCII

It seems when this allotment was made out,
There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female,
Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deem'd to be male,
They placed him o'er the women as a scout)
Were link'd together, and it happen'd the male
Was Juan, -- who, an awkward thing at his age,
Pair'd off with a Bacchante blooming visage.

XCIII

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain'd
The tenor; these two hated with a hate
Found only on the stage, and each more pain'd
With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate;

Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grain'd,
Instead of bearing up without debate,
That each pull'd different ways with many an oath,
"Arcades ambo," *id est* -- blackguards both.

XCIV

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
But bred within the March of old Ancona,
With eyes that look'd into the very soul
(And other chief points of a "bella donna"),
Bright -- and as black and burning as a coal;
And through her dear brunette complexion shone
Great wish to please -- a most attractive dower,
Especially when added to the power.

XCV

But all that power was wasted upon him,
For sorrow o'er each sense held stern command;
Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim;
And though thus chain'd, as natural her hand
Touch'd his, nor that -- nor any handsome limb
(And she had some not easy to withstand)
Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel brittle;
Perhaps his recent wounds might help a little.

XCVI

No matter; we should ne'er too much enquire,
But facts are facts: no knight could be more true,
And firmer faith no Ladye-love desire;
We will omit the proofs, save one or two:
'T is said no one in hand "can hold a fire
By thought of frosty Caucasus" -- but few,
I really think -- yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less real.

XCVII

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much truth;
Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into families.

XCVIII

'T is all the same to me; I'm fond of yielding,
And therefore leave them to the purer page
Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an age;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.

XCIX

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble:
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to cease
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease,
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

C

Of poets who come down to us through distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'T is as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,

Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 't is nothing but cold snow.

CI

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 't were identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till "the coming of the just" --
Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

CII

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

CIII

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

CIV

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:

A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column.
The time must come, when both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

CV

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soil'd:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

CVI

Yet there will still be bards: though fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought;
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

CVII

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men, who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,

But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

CVIII

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your "*imprimatur*" will ye not annex?
What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!

CIX

What! can I prove "a lion" then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, "I can't get out," like Yorick's starling;
Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling),
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

CX

Oh! "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,"
As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
They say your stockings are so (Heaven knows why,
I have examined few pair of that hue);
Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn
The festal midnight, and the levee morn.

CXI

Yet some of you are most seraphic creatures --
But times are alter'd since, a rhyming lover,

You read my stanzas, and I read your features:
And -- but no matter, all those things are over;
Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
For sometimes such a world of virtues cover;
I knew one woman of that purple school,
The loveliest, chastest, best, but -- quite a fool.

CXII

Humboldt, "the first of travellers," but not
The last, if late accounts be accurate,
Invented, by some name I have forgot,
As well as the sublime discovery's date,
An airy instrument, with which he sought
To ascertain the atmospheric state,
By measuring "the intensity of blue:"
Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

CXIII

But to the narrative: -- The vessel bound
With slaves to sell off in the capital,
After the usual process, might be found
At anchor under the seraglio wall;
Her cargo, from the plague being safe and sound,
Were landed in the market, one and all,
And there with Georgians, Russians, and Circassians,
Bought up for different purposes and passions.

CXIV

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred dollars
For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were given,
Warranted virgin; beauty's brightest colours
Had deck'd her out in all the hues of heaven:
Her sale sent home some disappointed bawlers,
Who bade on till the hundreds reach'd eleven;
But when the offer went beyond, they knew
'T was for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

CXV

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce would bring;
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 't was ere Abolition; and the thing
Need not seem very wonderful, for vice
Is always much more splendid than a king:
The virtues, even the most exalted, Charity,
Are saving -- Vice spares nothing for a rarity.

CXVI

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by pachas, some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews
As renegadoes; while in hapless group,
Hoping no very old vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they pick'd 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim:

CXVII

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long),
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in 't:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call'd in Ossian the fifth Duan.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE FIFTH

I

When amatory poets sing their loves
In liquid lines mellifluously bland,
And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,
They little think what mischief is in hand;
The greater their success the worse it proves,
As Ovid's verse may give to understand;
Even Petrarch's self, if judged with due severity,
Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

II

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,
 Except in such a way as not to attract;
Plain -- simple -- short, and by no means inviting,
 But with a moral to each error tack'd,
Form'd rather for instructing than delighting,
 And with all passions in their turn attack'd;
Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,
This poem will become a moral model.

III

The European with the Asian shore
 Sprinkled with palaces; the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;
 Sophia's cupola with golden gleam;
The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;
 The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm'd the charming Mary Montagu.

IV

I have a passion for the name of "Mary,"
For once it was a magic sound to me;
And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,
Where I beheld what never was to be;
All feelings changed, but this was last to vary,
A spell from which even yet I am not quite free:
But I grow sad -- and let a tale grow cold,
Which must not be pathetically told.

V

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
 Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;
'T is a grand sight from off the Giant's Grave
 To watch the progress of those rolling seas
Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
 Europe and Asia, you being quite at ease;
There's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in,
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine.

VI

'T was a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
When nights are equal, but not so the days;
The Parcae then cut short the further spinning
Of seamen's fates, and the loud tempests raise
The waters, and repentance for past sinning
In all, who o'er the great deep take their ways:
They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't;
Because if drown'd, they can't -- if spared, they won't.

VII

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
And age, and sex, were in the market ranged;
Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
Poor creatures! their good looks were sadly changed.
All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged;
The negroes more philosophy display'd, --
Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd.

VIII

Juan was juvenile, and thus was full,
As most at his age are, of hope and health;
Yet I must own he looked a little dull,
And now and then a tear stole down by stealth;
Perhaps his recent loss of blood might pull
His spirit down; and then the loss of wealth,
A mistress, and such comfortable quarters,
To be put up for auction amongst Tartars,

IX

Were things to shake a stoic; ne'ertheless,
 Upon the whole his carriage was serene:
His figure, and the splendour of his dress,
 Of which some gilded remnants still were seen,
Drew all eyes on him, giving them to guess
 He was above the vulgar by his mien;
And then, though pale, he was so very handsome;
And then -- they calculated on his ransom.

X

Like a backgammon board the place was dotted
With whites and blacks, in groups on show for sale,
Though rather more irregularly spotted:
Some bought the jet, while others chose the pale.
It chanced amongst the other people lotted,
A man of thirty rather stout and hale,
With resolution in his dark grey eye,
Next Juan stood, till some might choose to buy.

XI

He had an English look; that is, was square
In make, of a complexion white and ruddy,
Good teeth, with curling rather dark brown hair,
And, it might be from thought or toil or study,
An open brow a little mark'd with care:
One arm had on a bandage rather bloody;
And there he stood with such sang-froid, that greater
Could scarce be shown even by a mere spectator.

XII

But seeing at his elbow a mere lad,
Of a high spirit evidently, though
At present weigh'd down by a doom which had
O'erthrown even men, he soon began to show
A kind of blunt compassion for the sad
Lot of so young a partner in the woe,
Which for himself he seem'd to deem no worse
Than any other scrape, a thing of course.

XIII

“My boy!” said he, “amidst this motley crew
Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and what not,
All ragamuffins differing but in hue,
With whom it is our luck to cast our lot,
The only gentlemen seem I and you;
So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you any consolation,
‘T would give me pleasure. -- Pray, what is your nation?”

XIV

When Juan answer'd -- "Spanish!" he replied,
 "I thought, in fact, you could not be a Greek;
Those servile dogs are not so proudly eyed:
 Fortune has play'd you here a pretty freak,
But that's her way with all men, till they're tried;
 But never mind, -- she'll turn, perhaps, next week;
She has served me also much the same as you,
Except that I have found it nothing new."

XV

“Pray, sir,” said Juan, “if I may presume,
What brought you here?” -- “Oh! nothing very rare --
Six Tartars and a drag-chain.” -- “To this doom
But what conducted, if the question’s fair,
Is that which I would learn.” -- “I served for some
Months with the Russian army here and there,
And taking lately, by Suwarrow’s bidding,
A town, was ta’en myself instead of Widdin.”

XVI

“Have you no friends?” -- “I had -- but, by God’s blessing,
Have not been troubled with them lately. Now
I have answer’d all your questions without pressing,
And you an equal courtesy should show.’
“Alas!” said Juan, “‘t were a tale distressing,
And long besides.” -- “Oh! if ‘t is really so,
You’re right on both accounts to hold your tongue;
A sad tale saddens doubly, when’t is long.

XVII

“But droop not: Fortune at your time of life,
Although a female moderately fickle,
Will hardly leave you (as she’s not your wife)
For any length of days in such a pickle.
To strive, too, with our fate were such a strife
As if the corn-sheaf should oppose the sickle:
Men are the sport of circumstances, when
The circumstances seem the sport of men.”

XVIII

“’T is not,” said Juan, “for my present doom
I mourn, but for the past; -- I loved a maid:” --
He paused, and his dark eye grew full of gloom;
A single tear upon his eyelash staid
A moment, and then dropp’d; “but to resume,
’T is not my present lot, as I have said,
Which I deplore so much; for I have borne
Hardships which have the hardest overworn,

XIX

“On the rough deep. But this last blow --” and here
He stopp’d again, and turn’d away his face.
“Ay,” quoth his friend, “I thought it would appear
That there had been a lady in the case;
And these are things which ask a tender tear,
Such as I, too, would shed if in your place:
I cried upon my first wife’s dying day,
And also when my second ran away:

XX

“My third --” -- “Your third!” quoth Juan, turning round;

”You scarcely can be thirty: have you three?”

“No -- only two at present above ground:

Surely ‘t is nothing wonderful to see

One person thrice in holy wedlock bound!”

”Well, then, your third,” said Juan; “what did she?

She did not run away, too, -- did she, sir?”

“No, faith.” -- “What then?” -- “I ran away from her.”

XXI

“You take things coolly, sir,” said Juan. “Why,”
Replied the other, “what can a man do?
There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish’d. All, when life is new,
Commence with feelings warm, and prospects high;
But time strips our illusions of their hue,
And one by one in turn, some grand mistake
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the snake.

XXII

“‘T is true, it gets another bright and fresh,
Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone through,
This skin must go the way, too, of all flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or two; --
Love’s the first net which spreads its deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.”

XXIII

“All this is very fine, and may be true,”

Said Juan; “but I really don’t see how
It betters present times with me or you.”

”No?” quoth the other; “yet you will allow
By setting things in their right point of view,
Knowledge, at least, is gain’d; for instance, now,
We know what slavery is, and our disasters
May teach us better to behave when masters.”

XXIV

“Would we were masters now, if but to try
Their present lessons on our Pagan friends here,”
Said Juan, -- swallowing a heart-burning sigh:
 “Heaven help the scholar whom his fortune sends here!”
“Perhaps we shall be one day, by and by,”
 Rejoin’d the other, when our bad luck mends here;
“Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to eye us)
I wish to G-d that somebody would buy us.

XXV

“But after all, what *is* our present state?

’T is bad, and may be better -- all men’s lot:
Most men are slaves, none more so than the great,
To their own whims and passions, and what not;
Society itself, which should create

Kindness, destroys what little we had got:
To feel for none is the true social art
Of the world’s stoics -- men without a heart.”

XXVI

Just now a black old neutral personage
Of the third sex stept up, and peering over
The captives, seem'd to mark their looks and age,
And capabilities, as to discover
If they were fitted for the purposed cage:
No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a blackleg, broadcloth by a tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

XXVII

As is a slave by his intended bidder.

'T is pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider

Their passions, and are dext'rous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,

Some by a place -- as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash -- but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

XXVIII

The eunuch, having eyed them o'er with care,
Turn'd to the merchant, and begun to bid
First but for one, and after for the pair;
They haggled, wrangled, swore, too -- so they did!
As though they were in a mere Christian fair
Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or kid;
So that their bargain sounded like a battle
For this superior yoke of human cattle.

XXIX

At last they settled into simple grumbling,
And pulling out reluctant purses, and
Turning each piece of silver o'er, and tumbling
Some down, and weighing others in their hand,
And by mistake sequins with paras jumbling,
Until the sum was accurately scann'd,
And then the merchant giving change, and signing
Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

XXX

I wonder if his appetite was good?

Or, if it were, if also his digestion?

Methinks at meals some odd thoughts might intrude,

And conscience ask a curious sort of question,

About the right divine how far we should

Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has opprest one,

I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour

Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

XXXI

Voltaire says "No:" he tells you that Candide
Found life most tolerable after meals;
He's wrong -- unless man were a pig, indeed,
Repletion rather adds to what he feels,
Unless he's drunk, and then no doubt he's freed
From his own brain's oppression while it reels.
Of food I think with Philip's son, or rather
Ammon's (ill pleased with one world and one father);

XXXII

I think with Alexander, that the act
Of eating, with another act or two,
Makes us feel our mortality in fact
Redoubled; when a roast and a ragout,
And fish, and soup, by some side dishes back'd,
Can give us either pain or pleasure, who
Would pique himself on intellects, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice?

XXXIII

The other evening ('t was on Friday last) --
This is a fact and no poetic fable --
Just as my great coat was about me cast,
My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
I heard a shot -- 't was eight o'clock scarce past --
And, running out as fast as I was able,
I found the military commandant
Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to pant.

XXXIV

Poor fellow! for some reason, surely bad,
They had slain him with five slugs; and left him there
To perish on the pavement: so I had
Him borne into the house and up the stair,
And stripp'd and look'd to -- But why should I ad
More circumstances? vain was every care;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

XXXV

I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
And though I have seen many corpses, never
Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
So calm; though pierced through stomach, heart, and liver,
He seem'd to sleep, -- for you could scarcely tell
(As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
Of gore divulged the cause) that he was dead:
So as I gazed on him, I thought or said --

XXXVI

“Can this be death? then what is life or death?
Speak!” but he spoke not: “Wake!” but still he slept: --
“But yesterday and who had mightier breath?
A thousand warriors by his word were kept
In awe: he said, as the centurion saith,
‘Go,’ and he goeth; ‘come,’ and forth he stepp’d.
The trump and bugle till he spake were dumb --
And now nought left him but the muffled drum.”

XXXVII

And they who waited once and worshipp'd -- they
 With their rough faces throng'd about the bed
To gaze once more on the commanding clay
 Which for the last, though not the first, time bled:
And such an end! that he who many a day
 Had faced Napoleon's foes until they fled, --
The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

XXXVIII

The scars of his old wounds were near his new,
Those honourable scars which brought him fame;
And horrid was the contrast to the view --
But let me quit the theme; as such things claim
Perhaps even more attention than is due
From me: I gazed (as oft I have gazed the same)
To try if I could wrench aught out of death
Which should confirm, or shake, or make a faith;

XXXIX

But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
And there we go: -- but where? five bits of lead,
Or three, or two, or one, send very far!
And is this blood, then, form'd but to be shed?
Can every element our elements mar?
And air -- earth -- water -- fire live -- and we dead?
We whose minds comprehend all things? No more;
But let us to the story as before.

XL

The purchaser of Juan and acquaintance
Bore off his bargains to a gilded boat,
Embark'd himself and them, and off they went thence
As fast as oars could pull and water float;
They look'd like persons being led to sentence,
Wondering what next, till the caïque was brought
Up in a little creek below a wall
O'ertopp'd with cypresses, dark-green and tall.

XLI

Here their conductor tapping at the wicket
Of a small iron door, 't was open'd, and
He led them onward, first through a low thicket
Flank'd by large groves, which tower'd on either hand:
They almost lost their way, and had to pick it --
For night was dosing ere they came to land.
The eunuch made a sign to those on board,
Who row'd off, leaving them without a word.

XLII

As they were plodding on their winding way
Through orange bowers, and jasmine, and so forth
(Of which I might have a good deal to say,
There being no such profusion in the North
Of oriental plants, "*et cetera*,"
But that of late your scribblers think it worth
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in their works
Because one poet travell'd 'mongst the Turks) --

XLIII

As they were threading on their way, there came
 Into Don Juan's head a thought, which he
Whisper'd to his companion: -- 't was the same
 Which might have then occur'd to you or me.
"Methinks," said he, "it would be no great shame
 If we should strike a stroke to set us free;
Let's knock that old black fellow on the head,
And march away -- 't were easier done than said."

XLIV

“Yes,” said the other, “and when done, what then?
How get out? how the devil got we in?
And when we once were fairly out, and when
From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin,
To-morrow’d see us in some other den,
And worse off than we hitherto have been;
Besides, I’m hungry, and just now would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright a beef-steak.

XLV

“We must be near some place of man’s abode; --
For the old negro’s confidence in creeping,
With his two captives, by so queer a road,
Shows that he thinks his friends have not been sleeping;
A single cry would bring them all abroad:
’T is therefore better looking before leaping --
And there, you see, this turn has brought us through,
By Jove, a noble palace! -- lighted too.”

XLVI

It was indeed a wide extensive building
Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front
There seem'd to be besprent a deal of gilding
And various hues, as is the Turkish wont, --
A gaudy taste; for they are little skill'd in
The arts of which these lands were once the font:
Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
New painted, or a pretty opera-scene.

XLVII

And nearer as they came, a genial savour
Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus,
Things which in hungry mortals' eyes find favour,
Made Juan in his harsh intentions pause,
And put himself upon his good behaviour:
His friend, too, adding a new saving clause,
Said, "In Heaven's name let's get some supper now,
And then I'm with you, if you're for a row."

XLVIII

Some talk of an appeal unto some passion,
 Some to men's feelings, others to their reason;
The last of these was never much the fashion,
 For reason thinks all reasoning out of season.
Some speakers whine, and others lay the lash on,
 But more or less continue still to tease on,
With arguments according to their "*forte*;"
But no one dreams of ever being short. --

XLIX

But I digress: of all appeals, -- although
 I grant the power of pathos, and of gold,
Of beauty, flattery, threats, a shilling, -- no
 Method's more sure at moments to take hold
Of the best feelings of mankind, which grow
 More tender, as we every day behold,
Than that all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul -- the dinner-bell.

L

Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine;
And Juan and his friend, albeit they heard
No Christian knoll to table, saw no line
Of lackeys usher to the feast prepared,
Yet smelt roast-meat, beheld a huge fire shine,
And cooks in motion with their clean arms bared,
And gazed around them to the left and right
With the prophetic eye of appetite.

LI

And giving up all notions of resistance,
They follow'd close behind their sable guide,
Who little thought that his own crack'd existence
Was on the point of being set aside:
He motion'd them to stop at some small distance,
And knocking at the gate, 't was open'd wide,
And a magnificent large hall display'd
The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

LII

I won't describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days
His wondrous journey to some foreign court,
And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise --
Death to his publisher, to him 't is sport;
While Nature, tortured twenty thousand ways,
Resigns herself with exemplary patience
To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches, illustrations.

LIII

Along this hall, and up and down, some, squatted
 Upon their hams, were occupied at chess;
Others in monosyllable talk chatted,
 And some seem'd much in love with their own dress.
And divers smoked superb pipes decorated
 With amber mouths of greater price or less;
And several strutted, others slept, and some
Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.

LIV

As the black eunuch enter'd with his brace
Of purchased Infidels, some raised their eyes
A moment without slackening from their pace;
But those who sate ne'er stirr'd in anywise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
Just as one views a horse to guess his price;
Some nodded to the negro from their station,
But no one troubled him with conversation.

LV

He leads them through the hall, and, without stopping,
On through a farther range of goodly rooms,
Splendid but silent, save in one, where, dropping,
A marble fountain echoes through the glooms
Of night which robe the chamber, or where popping
Some female head most curiously presumes
To thrust its black eyes through the door or lattice,
As wondering what the devil a noise that is.

LVI

Some faint lamps gleaming from the lofty walls
Gave light enough to hint their farther way,
But not enough to show the imperial halls,
In all the flashing of their full array;
Perhaps there's nothing -- I'll not say appals,
But saddens more by night as well as day,
Than an enormous room without a soul
To break the lifeless splendour of the whole.

LVII

Two or three seem so little, one seems nothing:

 In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore,
There solitude, we know, has her full growth in

 The spots which were her realms for evermore;
But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in

 More modern buildings and those built of yore,
A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
Seeing what's meant for many with but one.

LVIII

A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite,
Are things which make an English evening pass;
Though certes by no means so grand a sight
As is a theatre lit up by gas.
I pass my evenings in long galleries solely,
And that's the reason I'm so melancholy.

LIX

Alas! man makes that great which makes him little:

I grant you in a church 't is very well:

What speaks of Heaven should by no means be brittle,

But strong and lasting, till no tongue can tell

Their names who rear'd it; but huge houses fit ill --

And huge tombs worse -- mankind, since Adam fell:

Methinks the story of the tower of Babel

Might teach them this much better than I'm able.

LX

Babel was Nimrod's hunting-box, and then
A town of gardens, walls, and wealth amazing,
Where Nabuchadonosor, king of men,
Reign'd, till one summer's day he took to grazing,
And Daniel tamed the lions in their den,
The people's awe and admiration raising;
'T was famous, too, for Thisbe and for Pyramus,
And the calumniated queen Semiramis.

LXI

That injured Queen by chroniclers so coarse
Has been accused (I doubt not by conspiracy)
Of an improper friendship for her horse
(Love, like religion, sometimes runs to heresy):
This monstrous tale had probably its source
(For such exaggerations here and there I see)
In writing “Courser” by mistake for “Courier:”
I wish the case could come before a jury here.

LXII

But to resume, -- should there be (what may not
Be in these days?) some infidels, who don't,
Because they can't find out the very spot
Of that same Babel, or because they won't
(Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some bricks has got,
And written lately two memoirs upon't),
Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
Must be believed, though they believe not you,

LXIII

Yet let them think that Horace has exprest
 Shortly and sweetly the masonic folly
Of those, forgetting the great place of rest,
 Who give themselves to architecture wholly;
We know where things and men must end at best:
 A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
And “*Et sepulchri immemor struis domos*”
Shows that we build when we should but entomb us.

LXIV

At last they reach'd a quarter most retired,
Where echo woke as if from a long slumber;
Though full of all things which could be desired,
One wonder'd what to do with such a number
Of articles which nobody required;
Here wealth had done its utmost to encumber
With furniture an exquisite apartment,
Which puzzled Nature much to know what Art meant.

LXV

It seem'd, however, but to open on
A range or suite of further chambers, which
Might lead to heaven knows where; but in this one
The movables were prodigally rich:
Sofas 't was half a sin to sit upon,
So costly were they; carpets every stitch
Of workmanship so rare, they made you wish
You could glide o'er them like a golden fish.

LXVI

The black, however, without hardly deigning
 A glance at that which wrapt the slaves in wonder,
Trampled what they scarce trod for fear of staining,
 As if the milky way their feet was under
With all its stars; and with a stretch attaining
 A certain press or cupboard niched in yonder --
In that remote recess which you may see --
Or if you don't the fault is not in me, --

LXVII

I wish to be perspicuous; and the black,
I say, unlocking the recess, pull'd forth
A quantity of clothes fit for the back
Of any Mussulman, whate'er his worth;
And of variety there was no lack --
And yet, though I have said there was no dearth,
He chose himself to point out what he thought
Most proper for the Christians he had bought.

LXVIII

The suit he thought most suitable to each
Was, for the elder and the stouter, first
A Candiot cloak, which to the knee might reach,
And trousers not so tight that they would burst,
But such as fit an Asiatic breech;
A shawl, whose folds in Cashmire had been nurst,
Slippers of saffron, dagger rich and handy;
In short, all things which form a Turkish Dandy.

LXIX

While he was dressing, Baba, their black friend,
 Hinted the vast advantages which they
Might probably attain both in the end,
 If they would but pursue the proper way
Which fortune plainly seem'd to recommend;
 And then he added, that he needs must say,
“‘T would greatly tend to better their condition,
If they would condescend to circumcision.

LXX

“For his own part, he really should rejoice
To see them true believers, but no less
Would leave his proposition to their choice.”

The other, thanking him for this excess
Of goodness, in thus leaving them a voice
In such a trifle, scarcely could express
“Sufficiently” (he said) “his approbation
Of all the customs of this polish’d nation.

LXXI

“For his own share -- he saw but small objection
To so respectable an ancient rite;
And, after swallowing down a slight refection,
For which he own'd a present appetite,
He doubted not a few hours of reflection
Would reconcile him to the business quite.”
“Will it?” said Juan, sharply: “Strike me dead,
But they as soon shall circumcise my head!

LXXII

“Cut off a thousand heads, before--” -- “Now, pray,”

Replied the other, “do not interrupt:
You put me out in what I had to say.

Sir! -- as I said, as soon as I have supt,
I shall perpend if your proposal may

Be such as I can properly accept;
Provided always your great goodness still
Remits the matter to our own free-will.”

LXXIII

Baba eyed Juan, and said, "Be so good
As dress yourself-" and pointed out a suit
In which a Princess with great pleasure would
Array her limbs; but Juan standing mute,
As not being in a masquerading mood,
Gave it a slight kick with his Christian foot;
And when the old negro told him to "Get ready,"
Replied, "Old gentleman, I'm not a lady."

LXXIV

“What you may be, I neither know nor care,”
Said Baba; “but pray do as I desire:
I have no more time nor many words to spare.”

”At least,” said Juan, “sure I may enquire
The cause of this odd travesty?” -- “Forbear,”
Said Baba, “to be curious; ‘t will transpire,
No doubt, in proper place, and time, and season:
I have no authority to tell the reason.”

LXXV

“Then if I do,” said Juan, “I’ll be --” -- “Hold!”

Rejoin’d the negro, “pray be not provoking;
This spirit’s well, but it may wax too bold,
And you will find us not too fond of joking.”

“What, sir!” said Juan, “shall it e’er be told
That I unsex’d my dress?” But Baba, stroking
The things down, said, “Incense me, and I call
Those who will leave you of no sex at all.

LXXVI

“I offer you a handsome suit of clothes:

A woman’s, true; but then there is a cause
Why you should wear them.” -- “What, though my soul loathes

The effeminate garb?” -- thus, after a short pause,
Sigh’d Juan, muttering also some slight oaths,

“What the devil shall I do with all this gauze?”
Thus he profanely term’d the finest lace
Which e’er set off a marriage-morning face.

LXXVII

And then he swore; and, sighing, on he slipp'd
A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk;
Next with a virgin zone he was equipp'd,
Which girt a slight chemise as white as milk;
But tugging on his petticoat, he tripp'd,
Which -- as we say -- or, as the Scotch say, whilk
(The rhyme obliges me to this; sometimes
Monarchs are less imperative than rhymes) --

LXXVIII

Whilk, which (or what you please), was owing to
His garment's novelty, and his being awkward:
And yet at last he managed to get through
His toilet, though no doubt a little backward:
The negro Baba help'd a little too,
When some untoward part of raiment stuck hard;
And, wrestling both his arms into a gown,
He paused, and took a survey up and down.

LXXIX

One difficulty still remain'd -- his hair
Was hardly long enough; but Baba found
So many false long tresses all to spare,
That soon his head was most completely crown'd,
After the manner then in fashion there;
And this addition with such gems was bound
As suited the ensemble of his toilet,
While Baba made him comb his head and oil it.

LXXX

And now being femininely all array'd,
With some small aid from scissors, paint, and tweezers,
He look'd in almost all respects a maid,
And Baba smilingly exclaim'd, "You see, sirs,
A perfect transformation here display'd;
And now, then, you must come along with me, sirs,
That is -- the Lady:" clapping his hands twice,
Four blacks were at his elbow in a trice.

LXXXI

“You, sir,” said Baba, nodding to the one,
 ’Will please to accompany those gentlemen
To supper; but you, worthy Christian nun,
 Will follow me: no trifling, sir; for when
I say a thing, it must at once be done.
 What fear you? think you this a lion’s den?
Why, ‘t is a palace; where the truly wise
Anticipate the Prophet’s paradise.

LXXXII

“You fool! I tell you no one means you harm.”

“So much the better,” Juan said, “for them;
Else they shall feel the weight of this my arm,
Which is not quite so light as you may deem.
I yield thus far; but soon will break the charm

If any take me for that which I seem:
So that I trust for everybody’s sake,
That this disguise may lead to no mistake.”

LXXXIII

“Blockhead! come on, and see,” quoth Baba; while
Don Juan, turning to his comrade, who
Though somewhat grieved, could scarce forbear a smile
Upon the metamorphosis in view, --
“Farewell!” they mutually exclaim’d: “this soil
Seems fertile in adventures strange and new;
One’s turn’d half Mussulman, and one a maid,
By this old black enchanter’s unsought aid.”

LXXXIV

“Farewell!” said Juan: ‘should we meet no more,
I wish you a good appetite.” -- “Farewell!”
Replied the other; “though it grieves me sore;
When we next meet we’ll have a tale to tell:
We needs must follow when Fate puts from shore.
Keep your good name; though Eve herself once fell.”
“Nay,” quoth the maid, “the Sultan’s self shan’t carry me,
Unless his highness promises to marry me.”

LXXXV

And thus they parted, each by separate doors;
 Baba led Juan onward room by room
Through glittering galleries and o'er marble floors,
 Till a gigantic portal through the gloom,
Haughty and huge, along the distance lowers;
 And wafted far arose a rich perfume:
It seem'd as though they came upon a shrine,
For all was vast, still, fragrant, and divine.

LXXXVI

The giant door was broad, and bright, and high,
Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious guise;
Warriors thereon were battling furiously;
Here stalks the victor, there the vanquish'd lies;
There captives led in triumph droop the eye,
And in perspective many a squadron flies:
It seems the work of times before the line
Of Rome transplanted fell with Constantine.

LXXXVII

This massy portal stood at the wide close
Of a huge hall, and on its either side
Two little dwarfs, the least you could suppose,
Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
In mockery to the enormous gate which rose
O'er them in almost pyramidic pride:
The gate so splendid was in all its features,
You never thought about those little creatures,

LXXXVIII

Until you nearly trod on them, and then
 You started back in horror to survey
The wondrous hideousness of those small men,
 Whose colour was not black, nor white, nor grey,
But an extraneous mixture, which no pen
 Can trace, although perhaps the pencil may;
They were mis-shapen pigmies, deaf and dumb --
Monsters, who cost a no less monstrous sum.

LXXXIX

Their duty was -- for they were strong, and though
 They look'd so little, did strong things at times --
To ope this door, which they could really do,
 The hinges being as smooth as Rogers' rhymes;
And now and then, with tough strings of the bow,
 As is the custom of those Eastern climes,
To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;
For mutes are generally used for that.

XC

They spoke by signs -- that is, not spoke at all;
And looking like two incubi, they glared
As Baba with his fingers made them fall
To heaving back the portal folds: it scared
Juan a moment, as this pair so small
With shrinking serpent optics on him stared;
It was as if their little looks could poison
Or fascinate whome'er they fix'd their eyes on.

XCI

Before they enter'd, Baba paused to hint
To Juan some slight lessons as his guide:
"If you could just contrive," he said, "to stint
That somewhat manly majesty of stride,
'T would be as well, and (though there's not much in 't)
To swing a little less from side to side,
Which has at times an aspect of the oddest; --
And also could you look a little modest,

XCII

“‘T would be convenient; for these mutes have eyes
Like needles, which may pierce those petticoats;
And if they should discover your disguise,
You know how near us the deep Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance, ere morning rise,
To find our way to Marmora without boats,
Stitch’d up in sacks -- a mode of navigation
A good deal practised here upon occasion.”

XCIII

With this encouragement, he led the way
 Into a room still nobler than the last;
A rich confusion form'd a disarray
 In such sort, that the eye along it cast
Could hardly carry anything away,
 Object on object flash'd so bright and fast;
A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter.

XCIV

Wealth had done wonders -- taste not much; such things
Occur in Orient palaces, and even
In the more chasten'd domes of Western kings
(Of which I have also seen some six or seven),
Where I can't say or gold or diamond flings
Great lustre, there is much to be forgiven;
Groups of bad statues, tables, chairs, and pictures,
On which I cannot pause to make my strictures.

XCIV

In this imperial hall, at distance lay
Under a canopy, and there reclined
Quite in a confidential queenly way,
A lady; Baba stopp'd, and kneeling sign'd
To Juan, who though not much used to pray,
Knelt down by instinct, wondering in his mind,
What all this meant: while Baba bow'd and bended
His head, until the ceremony ended.

XCVI

The lady rising up with such an air
As Venus rose with from the wave, on them
Bent like an antelope a Paphian pair
Of eyes, which put out each surrounding gem;
And raising up an arm as moonlight fair,
She sign'd to Baba, who first kiss'd the hem
Of her deep purple robe, and speaking low,
Pointed to Juan who remain'd below.

XCVII

Her presence was as lofty as her state;
Her beauty of that overpowering kind,
Whose force description only would abate:
I'd rather leave it much to your own mind,
Than lessen it by what I could relate
Of forms and features; it would strike you blind
Could I do justice to the full detail;
So, luckily for both, my phrases fail.

XCVIII

Thus much however I may add, -- her years
Were ripe, they might make six-and-twenty springs;
But there are forms which Time to touch forbears,
And turns aside his scythe to vulgar things,
Such as was Mary's Queen of Scots; true -- tears
And love destroy; and sapping sorrow wrings
Charms from the charmer, yet some never grow
Ugly; for instance -- Ninon de l'Enclos.

XCIX

She spake some words to her attendants, who
 Composed a choir of girls, ten or a dozen,
And were all clad alike; like Juan, too,
 Who wore their uniform, by Baba chosen;
They form'd a very nymph-like looking crew,
 Which might have call'd Diana's chorus "cousin,"
As far as outward show may correspond;
I won't be bail for anything beyond.

C

They bow'd obeisance and withdrew, retiring,
But not by the same door through which came in
Baba and Juan, which last stood admiring,
At some small distance, all he saw within
This strange saloon, much fitted for inspiring
Marvel and praise; for both or none things win;
And I must say, I ne'er could see the very
Great happiness of the "*Nil Admirari*."

CI

“Not to admire is all the art I know
 (Plain truth, dear Murray, needs few flowers of speech)
To make men happy, or to keep them so”
 (So take it in the very words of Creech) --
Thus Horace wrote we all know long ago;
 And thus Pope quotes the precept to re-teach
From his translation; but had none admired,
Would Pope have sung, or Horace been inspired?

CII

Baba, when all the damsels were withdrawn,
Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then
A second time desired him to kneel down,
And kiss the lady's foot; which maxim when
He heard repeated, Juan with a frown
Drew himself up to his full height again,
And said, "It grieved him, but he could not stoop
To any shoe, unless it shod the Pope."

CIII

Baba, indignant at this ill-timed pride,
 Made fierce remonstrances, and then a threat
He mutter'd (but the last was given aside)
 About a bowstring -- quite in vain; not yet
Would Juan bend, though 't were to Mahomet's bride:
 There's nothing in the world like etiquette
In kingly chambers or imperial halls,
As also at the race and county balls.

CIV

He stood like Atlas, with a world of words
About his ears, and nathless would not bend:
The blood of all his line's Castilian lords
Boil'd in his veins, and rather than descend
To stain his pedigree a thousand swords
A thousand times of him had made an end;
At length perceiving the "foot" could not stand,
Baba proposed that he should kiss the hand.

CV

Here was an honourable compromise,
 A half-way house of diplomatic rest,
Where they might meet in much more peaceful guise;
 And Juan now his willingness exprest
To use all fit and proper courtesies,
 Adding, that this was commonest and best,
For through the South the custom still commands
The gentleman to kiss the lady's hands.

CVI

And he advanced, though with but a bad grace,
 Though on more thorough-bred or fairer fingers
No lips e'er left their transitory trace;
 On such as these the lip too fondly lingers,
And for one kiss would fain imprint a brace,
 As you will see, if she you love shall bring hers
In contact; and sometimes even a fair stranger's
An almost twelvemonth's constancy endangers.

CVII

The lady eyed him o'er and o'er, and bade
 Baba retire, which he obey'd in style,
As if well used to the retreating trade;
 And taking hints in good part all the while,
He whisper'd Juan not to be afraid,
 And looking on him with a sort of smile,
Took leave, with such a face of satisfaction
As good men wear who have done a virtuous action.

CVIII

When he was gone, there was a sudden change:

I know not what might be the lady's thought,
But o'er her bright brow flash'd a tumult strange,

And into her dear cheek the blood was brought,
Blood-red as sunset summer clouds which range

The verge of Heaven; and in her large eyes wrought,
A mixture of sensations might be scann'd,
Of half voluptuousness and half command.

CIX

Her form had all the softness of her sex,
Her features all the sweetness of the devil,
When he put on the cherub to perplex
Eve, and paved (God knows how) the road to evil;
The sun himself was scarce more free from specks
Than she from aught at which the eye could cavil;
Yet, somehow, there was something somewhere wanting,
As if she rather order'd than was granting.

CX

Something imperial, or imperious, threw
A chain o'er all she did; that is, a chain
Was thrown as 't were about the neck of you, --
And rapture's self will seem almost a pain
With aught which looks like despotism in view:
Our souls at least are free, and 't is in vain
We would against them make the flesh obey --
The spirit in the end will have its way.

CXI

Her very smile was haughty, though so sweet;
Her very nod was not an inclination;
There was a self-will even in her small feet,
As though they were quite conscious of her station --
They trod as upon necks; and to complete
Her state (it is the custom of her nation),
A poniard deck'd her girdle, as the sign
She was a sultan's bride (thank Heaven, not mine!).

CXII

“To hear and to obey” had been from birth
The law of all around her; to fulfill
All phantasies which yielded joy or mirth,
Had been her slaves’ chief pleasure, as her will;
Her blood was high, her beauty scarce of earth:
Judge, then, if her caprices e’er stood still;
Had she but been a Christian, I’ve a notion
We should have found out the “perpetual motion.”

CXIII

Whate'er she saw and coveted was brought;
 Whate'er she did not see, if she supposed
It might be seen, with diligence was sought,
 And when 't was found straightway the bargain closed;
There was no end unto the things she bought,
 Nor to the trouble which her fancies caused;
Yet even her tyranny had such a grace,
The women pardon'd all except her face.

CXIV

Juan, the latest of her whims, had caught
Her eye in passing on his way to sale;
She order'd him directly to be bought,
And Baba, who had ne'er been known to fail
In any kind of mischief to be wrought,
At all such auctions knew how to prevail:
She had no prudence, but he had; and this
Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

CXV

His youth and features favour'd the disguise,
And, should you ask how she, a sultan's bride,
Could risk or compass such strange phantasies,
This I must leave sultanas to decide:
Emperors are only husbands in wives' eyes,
And kings and consorts oft are mystified,
As we may ascertain with due precision,
Some by experience, others by tradition.

CXVI

But to the main point, where we have been tending: --

She now conceived all difficulties past,
And deem'd herself extremely condescending

When, being made her property at last,
Without more preface, in her blue eyes blending

Passion and power, a glance on him she cast,
And merely saying, "Christian, canst thou love?"
Conceived that phrase was quite enough to move.

CXVII

And so it was, in proper time and place;
But Juan, who had still his mind o'erflowing
With Haidée's isle and soft Ionian face,
Felt the warm blood, which in his face was glowing,
Rush back upon his heart, which fill'd apace,
And left his cheeks as pale as snowdrops blowing;
These words went through his soul like Arab-spears,
So that he spoke not, but burst into tears.

CXVIII

She was a good deal shock'd; not shock'd at tears,
For women shed and use them at their liking;
But there is something when man's eye appears
Wet, still more disagreeable and striking;
A woman's tear-drop melts, a man's half sears,
Like molten lead, as if you thrust a pike in
His heart to force it out, for (to be shorter)
To them 't is a relief, to us a torture.

CXIX

And she would have consoled, but knew not how:

Having no equals, nothing which had e'er
Infected her with sympathy till now,

And never having dreamt what 't was to bear
Aught of a serious, sorrowing kind, although

There might arise some pouting petty care
To cross her brow, she wonder'd how so near
Her eyes another's eye could shed a tear.

CXX

But nature teaches more than power can spoil,
And, when a strong although a strange sensation
Moves -- female hearts are such a genial soil
For kinder feelings, whatsoe'er their nation,
They naturally pour the "wine and oil,"
Samaritans in every situation;
And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not why,
Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye.

CXXI

But tears must stop like all things else; and soon
 Juan, who for an instant had been moved
To such a sorrow by the intrusive tone
 Of one who dared to ask if “he had loved,”
Call’d back the stoic to his eyes, which shone
 Bright with the very weakness he reproved;
And although sensitive to beauty, he
Felt most indignant still at not being free.

CXXII

Gulbeyaz, for the first time in her days,
Was much embarrass'd, never having met
In all her life with aught save prayers and praise;
And as she also risk'd her life to get
Him whom she meant to tutor in love's ways
Into a comfortable tete-a-tete,
To lose the hour would make her quite a martyr,
And they had wasted now almost a quarter.

CXXIII

I also would suggest the fitting time
To gentlemen in any such like case,
That is to say in a meridian clime --
With us there is more law given to the chase,
But here a small delay forms a great crime:
So recollect that the extremest grace
Is just two minutes for your declaration --
A moment more would hurt your reputation.

CXXIV

Juan's was good; and might have been still better,
But he had got Haidée into his head:
However strange, he could not yet forget her,
Which made him seem exceedingly ill-bred.
Gulbeyaz, who look'd on him as her debtor
For having had him to her palace led,
Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
Grow deadly pale, and then blush back again.

CXXV

At length, in an imperial way, she laid
Her hand on his, and bending on him eyes
Which needed not an empire to persuade,
Look'd into his for love, where none replies:
Her brow grew black, but she would not upbraid,
That being the last thing a proud woman tries;
She rose, and pausing one chaste moment, threw
Herself upon his breast, and there she grew.

CXXVI

This was an awkward test, as Juan found,
But he was steel'd by sorrow, wrath, and pride:
With gentle force her white arms he unwound,
And seated her all drooping by his side,
Then rising haughtily he glanced around,
And looking coldly in her face, he cried,
“The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor I
Serve a Sultana's sensual phantasy.

CXXVII

“Thou ask’st if I can love? be this the proof
How much I have loved -- that I love not thee!
In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,
Were fitter for me: Love is for the free!
I am not dazzled by this splendid roof,
Whate’er thy power, and great it seems to be;
Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch around a throne,
And hands obey -- our hearts are still our own.”

CXXVIII

This was a truth to us extremely trite;
Not so to her, who ne'er had heard such things:
She deem'd her least command must yield delight,
Earth being only made for queens and kings.
If hearts lay on the left side or the right
She hardly knew, to such perfection brings
Legitimacy its born votaries, when
Aware of their due royal rights o'er men.

CXXIX

Besides, as has been said, she was so fair
As even in a much humbler lot had made
A kingdom or confusion anywhere,
And also, as may be presumed, she laid
Some stress on charms, which seldom are, if e'er,
By their possessors thrown into the shade:
She thought hers gave a double "right divine;"
And half of that opinion's also mine.

CXXX

Remember, or (if you can not) imagine,
Ye, who have kept your chastity when young,
While some more desperate dowager has been waging
Love with you, and been in the dog-days stung
By your refusal, recollect her raging!
Or recollect all that was said or sung
On such a subject; then suppose the face
Of a young downright beauty in this case.

CXXXI

Suppose, -- but you already have supposed,
The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,
Phaedra, and all which story has disclosed
Of good examples; pity that so few by
Poets and private tutors are exposed,
To educate -- ye youth of Europe -- you by!
But when you have supposed the few we know,
You can't suppose Gulbeyaz' angry brow.

CXXXII

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
Or any interesting beast of prey,
Are similes at hand for the distress
Of ladies who can not have their own way;
But though my turn will not be served with less,
These don't express one half what I should say:
For what is stealing young ones, few or many,
To cutting short their hopes of having any?

CXXXIII

The love of offspring's nature's general law,
 From tigresses and cubs to ducks and ducklings;
There's nothing whets the beak, or arms the claw
 Like an invasion of their babes and sucklings;
And all who have seen a human nursery, saw
 How mothers love their children's squalls and chucklings;
This strong extreme effect (to tire no longer
Your patience) shows the cause must still be stronger.

CXXXIV

If I said fire flash'd from Gulbeyaz' eyes,
 'T were nothing -- for her eyes flash'd always fire;
Or said her cheeks assumed the deepest dyes,
 I should but bring disgrace upon the dyer,
So supernatural was her passion's rise;
 For ne'er till now she knew a check'd desire:
Even ye who know what a check'd woman is
(Enough, God knows!) would much fall short of this.

CXXXV

Her rage was but a minute's, and 't was well --
A moment's more had slain her; but the while
It lasted 't was like a short glimpse of hell:
Nought's more sublime than energetic bile,
Though horrible to see yet grand to tell,
Like ocean warring 'gainst a rocky isle;
And the deep passions flashing through her form
Made her a beautiful embodied storm.

CXXXVI

A vulgar tempest 't were to a typhoon
To match a common fury with her rage,
And yet she did not want to reach the moon,
Like moderate Hotspur on the immortal page;
Her anger pitch'd into a lower tune,
Perhaps the fault of her soft sex and age --
Her wish was but to "kill, kill, kill," like Lear's,
And then her thirst of blood was quench'd in tears.

CXXXVII

A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,
 Pass'd without words -- in fact she could not speak;
And then her sex's shame broke in at last,
 A sentiment till then in her but weak,
But now it flow'd in natural and fast,
 As water through an unexpected leak;
For she felt humbled -- and humiliation
Is sometimes good for people in her station

CXXXVIII

It teaches them that they are flesh and blood,
It also gently hints to them that others,
Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud;
That urns and pipkins are but fragile brothers,
And works of the same pottery, bad or good,
Though not all born of the same sires and mothers:
It teaches -- Heaven knows only what it teaches,
But sometimes it may mend, and often reaches.

CXXXIX

Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head;
Her second, to cut only his -- acquaintance;
Her third, to ask him where he had been bred;
Her fourth, to rally him into repentance;
Her fifth, to call her maids and go to bed;
Her sixth, to stab herself; her seventh, to sentence
The lash to Baba: -- but her grand resource
Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

CXL

She thought to stab herself, but then she had
The dagger close at hand, which made it awkward;
For Eastern stays are little made to pad,
So that a poniard pierces if 't is stuck hard:
She thought of killing Juan -- but, poor lad!
Though he deserved it well for being so backward,
The cutting off his head was not the art
Most likely to attain her aim -- his heart.

CXLI

Juan was moved; he had made up his mind
To be impaled, or quarter'd as a dish
For dogs, or to be slain with pangs refined,
Or thrown to lions, or made baits for fish,
And thus heroically stood resign'd,
Rather than sin -- except to his own wish:
But all his great preparatives for dying
Dissolved like snow before a woman crying.

CXLII

As through his palms Bob Acres' valour oozed,
So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how;
And first he wonder'd why he had refused;
And then, if matters could be made up now;
And next his savage virtue he accused,
Just as a friar may accuse his vow,
Or as a dame repents her of her oath,
Which mostly ends in some small breach of both.

CXLIII

So he began to stammer some excuses;
But words are not enough in such a matter,
Although you borrow'd all that e'er the muses
Have sung, or even a Dandy's dandiest chatter,
Or all the figures Castlereagh abuses;
Just as a languid smile began to flatter
His peace was making, but before he ventured
Further, old Baba rather briskly enter'd.

CXLIV

“Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the Moon!”

(‘T was thus he spake) “and Empress of the Earth!
Whose frown would put the spheres all out of tune,
Whose smile makes all the planets dance with mirth,
Your slave brings tidings -- he hopes not too soon --
Which your sublime attention may be worth:
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray,
To hint that he is coming up this way.”

CXLV

“Is it,” exclaim’d Gulbeyaz, “as you say?

I wish to heaven he would not shine till morning!
But bid my women form the milky way.

Hence, my old comet! give the stars due warning --
And, Christian! mingle with them as you may,

And as you’d have me pardon your past scorning --”
Here they were interrupted by a humming
Sound, and then by a cry, “The Sultan’s coming!”

CXLVI

First came her damsels, a decorous file,
And then his Highness' eunuchs, black and white;
The train might reach a quarter of a mile:
His majesty was always so polite
As to announce his visits a long while
Before he came, especially at night;
For being the last wife of the Emperour,
She was of course the favorite of the four.

CXLVII

His Highness was a man of solemn port,
Shawl'd to the nose, and bearded to the eyes,
Snatch'd from a prison to preside at court,
His lately bowstrung brother caused his rise;
He was as good a sovereign of the sort
As any mention'd in the histories
Of Cantemir, or Knolles, where few shine
Save Solyman, the glory of their line.

CXLVIII

He went to mosque in state, and said his prayers
 With more than “Oriental scrupulosity;”
He left to his vizier all state affairs,
 And show’d but little royal curiosity:
I know not if he had domestic cares --
 No process proved connubial animosity;
Four wives and twice five hundred maids, unseen,
Were ruled as calmly as a Christian queen.

CXLIX

If now and then there happen'd a slight slip,
 Little was heard of criminal or crime;
The story scarcely pass'd a single lip --
 The sack and sea had settled all in time,
From which the secret nobody could rip:
 The Public knew no more than does this rhyme;
No scandals made the daily press a curse --
Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

CL

He saw with his own eyes the moon was round,
Was also certain that the earth was square,
Because he had journey'd fifty miles, and found
No sign that it was circular anywhere;
His empire also was without a bound:
'T is true, a little troubled here and there,
By rebel pachas, and encroaching giaours,
But then they never came to "the Seven Towers;"

CLI

Except in shape of envoys, who were sent
To lodge there when a war broke out, according
To the true law of nations, which ne'er meant
Those scoundrels, who have never had a sword in
Their dirty diplomatic hands, to vent
Their spleen in making strife, and safely wording
Their lies, yclep'd despatches, without risk or
The singeing of a single inky whisker.

CLII

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
Of whom all such as came of age were stow'd,
The former in a palace, where like nuns
They lived till some Bashaw was sent abroad,
When she, whose turn it was, was wed at once,
Sometimes at six years old -- though it seems odd,
'T is true; the reason is, that the Bashaw
Must make a present to his sire in law.

CLIII

His sons were kept in prison, till they grew
Of years to fill a bowstring or the throne,
One or the other, but which of the two
Could yet be known unto the fates alone;
Meantime the education they went through
Was princely, as the proofs have always shown:
So that the heir apparent still was found
No less deserving to be hang'd than crown'd.

CLIV

His majesty saluted his fourth spouse
 With all the ceremonies of his rank,
Who clear'd her sparkling eyes and smooth'd her brows,
 As suits a matron who has play'd a prank;
These must seem doubly mindful of their vows,
 To save the credit of their breaking bank:
To no men are such cordial greetings given
As those whose wives have made them fit for heaven.

CLV

His Highness cast around his great black eyes,
And looking, as he always look'd, perceived
Juan amongst the damsels in disguise,
At which he seem'd no whit surprised nor grieved,
But just remark'd with air sedate and wise,
While still a fluttering sigh Gulbeyaz heaved,
"I see you've bought another girl; 't is pity
That a mere Christian should be half so pretty."

CLVI

This compliment, which drew all eyes upon
The new-bought virgin, made her blush and shake.
Her comrades, also, thought themselves undone:
Oh! Mahomet! that his majesty should take
Such notice of a giaour, while scarce to one
Of them his lips imperial ever spake!
There was a general whisper, toss, and wriggle,
But etiquette forbade them all to giggle.

CLVII

The Turks do well to shut -- at least, sometimes --
The women up, because, in sad reality,
Their chastity in these unhappy climes
Is not a thing of that astringent quality
Which in the North prevents precocious crimes,
And makes our snow less pure than our morality;
The sun, which yearly melts the polar ice,
Has quite the contrary effect on vice.

CLVIII

Thus in the East they are extremely strict,
And Wedlock and a Padlock mean the same;
Excepting only when the former's pick'd
It ne'er can be replaced in proper frame;
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick'd:
But then their own Polygamy's to blame;
Why don't they knead two virtuous souls for life
Into that moral centaur, man and wife?

CLIX

Thus far our chronicle; and now we pause,
 Though not for want of matter; but 't is time
According to the ancient epic laws,
 To slacken sail, and anchor with our rhyme.
Let this fifth canto meet with due applause,
 The sixth shall have a touch of the sublime;
Meanwhile, as Homer sometimes sleeps, perhaps
You'll pardon to my muse a few short naps.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE SIXTH

I

“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, -- taken at the flood,” -- you know the rest,
And most of us have found it now and then;
At least we think so, though but few have guess’d
The moment, till too late to come again.
But no doubt every thing is for the best --
Of which the surest sign is in the end:
When things are at the worst they sometimes mend.

II

There is a tide in the affairs of women
Which, taken at the flood, leads -- God knows where:
Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen
With its strange whirls and eddies can compare:
Men with their heads reflect on this and that --
But women with their hearts on heaven knows what!

III

And yet a headlong, headstrong, downright she,
Young, beautiful, and daring -- who would risk
A throne, the world, the universe, to be
Beloved in her own way, and rather whisk
The stars from out the sky, than not be free
As are the billows when the breeze is brisk --
Though such a she’s a devil (if that there be one),
Yet she would make full many a Manichean.

IV

Thrones, worlds, *et cetera*, are so oft upset

By commonest ambition, that when passion
O'erthrows the same, we readily forget,
Or at the least forgive, the loving rash one.
If Antony be well remember'd yet,
'T is not his conquests keep his name in fashion,
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra's eyes,
Outbalances all Caesar's victories.

V

He died at fifty for a queen of forty;
I wish their years had been fifteen and twenty,
For then wealth, kingdoms, worlds are but a sport -- I
Remember when, though I had no great plenty
Of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I
Gave what I had -- a heart: as the world went, I
Gave what was worth a world; for worlds could never
Restore me those pure feelings, gone forever.

VI

'T was the boy's "mite," and, like the "widow's," may
Perhaps be weigh'd hereafter, if not now;
But whether such things do or do not weigh,
All who have loved, or love, will still allow
Life has nought like it. God is love, they say,
And Love's a god, or was before the brow
Of earth was wrinkled by the sins and tears
Of -- but Chronology best knows the years.

VII

We left our hero and third heroine in
A kind of state more awkward than uncommon,
For gentlemen must sometimes risk their skin
For that sad tempter, a forbidden woman:
Sultans too much abhor this sort of sin,
And don't agree at all with the wise Roman,
Heroic, stoic Cato, the sententious,

Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.

VIII

I know Gulbeyaz was extremely wrong;
I own it, I deplore it, I condemn it;
But I detest all fiction even in song,
And so must tell the truth, howe'er you blame it.
Her reason being weak, her passions strong,
She thought that her lord's heart (even could she claim it)
Was scarce enough; for he had fifty-nine
Years, and a fifteen-hundredth concubine.

IX

I am not, like Cassio, "an arithmetician,"
But by "the bookish theoric" it appears,
If 't is summ'd up with feminine precision,
That, adding to the account his Highness' years,
The fair Sultana err'd from inanition;
For, were the Sultan just to all his dears,
She could but claim the fifteen-hundredth part
Of what should be monopoly -- the heart.

X

It is observed that ladies are litigious
Upon all legal objects of possession,
And not the least so when they are religious,
Which doubles what they think of the transgression:
With suits and prosecutions they besiege us,
As the tribunals show through many a session,
When they suspect that any one goes shares
In that to which the law makes them sole heirs.

XI

Now, if this holds good in a Christian land,
The heathen also, though with lesser latitude,

Are apt to carry things with a high hand,
And take what kings call “an imposing attitude,”
And for their rights connubial make a stand,
When their liege husbands treat them with ingratitude:
And as four wives must have quadruple claims,
The Tigris hath its jealousies like Thames.

XII

Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
The favourite; but what is favour amongst four?
Polygamy may well be held in dread,
Not only as a sin, but as a *bore*:
Most wise men, with *one* moderate woman wed,
Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear
To make the nuptial couch a “Bed of Ware.”

XIII

His Highness, the sublimest of mankind, --
So styled according to the usual forms
Of every monarch, till they are consign'd
To those sad hungry jacobins the worms,
Who on the very loftiest kings have dined, --
His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz' charms,
Expecting all the welcome of a lover
(A “Highland welcome” all the wide world over).

XIV

Now here we should distinguish; for howe'er
Kisses, sweet words, embraces, and all that,
May look like what is -- neither here nor there,
They are put on as easily as a hat,
Or rather bonnet, which the fair sex wear,
Trimm'd either heads or hearts to decorate,
Which form an ornament, but no more part
Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

XV

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, resign'd
Rather to hide what pleases most unknown,
Are the best tokens (to a modest mind)
Of love, when seated on his loveliest throne,
A sincere woman's breast, -- for over-warm
Or over-cold annihilates the charm.

XVI

For over-warmth, if false, is worse than truth;
If true, 't is no great lease of its own fire;
For no one, save in very early youth,
Would like (I think) to trust all to desire,
Which is but a precarious bond, in sooth,
And apt to be transferr'd to the first buyer
At a sad discount: while your over chilly
Women, on t' other hand, seem somewhat silly.

XVII

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,
For so it seems to lovers swift or slow,
Who fain would have a mutual flame confess'd,
And see a sentimental passion glow,
Even were St. Francis' paramour their guest,
In his monastic concubine of snow; --
In short, the maxim for the amorous tribe is
Horatian, "*Medio tu tutissimus ibis.*"

XVIII

The "tu"'s too much, -- but let it stand, -- the verse
Requires it, that's to say, the English rhyme,
And not the pink of old hexameters;
But, after all, there's neither tune nor time

In the last line, which cannot well be worse,
And was thrust in to close the octave's chime:
I own no prosody can ever rate it
As a rule, but *Truth* may, if you translate it.

XIX

If fair Gulbeyaz overdid her part,
I know not -- it succeeded, and success
Is much in most things, not less in the heart
Than other articles of female dress.
Self-love in man, too, beats all female art;
They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less;
And no one virtue yet, except starvation,
Could stop that worst of vices -- propagation.

XX

We leave this royal couple to repose:
A bed is not a throne, and they may sleep,
Whate'er their dreams be, if of joys or woes:
Yet disappointed joys are woes as deep
As any man's day mixture undergoes.
Our least of sorrows are such as we *weep*;
'T is the vile daily drop on drop which wears
The soul out (like the stone) with petty cares.

XXI

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill
To pay, unpaid, protested, or discounted
At a per-centage; a child cross, dog ill,
A favourite horse fallen lame just as he's mounted,
A bad old woman making a worse will,
Which leaves you minus of the cash you counted
As certain; -- these are paltry things, and yet
I've rarely seen the man they did not fret.

XXII

I'm a philosopher; confound them all!
Bills, beasts, and men, and -- no! *not* womankind!
With one good hearty curse I vent my gall,
And then my stoicism leaves nought behind
Which it can either pain or evil call,
And I can give my whole soul up to mind;
Though what *is* soul or mind, their birth or growth,
Is more than I know -- the deuce take them both!

XXIII

So now all things are damned one feels at ease,
As after reading Athanasius' curse,
Which doth your true believer so much please:
I doubt if any now could make it worse
O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
'T is so sententious, positive, and terse,
And decorates the book of Common Prayer,
As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.

XXIV

Gulbeyaz and her lord were sleeping, or
At least one of them! -- Oh, the heavy night,
When wicked wives, who love some bachelor,
Lie down in dudgeon to sigh for the light
Of the gray morning, and look vainly for
Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite --
To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake!

XXV

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
Also beneath the canopy of beds
Four-posted and silk curtain'd, which are given
For rich men and their brides to lay their heads
Upon, in sheets white as what bards call "driven
Snow." Well! 't is all hap-hazard when one weds.

Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant's quean*.

XXVI

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
With all the damsels in their long array,
Had bow'd themselves before th' imperial eyes,
And at the usual signal ta'en their way
Back to their chambers, those long galleries
In the seraglio, where the ladies lay
Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms there
Beating for love, as the caged bird's for air.

XXVII

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
The tyrant's wish, "that mankind only had
One neck, which he with one fell stroke might pierce:"
My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than fierce;
It being (not *now*, but only while a lad)
That womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all at once from North to South.

XXVIII

Oh, enviable Briareus! with thy hands
And heads, if thou hadst all things multiplied
In such proportion! -- But my Muse withstands
The giant thought of being a Titan's bride,
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of love
In which we left him several lines above.

XXIX

He went forth with the lovely Odalisques,

At the given signal join'd to their array;
And though he certainly ran many risks,
Yet he could not at times keep, by the way
(Although the consequences of such frisks
Are worse than the worst damages men pay
In moral England, where the thing's a tax),
From ogling all their charms from breasts to backs.

XXX

Still he forgot not his disguise: -- along
The galleries from room to room they walk'd,
A virgin-like and edifying throng,
By eunuchs flank'd; while at their head there stalk'd
A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirr'd or talk'd
Without her sanction on their she-parades:
Her title was "the Mother of the Maids."

XXXI

Whether she was a "mother," I know not,
Or whether they were "maids" who call'd her mother;
But this is her seraglio title, got
I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott:
Her office was to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they blunder'd.

XXXII

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men --
Except his majesty, who, with her aid,
And guards, and bolts, and walls, and now and then
A slight example, just to cast a shade
Along the rest, contrived to keep this den
Of beauties cool as an Italian convent,

Where all the passions have, alas! but one vent.

XXXIII

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless -- how
 Could you ask such a question? -- but we will
Continue. As I said, this goodly row
 Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
 Like water-lilies floating down a rill --
Or rather lake, for *rills* do *not* run *slowly*, --
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

XXXIV

But when they reach'd their own apartments, there,
 Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at spring-tide, or women anywhere
 When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all), or like Irish at a fair,
 Their guards being gone, and as it were a truce
Establish'd between them and bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile, and play.

XXXV

Their talk, of course, ran most on the new comer;
 Her shape, her hair, her air, her everything:
Some thought her dress did not so much become her,
 Or wonder'd at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh their summer,
 Others contended they were but in spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in height,
While others wish'd that she had been so quite.

XXXVI

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
 Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,

And fresh, and “beautiful exceedingly,”
Who with the brightest Georgians might compare:
They wonder’d how Gulbeyaz, too, could be
So silly as to buy slaves who might share
(If that his Highness wearied of his bride)
Her throne and power, and every thing beside.

XXXVII

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,
After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or Heathen,
In a new face “the ugliest creature breathing.”

XXXVIII

And yet they had their little jealousies,
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,
Whether there are such things as sympathies
Without our knowledge or our approbation,
Although they could not see through his disguise,
All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like magnetism, or devilism, or what
You please -- we will not quarrel about that:

XXXIX

But certain ‘tis they all felt for their new
Companion something newer still, as ‘t were
A sentimental friendship through and through,
Extremely pure, which made them all concur
In wishing her their sister, save a few
Who wish’d they had a brother just like her,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

XL

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù; in short
(To save description), fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and complexion;
They all alike admired their new connection.

XLI

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seem'd made to tread,
But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's form
Look'd more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large, and languishing, and lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

XLII

A kind of sleepy Venus seem'd Dudù,
Yet very fit to "murder sleep" in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
Few angles were there in her form, 't is true,
Thinner she might have been, and yet scarce lose;
Yet, after all, 't would puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm to pare.

XLIII

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day breaking;
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking;

She look'd (this simile's quite new) just cut
From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking,
The mortal and the marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into life.

XLIV

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name --
"Juanna." -- Well, a pretty name enough.
Katinka ask'd her also whence she came --
"From Spain." -- "But where *is* Spain?" -- "Don't ask such stuff,
Nor show your Georgian ignorance -- for shame!"
Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough,
To poor Katinka: "Spain's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier."

XLV

Dudù said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair;
And looking at her steadfastly, she sigh'd,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger without friend or guide,
And all abash'd, too, at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and faces.

XLVI

But here the Mother of the Maids drew near,
With, "Ladies, it is time to go to rest.
I'm puzzled what to do with *you*, my dear,"
She added to Juanna, their new guest:
"Your coming has been unexpected here,
And every couch is occupied; you had best
Partake of mine; but by to-morrow early
We will have all things settled for you fairly."

XLVII

Here Lolah interposed -- "Mamma, you know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot bear
That anybody should disturb you so;
I'll take Juanna; we're a slenderer pair
Than you would make the half of; -- don't say no;
And I of your young charge will take due care."
But here Katinka interfered, and said,
"She also had compassion and a bed.

XLVIII

"Besides, I hate to sleep alone," quoth she.
The matron frown'd: "Why so?" -- "For fear of ghosts,"
Replied Katinka; "I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts;
And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Gouls in hosts."
The dame replied, "Between your dreams and you,
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.

XLIX

"You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
The same, Katinka, until by and by;
And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
Who's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
And will not toss and chatter the night through.
What say you, child?" -- Dudù said nothing, as
Her talents were of the more silent class;

L

But she rose up, and kiss'd the matron's brow
Between the eyes, and Lolah on both cheeks,
Katinka, too; and with a gentle bow
(Curt'sies are neither used by Turks nor Greeks)
She took Juanna by the hand to show
Their place of rest, and left to both their piques,

The others pouting at the matron's preference
Of Dudù, though they held their tongues from deference.

LI

It was a spacious chamber (Oda is
The Turkish title), and ranged round the wall
Were couches, toilets -- and much more than this
I might describe, as I have seen it all,
But it suffices -- little was amiss;
'T was on the whole a nobly furnish'd hall,
With all things ladies want, save one or two,
And even those were nearer than they knew.

LII

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
Not very dashing, but extremely winning,
With the most regulated charms of feature,
Which painters cannot catch like faces sinning
Against proportion -- the wild strokes of nature
Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike,
And pleasing or unpleasing, still are like.

LIII

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,
Where all was harmony, and calm, and quiet,
Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without mirth,
Which, if not happiness, is much more nigh it
Than are your mighty passions and so forth,
Which some call "the sublime:" I wish they'd try it:
I've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

LIV

But she was pensive more than melancholy,

And serious more than pensive, and serene,
It may be, more than either -- not unholy
Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to have been.
The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was wholly
Unconscious, albeit turn'd of quick seventeen,
That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
She never thought about herself at all.

LV

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
The Age of Gold (when gold was yet unknown,
By which its nomenclature came to pass;
Thus most appropriately has been shown
"Lucus à *non* lucendo," *not* what was,
But what was *not*; a sort of style that's grown
Extremely common in this age, whose metal
The devil may decompose, but never settle:

LVI

I think it may be of "Corinthian Brass,"
Which was a mixture of all metals, but
The brazen uppermost). Kind reader! pass
This long parenthesis: I could not shut
It sooner for the soul of me, and class
My faults even with your own! which meaneth, Put
A kind construction upon them and me:
But *that* you won't -- then don't -- I am not less free.

LVII

'T is time we should return to plain narration,
And thus my narrative proceeds: -- Dudù,
With every kindness short of ostentation,
Show'd Juan, or Juanna, through and through
This labyrinth of females, and each station
Described -- what's strange -- in words extremely few:
I have but one simile, and that's a blunder,

For wordless woman, which is *silent* thunder.

LVIII

And next she gave her (I say *her*, because
The gender still was epicene, at least
In outward show, which is a saving clause)
An outline of the customs of the East,
With all their chaste integrity of laws,
By which the more a haram is increased,
The stricter doubtless grow the vestal duties
Of any supernumerary beauties.

LIX

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
Dudù was fond of kissing -- which I'm sure
That nobody can ever take amiss,
Because 't is pleasant, so that it be pure,
And between females means no more than this --
That they have nothing better near, or newer.
"Kiss" rhymes to "bliss" in fact as well as verse --
I wish it never led to something worse.

LX

In perfect innocence she then unmade
Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
A child of Nature, carelessly array'd:
If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
'T was like the fawn, which, in the lake display'd,
Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
Admiring this new native of the deep.

LXI

And one by one her articles of dress
Were laid aside; but not before she offer'd

Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
Of modesty declined the assistance proffer'd:
Which pass'd well off -- as she could do no less;
Though by this *politesse* she rather suffer'd,
Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins,
Which surely were invented for our sins, --

LXII

Making a woman like a porcupine,
Not to be rashly touch'd. But still more dread,
Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 't was mine,
In early youth, to turn a lady's maid; --
I did my very boyish best to shine
In tricking her out for a masquerade;
The pins were placed sufficiently, but not
Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

LXIII

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
And I love wisdom more than she loves me;
My tendency is to philosophise
On most things, from a tyrant to a tree;
But still the spouseless virgin *Knowledge* flies.
What are we? and whence came we? what shall be
Our *ultimate* existence? what's our present?
Are questions answerless, and yet incessant.

LXIV

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
And distant from each other burn'd the lights,
And slumber hover'd o'er each lovely limb
Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
They should have walk'd there in their sprightliest trim,
By way of change from their sepulchral sites,
And shown themselves as ghosts of better taste
Than haunting some old ruin or wild waste.

LXV

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and dime, and root,
In some exotic garden sometimes found,
With cost, and care, and warmth induced to shoot.
One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping, as the fruit
Nods from the tree, was slumbering with soft breath,
And lips apart, which show'd the pearls beneath.

LXVI

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her white arm,
And raven ringlets gather'd in dark crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
The moon breaks, half unveil'd each further charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night
All bashfully to struggle into light.

LXVII

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for
'T was night, but there were lamps, as hath been said.
A third's all pallid aspect offer'd more
The traits of sleeping sorrow, and betray'd
Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore
Belovéd and deplored; while slowly stray'd
(As night-dew, on a cypress glittering, tinges
The black bough) tear-drops through her eyes' dark fringes.

LXVIII

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
Lay in a breathless, hush'd, and stony sleep;
White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,

Or Lot's wife done in salt, -- or what you will; --
My similes are gather'd in a heap,
So pick and choose -- perhaps you'll be content
With a carved lady on a monument.

LXIX

And lo! a fifth appears; -- and what is she?
A lady of a "certain age," which means
Certainly aged -- what her years might be
I know not, never counting past their teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,
As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

LXX

But all this time how slept, or dream'd, Dudù?
With strict inquiry I could ne'er discover,
And scorn to add a syllable untrue;
But ere the middle watch was hardly over,
Just when the fading lamps waned dim and blue,
And phantoms hover'd, or might seem to hover,
To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she scream'd out:

LXXI

And that so loudly, that upstarted all
The Oda, in a general commotion:
Matron and maids, and those whom you may call
Neither, came crowding like the waves of ocean,
One on the other, throughout the whole hall,
All trembling, wondering, without the least notion
More than I have myself of what could make
The calm Dudù so turbulently wake.

LXXII

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,
 With floating draperies and with flying hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
 And bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing bare,
And bright as any meteor ever bred
 By the North Pole, -- they sought her cause of care,
For she seem'd agitated, flush'd, and frighten'd,
Her eye dilated and her colour heighten'd.

LXXIII

But what was strange -- and a strong proof how great
 A blessing is sound sleep -- Juanna lay
As fast as ever husband by his mate
 In holy matrimony snores away.
Not all the clamour broke her happy state
 Of slumber, ere they shook her, -- so they say
At least, -- and then she, too, unclosed her eyes,
And yawn'd a good deal with discreet surprise.

LXXIV

And now commenced a strict investigation,
 Which, as all spoke at once and more than once,
Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narration,
 Alike might puzzle either wit or dunce
To answer in a very clear oration.
 Dudù had never pass'd for wanting sense,
But, being "no orator as Brutus is,"
Could not at first expound what was amiss.

LXXV

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
 She dream'd a dream, of walking in a wood --
A "wood obscure," like that where Dante found
 Himself in at the age when all grow good;
Life's half-way house, where dames with virtue crown'd
 Run much less risk of lovers turning rude;

And that this wood was full of pleasant fruits,
And trees of goodly growth and spreading roots;

LXXVI

And in the midst a golden apple grew, --
A most prodigious pippin, -- but it hung
Rather too high and distant; that she threw
Her glances on it, and then, longing, flung
Stones and whatever she could pick up, to
Bring down the fruit, which still perversely clung
To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
But always at a most provoking height; --

LXXVII

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
It fell down of its own accord before
Her feet; that her first movement was to stoop
And pick it up, and bite it to the core;
That just as her young lip began to ope
Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
A bee flew out and stung her to the heart,
And so -- she awoke with a great scream and start.

LXXVIII

All this she told with some confusion and
Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
To expound their vain and visionary gleams.
I've known some odd ones which seem'd really plann'd
Prophetically, or that which one deems
A "strange coincidence," to use a phrase
By which such things are settled now-a-days.

LXXIX

The damsels, who had thoughts of some great harm,

Began, as is the consequence of fear,
To scold a little at the false alarm
That broke for nothing on their sleeping car.
The matron, too, was wroth to leave her warm
Bed for the dream she had been obliged to hear,
And chafed at poor Dudù, who only sigh'd,
And said that she was sorry she had cried.

LXXX

"I've heard of stories of a cock and bull;
But visions of an apple and a bee,
To take us from our natural rest, and pull
The whole Oda from their beds at half-past three,
Would make us think the moon is at its full.
You surely are unwell, child! we must see,
To-morrow, what his Highness's physician
Will say to this hysteric of a vision.

LXXXI

"And poor Juanna, too -- the child's first night
Within these walls to be broke in upon
With such a clamour! I had thought it right
That the young stranger should not lie alone,
And, as the quietest of all, she might
With you, Dudù, a good night's rest have known;
But now I must transfer her to the charge
Of Lolah -- though her couch is not so large."

LXXXII

Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition;
But poor Dudù, with large drops in her own,
Resulting from the scolding or the vision,
Implored that present pardon might be shown
For this first fault, and that on no condition
(She added in a soft and piteous tone)
Juanna should be taken from her, and

Her future dreams should all be kept in hand.

LXXXIII

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now;
She wonder'd at herself how she could scream --
'T was foolish, nervous, as she must allow,
A fond hallucination, and a theme
For laughter -- but she felt her spirits low,
And begg'd they would excuse her; she'd get over
This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

LXXXIV

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep disclosed
When all around rang like a tocsin bell:
She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show,
Save that of dreaming once "mal-à-propos."

LXXXV

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turn'd round
And hid her face within Juanna's breast:
Her neck alone was seen, but that was found
The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blush'd, nor can expound
The mystery of this rupture of their rest;
All that I know is, that the facts I state
Are true as truth has ever been of late.

LXXXVI

And so good night to them, -- or, if you will,
Good morrow -- for the cock had crown, and light

Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled into sight
Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each height
That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.

LXXXVII

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and pale
As passion rises, with its bosom worn,
Array'd herself with mantle, gem, and veil.
The nightingale that sings with the deep thorn,
Which fable places in her breast of wail,
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those
Whose headlong passions form their proper woes.

LXXXVIII

And that's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift; --
But *that* they will not do without suspicion,
Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of vision;
While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is natural,
The numbers are too great for them to flatter all.

LXXXIX

Rose the sultana from a bed of splendour,
Softer than the soft Sybarite's, who cried
Aloud because his feelings were too tender
To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side, --
So beautiful that art could little mend her,
Though pale with conflicts between love and pride; --
So agitated was she with her error,
She did not even look into the mirror.

XC

Also arose about the self-same time,
Perhaps a little later, her great lord,
Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime,
And of a wife by whom he was abhorr'd;
A thing of much less import in that clime --
At least to those of incomes which afford
The filling up their whole connubial cargo --
Than where two wives are under an embargo.

XCI

He did not think much on the matter, nor
Indeed on any other: as a man
He liked to have a handsome paramour
At hand, as one may like to have a fan,
And therefore of Circassians had good store,
As an amusement after the Divan;
Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
Had made him lately bask in his bride's beauty.

XCII

And now he rose; and after due ablutions
Exacted by the customs of the East,
And prayers and other pious evolutions,
He drank six cups of coffee at the least,
And then withdrew to hear about the Russians,
Whose victories had recently increased
In Catherine's reign, whom glory still adores,
As greatest of all sovereigns and w--s.

XCIII

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander!
Her son's son, let not this last phrase offend
Thine ear, if it should reach -- and now rhymes wander
Almost as far as Petersburg and lend

A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which blend
Their roar even with the Baltic's -- so you be
Your father's son, 't is quite enough for me.

XCIV

To call men love-begotten or proclaim
Their mothers as the antipodes of Timon,
That hater of mankind, would be a shame,
A libel, or whate'er you please to rhyme on:
But people's ancestors are history's game;
And if one lady's slip could leave a crime on
All generations, I should like to know
What pedigree the best would have to show?

XCV

Had Catherine and the sultan understood
Their own true interests, which kings rarely know
Until 't is taught by lessons rather rude,
There was a way to end their strife, although
Perhaps precarious, had they but thought good,
Without the aid of prince or plenipo:
She to dismiss her guards and he his haram,
And for their other matters, meet and share 'em.

XCVI

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
His daily council upon ways and means
How to encounter with this martial scold,
This modern Amazon and queen of queans;
And the perplexity could not be told
Of all the pillars of the state, which leans
Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

XCVII

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was gone,
Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
And rich with all contrivances which grace
Those gay recesses: -- many a precious stone
Sparkled along its roof, and many a vase
Of porcelain held in the fetter'd flowers,
Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

XCVIII

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and marble,
Vied with each other on this costly spot;
And singing birds without were heard to warble;
And the stain'd glass which lighted this fair grot
Varied each ray; -- but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not
Be too minute; an outline is the best, --
A lively reader's fancy does the rest.

XCIX

And here she summon'd Baba, and required
Don Juan at his hands, and information
Of what had pass'd since all the slaves retired,
And whether he had occupied their station;
If matters had been managed as desired,
And his disguise with due consideration
Kept up; and above all, the where and how
He had pass'd the night, was what she wish'd to know.

C

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
To this long catechism of questions, ask'd
More easily than answer'd, -- that he had tried
His best to obey in what he had been task'd;
But there seem'd something that he wish'd to hide,
Which hesitation more betray'd than mask'd;

He scratch'd his ear, the infallible resource
To which embarrass'd people have recourse.

CI

Gulbeyaz was no model of true patience,
Nor much disposed to wait in word or deed;
She liked quick answers in all conversations;
And when she saw him stumbling like a steed
In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh ones;
And as his speech grew still more broken-kneed,
Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,
And her proud brow's blue veins to swell and darkle.

CII

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he knew
To bode him no great good, he deprecated
Her anger, and beseech'd she'd hear him through --
He could not help the thing which he related:
Then out it came at length, that to Dudù
Juan was given in charge, as hath been stated;
But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore on
The holy camel's hump, besides the Koran.

CIII

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
The discipline of the whole haram bore,
As soon as they re-enter'd their own room,
For Baba's function stopt short at the door,
Had settled all; nor could he then presume
(The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
Without exciting such suspicion as
Might make the matter still worse than it was.

CIV

He hoped, indeed he thought, he could be sure

Juan had not betray'd himself; in fact
'T was certain that his conduct had been pure,
Because a foolish or imprudent act
Would not alone have made him insecure,
But ended in his being found out and *sacked*,
And thrown into the sea. -- Thus Baba spoke
Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.

CV

This he discreetly kept in the background,
And talk'd away -- and might have talk'd till now,
For any further answer that he found,
So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz' brow:
Her cheek turn'd ashes, ears rung, brain whirl'd round,
As if she had received a sudden blow,
And the heart's dew of pain sprang fast and chilly
O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a lily.

CVI

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
Baba thought she would faint, but there he err'd --
It was but a convulsion, which though short
Can never be described; we all have heard,
And some of us have felt thus "*all amort*,"
When things beyond the common have occur'd; --
Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
What she could ne'er express -- then how should I?

CVII

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
Stands on her tripod, agonised, and full
Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
The heart asunder; -- then, as more or less
Their speed abated or their strength grew dull,
She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,

And bow'd her throbbing head o'er trembling knees.

CVIII

Her face declined and was unseen; her hair
Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow,
Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
A low soft ottoman), and black despair
Stirr'd up and down her bosom like a billow,
Which rushes to some shore whose shingles check
Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

CIX

Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping
Conceal'd her features better than a veil;
And one hand o'er the ottoman lay drooping,
White, waxen, and as alabaster pale:
Would that I were a painter! to be grouping
All that a poet drags into detail
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

CX

Baba, who knew by experience when to talk
And when to hold his tongue, now held it till
This passion might blow o'er, nor dared to balk
Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will.
At length she rose up, and began to walk
Slowly along the room, but silent still,
And her brow clear'd, but not her troubled eye;
The wind was down, but still the sea ran high.

CXI

She stopp'd, and raised her head to speak -- but paused,
And then moved on again with rapid pace;

Then slacken'd it, which is the march most caused
By deep emotion: -- you may sometimes trace
A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed
By Sallust in his Catiline, who, chased
By all the demons of all passions, show'd
Their work even by the way in which he trode.

CXII

Gulbeyaz stopp'd and beckon'd Baba: -- "Slave!
Bring the two slaves!" she said in a low tone,
But one which Baba did not like to brave,
And yet he shudder'd, and seem'd rather prone
To prove reluctant, and begg'd leave to crave
(Though he well knew the meaning) to be shown
What slaves her highness wish'd to indicate,
For fear of any error, like the late.

CXIII

"The Georgian and her paramour," replied
The imperial bride -- and added, "Let the boat
Be ready by the secret portal's side:
You know the rest." The words stuck in her throat,
Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
And of this Baba willingly took note,
And begg'd by every hair of Mahomet's beard,
She would revoke the order he had heard.

CXIV

"To hear is to obey," he said; "but still,
Sultana, think upon the consequence:
It is not that I shall not all fulfil
Your orders, even in their severest sense;
But such precipitation may end ill,
Even at your own imperative expense:
I do not mean destruction and exposure,
In case of any premature disclosure;

CXV

“But your own feelings. Even should all the rest
Be hidden by the rolling waves, which hide
Already many a once love-beaten breast
Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide --
You love this boyish, new, seraglio guest,
And if this violent remedy be tried --
Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you,
That killing him is not the way to cure you.”

CXVI

“What dost thou know of love or feeling? -- Wretch!
Begone!” she cried, with kindling eyes -- “and do
My bidding!” Baba vanish’d, for to stretch
His own remonstrance further he well knew
Might end in acting as his own “Jack Ketch;”
And though he wish’d extremely to get through
This awkward business without harm to others,
He still preferr’d his own neck to another’s.

CXVII

Away he went then upon his commission,
Growling and grumbling in good Turkish phrase
Against all women of whate’er condition,
Especially sultanas and their ways;
Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,
Their never knowing their own mind two days,
The trouble that they gave, their immorality,
Which made him daily bless his own neutrality.

CXVIII

And then he call’d his brethren to his aid,
And sent one on a summons to the pair,
That they must instantly be well array’d,
And above all be comb’d even to a hair,

And brought before the empress, who had made
Inquiries after them with kindest care:
At which Dudù look'd strange, and Juan silly;
But go they must at once, and will I -- nill I.

CXIX

And here I leave them at their preparation
For the imperial presence, wherein whether
Gulbeyaz show'd them both commiseration,
Or got rid of the parties altogether,
Like other angry ladies of her nation, --
Are things the turning of a hair or feather
May settle; but far be 't from me to anticipate
In what way feminine caprice may dissipate.

CXX

I leave them for the present with good wishes,
Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange
Another part of history; for the dishes
Of this our banquet we must sometimes change;
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,
Although his situation now seems strange
And scarce secure, as such digressions are fair,
The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE SEVENTH

I

O Love! O Glory! what are ye who fly
 Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the polar sky
 Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
 Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

II

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
 A non-descript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
 Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
 But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
To laugh at *all* things -- for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things -- but a *show*?

III

They accuse me -- *Me* -- the present writer of
 The present poem -- of -- I know not what --
A tendency to under-rate and scoff
 At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.
 Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Danté's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

IV

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,

By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.
'T is not their fault, nor mine, if this be so --
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes. -- We live and die,
But which is best, *you* know no more than I.

V

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
"To know that nothing could be known;" a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only "like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean -- Truth."

VI

Ecclesiastes said, "that all is vanity" --
Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:
In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

VII

Dogs, or men! -- for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs -- your betters far -- ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying
To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying
Of wolves, will the bright muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies -- then howl your idle wrath!

While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path.

VIII

"Fierce loves and faithless wars" -- I am not sure
If this be the right reading -- 't is no matter;
The fact's about the same, I am secure;
I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,
And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
By Souvaroff, or Anglicè Suwarrow,
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow.

IX

The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed
Upon the Danube's left branch and left bank,
With buildings in the Oriental taste,
But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
Or was at least, unless 't is since defaced,
Which with your conquerors is a common prank:
It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
And measures round of toises thousands three.

X

Within the extent of this fortification
A borough is comprised along the height
Upon the left, which from its loftier station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades *upright*,
So placed as to *impede* the fire of those
Who held the place, and to *assist* the foe's.

XI

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:

But the town ditch below was deep as ocean,
The rampart higher than you'd wish to hang:
But then there was a great want of precaution
(Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
Nor work advanced, nor cover'd way was there,
To hint at least "Here is no thoroughfare."

XII

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
And walls as thick as most skulls born as yet;
Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St. George,
Case-mated one, and t' other "a barbette,"
Of Danube's bank took formidable charge;
While two and twenty cannon duly set
Rose over the town's right side, in bristling tier,
Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

XIII

But from the river the town's open quite,
Because the Turks could never be persuaded
A Russian vessel e'er would heave in sight;
And such their creed was, till they were invaded,
When it grew rather late to set things right.
But as the Danube could not well be waded,
They look'd upon the Muscovite flotilla,
And only shouted, "Allah!" and "Bis Millah!"

XIV

The Russians now were ready to attack:
But oh, ye goddesses of war and glory!
How shall I spell the name of each Cossacque
Who were immortal, could one tell their story?
Alas! what to their memory can lack?
Achilles' self was not more grim and gory
Than thousands of this new and polish'd nation,
Whose names want nothing but -- pronunciation.

XV

Still I'll record a few, if but to increase
Our euphony: there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff,
Meknop, Serge Lwow, Arséniew of modern Greece,
And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants apiece;
And more might be found out, if I could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious strumpet),
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

XVI

And cannot tune those discords of narration,
Which may be names at Moscow, into rhyme;
Yet there were several worth commemoration,
As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
Soft words, too, fitted for the peroration
Of Londonderry drawling against time,
Ending in "ischskin," "ousckin," "iffskchy," "ouski":
Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

XVII

Scherematoff and Chrematoff, Koklophti,
Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin Pouskin,
All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoff'd high
Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,
Unless to make their kettle-drums a new skin
Out of their hides, if parchment had grown dear,
And no more handy substitute been near.

XVIII

Then there were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers;

Also to have the sacking of a town, --

A pleasant thing to young men at their years.
'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen call'd Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

XIX

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson; all the rest
Had been call'd "*Jemmy*," after the great bard;
I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or ward,
Was *he*, since so renown'd "in country quarters
At Halifax;" but now he served the Tartars.

XX

The rest were jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills;
But when I've added that the elder jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I've said all *I* know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking "Schmacksmith,"
A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

XXI

I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a god
Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*
May make up for a *bullet* in his body?
I hope this little question is no sin,
Because, though I am but a simple noddie,
I think one Shakspeare puts the same thought in
The mouth of some one in his plays so doting,
Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

XXII

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young, and gay:
But I'm too great a patriot to record
Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;
I'd rather tell ten lies than say a word
Of truth; -- such truths are treason; they betray
Their country; and as traitors are abhorr'd
Who name the French in English, save to show
How Peace should make John Bull the Frenchman's foe.

XXIII

The Russians, having built two batteries on
An isle near Ismail, had two ends in view;
The first was to bombard it, and knock down
The public buildings and the private too,
No matter what poor souls might be undone.
The city's shape suggested this, 't is true;
Form'd like an amphitheatre, each dwelling
Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

XXIV

The second object was to profit by
The moment of the general consternation,
To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh
Extremely tranquil, anchor'd at its station:
But a third motive was as probably
To frighten them into capitulation;
A phantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
Unless they are game as bull-dogs and fox-terriers.

XXV

A habit rather blamable, which is
That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this
The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and Smith;
One of the valorous "Smiths" whom we shall miss
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to "pith;"

But 't is a name so spread o'er "Sir" and "Madam,"
That one would think the *first* who bore it "*Adam*."

XXVI

The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls "Murder," and at others "Glory."

XXVII

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste, or waste, I neither know nor care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either miss'd, or they were never miss'd,
And added greatly to the missing list.

XXVIII

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reach'd a spot to take effect:
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 't was dawn, the Turks slept fast as ever.

XXIX

At seven they rose, however, and survey'd

The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'T was nine, when still advancing undismay'd,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was return'd with interest, I may say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

XXX

For six hours bore they without intermission
The Turkish fire, and aided by their own
Land batteries, work'd their guns with great precision:
At length they found mere cannonade alone
By no means would produce the town's submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

XXXI

The Moslem, too, had lost both ships and men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and sail'd again,
And gall'd the Russians with a heavy fire,
And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the water
Pell-mell, and with a whole gazette of slaughter.

XXXII

"If" (says the historian here) "I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to say;"
And so he says no more -- but pays his court
To some distinguish'd strangers in that fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and Damas,

Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

XXXIII

This being the case, may show us what Fame is:

For out of these three "*preux Chevaliers*," how
Many of common readers give a guess

That such existed? (and they may live now
For aught we know.) Renown's all hit or miss;

There's fortune even in fame, we must allow.
'T is true the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne
Have half withdrawn from *him* oblivion's screen.

XXXIV

But here are men who fought in gallant actions

As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions

Their names are rarely found, nor often sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad contractions,

And is extinguish'd sooner than she ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

XXXV

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,

Show'd that *somewhere, somehow*, there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)

Most strongly recommended an assault;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the breach.

XXXVI

There was a man, if that he was a man,

Not that his manhood could be call'd in question,

For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indigestion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest on
The soil of the green province he had wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

XXXVII

This was Potemkin -- a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.
This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

XXXVIII

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's border
Were briskly fired and answer'd in due order.

XXXIX

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embark'd, the siege to raise,
A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panthers for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in war's art,
By his despatches couch'd in pithy phrase;
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles to the command, Field-Marshal Souvaroff.

XL

The letter of the prince to the same marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be partial --
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o'er-arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
"You will take Ismail at whatever price."

XLI

"Let there be light! said God, and there was light!"
"Let there be blood!" says man, and there's a sea!
The fiat of this spoil'd child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could decree
More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they should be
Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit;
For war cuts up not only branch, but root.

XLII

Our friends the Turks, who with loud "Allahs" now
Began to signalise the Russ retreat,
Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
In thinking that their enemy is beat
(Or *beaten*, if you insist on grammar, though
I never think about it in a heat),
But here I say the Turks were much mistaken,
Who hating hogs, yet wish'd to save their bacon.

XLIII

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
In sight two horsemen, who were deem'd Cossacques
For some time, till they came in nearer view.
They had but little baggage at their backs,

For there were but *three* shirts between the two;
But on they rode upon two Ukraine hacks,
Till, in approaching, were at length descried
In this plain pair, Suwarrow and his guide.

XLIV

“Great joy to London now!” says some great fool,
When London had a grand illumination,
Which to that bottle-conjurer, John Bull,
Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
So that the streets of colour’d lamps are full,
That Sage (said John) surrenders at discretion
His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

XLV

‘T is strange that he should farther “damn his eyes,”
For they are damn’d; that once all-famous oath
Is to the devil now no farther prize,
Since John has lately lost the use of both.
Debt he calls wealth, and taxes Paradise;
And Famine, with her gaunt and bony growth,
Which stare him in the face, he won’t examine,
Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

XLVI

But to the tale: -- great joy unto the camp!
To Russian, Tartar, English, French, Cossacque,
O’er whom Suwarrow shone like a gas lamp,
Presaging a most luminous attack;
Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,
Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
Which all who saw it follow’d, wrong or right.

XLVII

But certes matters took a different face;
 There was enthusiasm and much applause,
The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
 And all presaged good fortune to their cause.
Within a cannon-shot length of the place
 They drew, constructed ladders, repair'd flaws
In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
And all kinds of benevolent machines.

XLVIII

'T is thus the spirit of a single mind
 Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
 Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
 Or a bell-wether form the flock's connection
By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

XLIX

The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
 That they were going to a marriage feast
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
 Since there is discord after both at least):
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
 Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little -- odd -- old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

L

But so it was; and every preparation
 Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
 And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
 Was also in three columns, with a thirst

For glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attack'd by water.

LI

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which unanimity,
That stranger to most councils, here prevail'd,
As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
And every difficulty being dispell'd,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.

LII

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deign'd to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil:
Just as you'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill:
He show'd them how to mount a ladder (which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.

LIII

Also he dress'd up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines,
By way of lesson against actual Turks:
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judg'd them proper to assail the works;
At which your wise men sneer'd in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

LIV

Most things were in this posture on the eve

Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce conceive;
Yet men resolved to dash through thick and thin
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled: -- there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

LV

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting, pondering;
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

LVI

The day before the assault, while upon drill --
For this great conqueror play'd the corporal --
Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks round a hill,
Had met a party towards the twilight's fall,
One of whom spoke their tongue -- or well or ill,
'T was much that he was understood at all;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or manner,
They found that he had fought beneath their banner.

LVII

Whereon immediately at his request
They brought him and his comrades to head-quarters;
Their dress was Moslem, but you might have guess'd
That these were merely masquerading Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashion'd vest
Lurk'd Christianity; which sometimes barter
Her inward grace for outward show, and makes

It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

LVIII

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt
Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,
And lecturing on the noble art of killing, --
For deeming human clay but common dirt,
This great philosopher was thus instilling
His maxims, which to martial comprehension
Proved death in battle equal to a pension; --

LIX

Suwarrow, when he saw this company
Of Cossacques and their prey, turn'd round and cast
Upon them his slow brow and piercing eye: --
"Whence come ye?" -- "From Constantinople last,
Captives just now escaped," was the reply.
"What are ye?" -- "What you see us." Briefly pass'd
This dialogue; for he who answer'd knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

LX

"Your names?" -- "Mine's Johnson, and my comrade's Juan;
The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman." The chief threw on
The party a slight glance, then said, "I have heard
Your name before, the second is a new one:
To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass: -- I think I have heard your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?" -- "The same."

LXI

"You served at Widdin?" -- "Yes." -- "You led the attack?"
"I did." -- "What next?" -- "I really hardly know."

“You were the first i’ the breach?” -- “I was not slack
At least to follow those who might be so.”
“What follow’d?” -- “A shot laid me on my back,
And I became a prisoner to the foe.”
“You shall have vengeance, for the town surrounded
Is twice as strong as that where you were wounded.

LXII

“Where will you serve?” -- “Where’er you please.” -- “I know
You like to be the hope of the forlorn,
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe
After the hardships you’ve already borne.
And this young fellow -- say what can he do?
He with the beardless chin and garments torn?”
“Why, general, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the assault.”

LXIII

“He shall if that he dare.” Here Juan bow’d
Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
Continued: “Your old regiment’s allow’d,
By special providence, to lead to-morrow,
Or it may be to-night, the assault: I have vow’d
To several saints, that shortly plough or harrow
Shall pass o’er what was Ismail, and its tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

LXIV

“So now, my lads, for glory!” -- Here he turn’d
And drill’d away in the most classic Russian,
Until each high, heroic bosom burn’d
For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurn’d
All earthly goods save tithes) and bade them push on
To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress Catherine.

LXV

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy
Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents high
In his resumed amusement. "I confess
My debt in being thus allow'd to die
Among the foremost; but if you'd express
Explicitly our several posts, my friend
And self would know what duty to attend."

LXVI

"Right! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which should be
Now under arms. Ho! Katskoff, take him to
(Here he call'd up a Polish orderly)
His post, I mean the regiment Nikolaiew:
The stranger stripling may remain with me;
He's a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent."

LXVII

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:
The ladies, -- who by no means had been bred
To be disposed of in a way so new,
Although their haram education led
Doubtless to that of doctrines the most true,
Passive obedience, -- now raised up the head,
With flashing eyes and starting tears, and flung
Their arms, as hens their wings about their young,

LXVIII

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honour'd by the greatest chief
That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.

Oh, foolish mortals! Always taught in vain!
Oh, glorious laurel! since for one sole leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing sea.

LXIX

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, survey'd
The women with their hair about their ears
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions, when their trade
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes -- and such was Suwarrow.

LXX

He said, -- and in the kindest Calmuck tone, --
"Why, Johnson, what the devil do you mean
By bringing women here? They shall be shown
All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives:
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives."

LXXI

"May it please your excellency," thus replied
Our British friend, "these are the wives of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

LXXII

“But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward scrape.
I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used genteelly.”

LXXIII

Meantime these two poor girls, with swimming eyes,
Look'd on as if in doubt if they could trust
Their own protectors; nor was their surprise
Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmear'd with dust,
Stript to his waistcoat, and that not too clean,
More fear'd than all the sultans ever seen.

LXXIV

For every thing seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to them,
Who were accusom'd, as a sort of god,
To see the sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail 's a diadem),
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do without.

LXXV

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,
Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:
Don Juan, who was much more sentimental,
Swore they should see him by the dawn of day,
Or that the Russian army should repent all:

And, strange to say, they found some consolation
In this -- for females like exaggeration.

LXXVI

And then with tears, and sighs, and some slight kisses,
They parted for the present -- these to await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,
What sages call Chance, Providence, or Fate
(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,
A mortgage on Humanity's estate) --
While their beloved friends began to arm,
To burn a town which never did them harm.

LXXVII

Suwarrow, -- who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail,
Who calculated life as so much dross,
And as the wind a widow'd nation's wail,
And cared as little for his army's loss
(So that their efforts should at length prevail)
As wife and friends did for the boils of job, --
What was 't to him to hear two women sob?

LXXVIII

Nothing. -- The work of glory still went on
In preparations for a cannonade
As terrible as that of Ilion,
If Homer had found mortars ready made;
But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
We only can but talk of escalade,
Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries, bayonets, bullets, --
Hard words, which stick in the soft Muses' gullets.

LXXIX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm

All cars, though long; all ages, though so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm
Arms to which men will never more resort,
Unless gunpowder should be found to harm
Much less than is the hope of every court,
Which now is leagued young Freedom to annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy: --

LXXX

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;

LXXXI

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight substratum.
But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing -- how shall I relate 'em?
Souls of immortal generals! Phoebus watches
To colour up his rays from your despatches.

LXXXII

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
Oh, Caesar's Commentaries! now impart, ye
Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded)
A portion of your fading twilight hues,

So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

LXXXIII

When I call “fading” martial immortality,
I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,
Some sucking hero is compell’d to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the totality
Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

LXXXIV

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
But deems himself the first in Glory’s van.
But Glory’s glory; and if you would find
What *that* is -- ask the pig who sees the wind!

LXXXV

At least *he feels it*, and some say he *sees*,
Because he runs before it like a pig;
Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
A schooner, or -- but it is time to ease
This Canto, ere my Muse perceives fatigue.
The next shall ring a peal to shake all people,
Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

LXXXVI

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull night,
The hum of armies gathering rank on rank!

Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
Along the leaguer'd wall and bristling bank
Of the arm'd river, while with straggling light
The stars peep through the vapours dim and dank,
Which curl in curious wreaths: -- how soon the smoke
Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak!

LXXXVII

Here pause we for the present -- as even then
That awful pause, dividing life from death,
Struck for an instant on the hearts of men,
Thousands of whom were drawing their last breath!
A moment -- and all will be life again!
The march! the charge! the shouts of either faith!
Hurra! and Allah! and -- one moment more,
The death-cry drowning in the battle's roar.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE EIGHTH

I

Oh blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds!

These are but vulgar oaths, as you may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking sounds:

And so they are; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds

At present such things, since they are her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will -- they mean but wars.

II

All was prepared -- the fire, the sword, the men

To wield them in their terrible array.

The army, like a lion from his den,

March'd forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay, --
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen

To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in vain
Immediately in others grew again.

III

History can only take things in the gross;

But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,

War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,

As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

IV

And why? -- because it brings self-approbation;

Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation,
Which (it may be) has not much left to spare,
A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape or stare,
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

V

And such they are -- and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
While the mere victor's may appal or stun
The servile and the vain, such names will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

VI

The night was dark, and the thick mist allow'd
Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the same --
A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and loud
Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
The ear far more than thunder; for Heaven's flashes
Spare, or smite rarely -- man's make millions ashes!

VII

The column order'd on the assault scarce pass'd
Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with like voices:
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream embraced,
Which rock'd as 't were beneath the mighty noises;
While the whole rampart blazed like Etna, when

The restless Titan hiccups in his den.

VIII

And one enormous shout of “Allah!” rose

In the same moment, loud as even the roar
Of war’s most mortal engines, to their foes

Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore
Resounded “Allah!” and the clouds which close

With thick’ning canopy the conflict o’er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth “Allah! Allah Hu!”

IX

The columns were in movement one and all,

But of the portion which attack’d by water,
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,

Though led by Arseniew, that great son of slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.

”Carnage” (so Wordsworth tells you) “is God’s daughter:”
If *he* speak truth, she is Christ’s sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

X

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the knee;

Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball between
His cap and head, which proves the head to be

Aristocratic as was ever seen,
Because it then received no injury

More than the cap; in fact, the ball could mean
No harm unto a right legitimate head:
“Ashes to ashes” -- why not lead to lead?

XI

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,

Insisting on removal of *the Prince*

Amidst some groaning thousands dying near, --
All common fellows, who might writhe and wince,
And shriek for water into a deaf ear, --
The General Markow, who could thus evince
His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
To teach him greater, had his own leg broken.

XII

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills;
Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians, yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears the ills
Past, present, and to come; -- but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field;

XIII

There the still varying pangs, which multiply
Until their very number makes men hard
By the infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze whate'er it may regard --
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-*white* eye
Turn'd back within its socket, -- these reward
Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

XIV

Yet I love glory; -- glory's a great thing: --
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintain'd at the expense of your good king:
A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,
And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to wage
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

XV

The troops, already disembark'd, push'd on
To take a battery on the right; the others,
Who landed lower down, their landing done,
Had set to work as briskly as their brothers:
Being grenadiers, they mounted one by one,
Cheerful as children climb the breasts of mothers,
O'er the entrenchment and the palisade,
Quite orderly, as if upon parade.

XVI

And this was admirable; for so hot
The fire was, that were red Vesuvius loaded,
Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
And shells or hells, it could not more have goaded.
Of officers a third fell on the spot,
A thing which victory by no means boded
To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are at fault.

XVII

But here I leave the general concern,
To track our hero on his path of fame:
He must his laurels separately earn;
For fifty thousand heroes, name by name,
Though all deserving equally to turn
A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory,
And what is worse still, a much longer story:

XVIII

And therefore we must give the greater number
To the Gazette -- which doubtless fairly dealt
By the deceased, who lie in famous slumber
In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt

Their clay for the last time their souls encumber; --
Thrice happy he whose name has been well spelt
In the despatch: I knew a man whose loss
Was printed *Grove*, although his name was Grose.

XIX

Juan and Johnson join'd a certain corps,
And fought away with might and main, not knowing
The way which they had never trod before,
And still less guessing where they might be going;
But on they march'd, dead bodies trampling o'er,
Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweating, glowing,
But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin.

XX

Thus on they wallow'd in the bloody mire
Of dead and dying thousands, -- sometimes gaining
A yard or two of ground, which brought them nigher
To some odd angle for which all were straining;
At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
Which really pour'd as if all hell were raining
Instead of heaven, they stumbled backwards o'er
A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore.

XXI

Though 't was Don Juan's first of fields, and though
The nightly muster and the silent march
In the chill dark, when courage does not glow
So much as under a triumphal arch,
Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or throw
A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as starch,
Which stiffen'd heaven) as if he wish'd for day; --
Yet for all this he did not run away.

XXII

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
There *have been* and *are* heroes who begun
With something not much better, or as bad:
Frederic the Great from Molwitz deign'd to run,
For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after one
Warm bout are broken into their new tricks,
And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

XXIII

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*
(The antiquarians who can settle time,
Which settles all things, Roman, Greek, or Runic,
Swear that Pat's language sprung from the same clime
With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian tunic
Of Dido's alphabet; and this is rational
As any other notion, and not national); --

XXIV

But Juan was quite "a broth of a boy,"
A thing of impulse and a child of song;
Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem wrong),
And afterward, if he must needs destroy,
In such good company as always throng
To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure,
No less delighted to employ his leisure;

XXV

But always without malice: if he warr'd
Or loved, it was with what we call "the best
Intentions," which form all mankind's trump card,
To be produced when brought up to the test.
The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer -- ward
Off each attack, when people are in quest

Of their designs, by saying they meant well;
'T is pity "that such meaning should pave hell."

XXVI

I almost lately have begun to doubt
Whether hell's pavement -- if it be so paved --
Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
Not by the numbers good intent hath saved,
But by the mass who go below without
Those ancient good intentions, which once shaved
And smooth'd the brimstone of that street of hell
Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall Mall.

XXVII

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides
Warrior from warrior in their grim career,
Like chastest wives from constant husbands' sides
Just at the close of the first bridal year,
By one of those odd turns of Fortune's tides,
Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
He found himself alone, and friends retiring.

XXVIII

I don't know how the thing occur'd -- it might
Be that the greater part were kill'd or wounded,
And that the rest had faced unto the right
About; a circumstance which has confounded
Caesar himself, who, in the very sight
Of his whole army, which so much abounded
In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield,
And rally back his Romans to the field.

XXIX

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and was

No Caesar, but a fine young lad, who fought
He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
Stopp'd for a minute, as perhaps he ought
For a much longer time; then, like an ass
(Start not, kind reader; since great Homer thought
This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
Perhaps may find it better than a new one) --

XXX

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
And, what was stranger, never look'd behind;
But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
He stumbled on, to try if he could find
A path, to add his own slight arm and forces
To corps, the greater part of which were corses.

XXXI

Perceiving then no more the commandant
Of his own corps, nor even the corps, which had
Quite disappear'd -- the gods know how! (I can't
Account for every thing which may look bad
In history; but we at least may grant
It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
In search of glory, should look on before,
Nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps): --

XXXII

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
And left at large, like a young heir, to make
His way to -- where he knew not -- single handed;
As travellers follow over bog and brake
An "ignis fatuus;" or as sailors stranded
Unto the nearest hut themselves betake;
So Juan, following honour and his nose,

Rush'd where the thickest fire announced most foes.

XXXIII

He knew not where he was, nor greatly cared,
For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
Fill'd as with lightning -- for his spirit shared
The hour, as is the case with lively brains;
And where the hottest fire was seen and heard,
And the loud cannon peal'd his hoarsest strains,
He rush'd, while earth and air were sadly shaken
By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

XXXIV

And as he rush'd along, it came to pass he
Fell in with what was late the second column,
Under the orders of the General Lascy,
But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
Of heroism, and took his place with solemn
Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant faces
And levell'd weapons still against the glaxis.

XXXV

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
Who had "retreated," as the phrase is when
Men run away much rather than go through
Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
Knew when and how "to cut and come again,"
And never ran away, except when running
Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning.

XXXVI

And so, when all his corps were dead or dying,
Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose

More virgin valour never dreamt of flying
From ignorance of danger, which induces
Its votaries, like innocence relying
On its own strength, with careless nerves and thews, --
Johnson retired a little, just to rally
Those who catch cold in "shadows of Death's valley."

XXXVII

And there, a little shelter'd from the shot,
Which rain'd from bastion, battery, parapet,
Rampart, wall, casement, house, -- for there was not
In this extensive city, sore beset
By Christian soldiery, a single spot
Which did not combat like the devil, as yet,
He found a number of Chasseurs, all scatter'd
By the resistance of the chase they batter'd.

XXXVIII

And these he call'd on; and, what's strange, they came
Unto his call, unlike "the spirits from
The vasty deep," to whom you may exclaim,
Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave their home.
Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
And that odd impulse, which in wars or creeds
Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

XXXIX

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
And though his name, than Ajax or Achilles,
Sounds less harmonious, underneath the sun soon
We shall not see his likeness: he could kill his
Man quite as quietly as blows the monsoon
Her steady breath (which some months the same *still* is):
Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle,
And could be very busy without bustle;

XL

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
Upon reflection, knowing that behind
He would find others who would fain be rid so
Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their lids so
Oft are soon closed, all heroes are not blind,
But when they light upon immediate death,
Retire a little, merely to take breath.

XLI

But Johnson only ran off, to return
With many other warriors, as we said,
Unto that rather somewhat misty bourn,
Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
To Jack howe'er this gave but slight concern:
His soul (like galvanism upon the dead)
Acted upon the living as on wire,
And led them back into the heaviest fire.

XLII

Egad! they found the second time what they
The first time thought quite terrible enough
To fly from, malgré all which people say
Of glory, and all that immortal stuff
Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
That daily shilling which makes warriors tough) --
They found on their return the self-same welcome,
Which made some *think*, and others *know*, a *hell* come.

XLIII

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
Grass before scythes, or corn below the sickle,
Proving that trite old truth, that life's as frail
As any other boon for which men stickle.

The Turkish batteries thrash'd them like a flail,
Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle
Putting the very bravest, who were knock'd
Upon the head, before their guns were cock'd.

XLIV

The Turks, behind the traverses and flanks
Of the next bastion, fired away like devils,
And swept, as gales sweep foam away, whole ranks:
However, Heaven knows how, the Fate who levels
Towns, nations, worlds, in her revolving pranks,
So order'd it, amidst these sulphury revels,
That Johnson and some few who had not scamper'd,
Reach'd the interior "talus" of the rampart.

XLV

First one or two, then five, six, and a dozen,
Came mounting quickly up, for it was now
All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
Flame was shower'd forth above, as well 's below,
So that you scarce could say who best had chosen,
The gentlemen that were the first to show
Their martial faces on the parapet,
Or those who thought it brave to wait as yet.

XLVI

But those who scaled, found out that their advance
Was favour'd by an accident or blunder:
The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's ignorance
Had palisado'd in a way you'd wonder
To see in forts of Netherlands or France
(Though these to our Gibraltar must knock under) --
Right in the middle of the parapet
Just named, these palisades were primly set:

XLVII

So that on either side some nine or ten
Paces were left, whereon you could contrive
To march; a great convenience to our men,
At least to all those who were left alive,
Who thus could form a line and fight again;
And that which farther aided them to strive
Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
Which scarcely rose much higher than grass blades.

XLVIII

Among the first, -- I will not say *the first*,
For such precedence upon such occasions
Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
Out between friends as well as allied nations:
The Briton must be bold who really durst
Put to such trial John Bull's partial patience,
As say that Wellington at Waterloo
Was beaten -- though the Prussians say so too; --

XLIX

And that if Blucher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
And God knows who besides in "au" and "ow,"
Had not come up in time to cast an awe
Into the hearts of those who fought till now
As tigers combat with an empty craw,
The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show
His orders, also to receive his pensions,
Which are the heaviest that our history mentions.

L

But never mind; -- "God save the King!" and *Kings!*
For if *he* don't, I doubt if *men* will longer --
I think I hear a little bird, who sings
The people by and by will be the stronger:
The veriest jade will wince whose harness wrings
So much into the raw as quite to wrong her

Beyond the rules of posting, -- and the mob
At last fall sick of imitating Job.

LI

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst a giant;
At last it takes to weapons such as men
Snatch when despair makes human hearts less pliant.
Then comes "the tug of war;" -- 't will come again,
I rather doubt; and I would fain say "fie on 't,"
If I had not perceived that revolution
Alone can save the earth from hell's pollution.

LII

But to continue: -- I say not *the* first,
But of the first, our little friend Don Juan
Walk'd o'er the walls of Ismail, as if nursed
Amidst such scenes -- though this was quite a new one
To him, and I should hope to *most*. The thirst
Of glory, which so pierces through and through one,
Pervaded him -- although a generous creature,
As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

LIII

And here he was -- who upon woman's breast,
Even from a child, felt like a child; howe'er
The man in all the rest might be confest,
To him it was Elysium to be there;
And he could even withstand that awkward test
Which Rousseau points out to the dubious fair,
"Observe your lover when he *leaves* your arms;"
But Juan never *left* them, while they had charms,

LIV

Unless compell'd by fate, or wave, or wind,

Or near relations, who are much the same.
But *here* he was! -- where each tie that can bind
Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
And *he* whose very body was all mind,
Flung here by fate or circumstance, which tame
The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
Dash'd on like a spurr'd blood-horse in a race.

LV

So was his blood stirr'd while he found resistance,
As is the hunter's at the five-bar gate,
Or double post and rail, where the existence
Of Britain's youth depends upon their weight,
The lightest being the safest: at a distance
He hated cruelty, as all men hate
Blood, until heated -- and even then his own
At times would curdle o'er some heavy groan.

LVI

The General Lascy, who had been hard press'd,
Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
As were some hundred youngsters all abreast,
Who came as if just dropp'd down from the moon,
To Juan, who was nearest him, address'd
His thanks, and hopes to take the city soon,
Not reckoning him to be a "base Bezonian"
(As Pistol calls it), but a young Livonian.

LVII

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
In answer made an inclination to
The general who held him in command;
For seeing one with ribands, black and blue,
Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in hand,
Addressing him in tones which seem'd to thank,

He recognised an officer of rank.

LVIII

Short speeches pass between two men who speak
No common language; and besides, in time
Of war and taking towns, when many a shriek
Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a crime
Is perpetrated ere a word can break
Upon the ear, and sounds of horror chime
In like church-bells, with sigh, howl, groan, yell, prayer,
There cannot be much conversation there.

LIX

And therefore all we have related in
Two long octaves, pass'd in a little minute;
But in the same small minute, every sin
Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
The very cannon, deafen'd by the din,
Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a linnet,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
Of human nature's agonising voice!

LX

The town was enter'd. Oh eternity! --
"God made the country and man made the town,"
So Cowper says -- and I begin to be
Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,
All walls men know, and many never known;
And pondering on the present and the past,
To deem the woods shall be our home at last

LXI

Of all men, saving Sylla the man-slayer,
Who passes for in life and death most lucky,

Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The General Boon, back-woodsman of Kentucky,
Was happiest amongst mortals anywhere;
For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

LXII

Crime came not near him -- she is not the child
Of solitude; Health shrank not from him -- for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
Where if men seek her not, and death be more
Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled
By habit to what their own hearts abhor --
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

LXIII

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng,
Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
Without which glory's but a tavern song --
Simple, serene, the *antipodes* of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of Nature, or the man of Ross run wild.

LXIV

'T is true he shrank from men even of his nation,
When they built up unto his darling trees, --
He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;
The inconvenience of civilisation
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please;
But where he met the individual man,
He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.

LXV

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young, unwaken'd world was ever new,
Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
A frown on Nature's or on human face;
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain: the green woods were their portions;
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

LXVII

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;
Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
The lust which stings, the splendour which encumbers,
With the free foresters divide no spoil;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII

So much for Nature: -- by way of variety,
Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
And the sweet consequence of large society,
War, pestilence, the despot's desolation,

The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
The millions slain by soldiers for their ration,
The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at threescore,
With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX

The town was enter'd: first one column made
Its sanguinary way good -- then another;
The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
Clash'd 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and mother
With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to upbraid:
Still closer sulphury clouds began to smother
The breath of morn and man, where foot by foot
The madden'd Turks their city still dispute.

LXX

Koutousow, he who afterward beat back
(With some assistance from the frost and snow)
Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
It happen'd was himself beat back just now;
He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
Though life, and death, and victory were at stake;
But here it seem'd his jokes had ceased to take:

LXXI

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
Follow'd in haste by various grenadiers,
Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
He climb'd to where the parapet appears;
But there his project reach'd its utmost pitch
('Mongst other deaths the General Ribaupierre's
Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
Threw them all down into the ditch again.

LXXII

And had it not been for some stray troops landing
They knew not where, being carried by the stream
To some spot, where they lost their understanding,
And wander'd up and down as in a dream,
Until they reach'd, as daybreak was expanding,
That which a portal to their eyes did seem, --
The great and gay Koutousow might have lain
Where three parts of his column yet remain.

LXXIII

And scrambling round the rampart, these same troops,
After the taking of the "Cavalier,"
Just as Koutousow's most "forlorn" of "hopes"
Took like chameleons some slight tinge of fear,
Open'd the gate call'd "Kilia," to the groups
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thaw'd into a marsh of human blood.

LXXIV

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cossacques
(I don't much pique myself upon orthography,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics, and geography) --
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order, -- were all cut to pieces.

LXXV

Their column, though the Turkish batteries thunder'd
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reach'd the rampart,
And naturally thought they could have plunder'd
The city, without being farther hamper'd;
But as it happens to brave men, they blunder'd --
The Turks at first pretended to have scamper'd,

Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,
From whence they sallied on those Christian scorners.

LXXVI

Then being taken by the tail -- a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers -- these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short lease --
But perish'd without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heap'd carcasses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
March'd with the brave battalion of Polouzki: --

LXXVII

This valiant man kill'd all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans, who would not yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.
The walls were won, but 't was an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause to mourn:
'T was blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor t' other flinch.

LXXVIII

Another column also suffer'd much: --
And here we may remark with the historian,
You should but give few cartridges to such
Troops as are meant to march with greatest glory on:
When matters must be carried by the touch
Of the bright bayonet, and they all should hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

LXXIX

A junction of the General Meknop's men

(Without the General, who had fallen some time
Before, being badly seconded just then)
Was made at length with those who dared to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again;
And though the Turk's resistance was sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.

LXXX

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers,
Among the foremost, offer'd him good quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,
A savage sort of military martyr.
An English naval officer, who wish'd
To make him prisoner, was also dish'd:

LXXXI

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead;
On which the rest, without more intermission,
Began to lay about with steel and lead --
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions: not a single head
Was spared; -- three thousand Moslems perish'd here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

LXXXII

The city's taken -- only part by part --
And death is drunk with gore: there's not a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate heart
For those for whom it soon shall cease to beat.
Here War forgot his own destructive art
In more destroying Nature; and the heat
Of carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden slime,

Engender'd monstrous shapes of every crime.

LXXXIII

A Russian officer, in martial tread
Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
Seized fast, as if 't were by the serpent's head
Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed to feel:
In vain he kick'd, and swore, and writhed, and bled,
And howl'd for help as wolves do for a meal --
The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
As do the subtle snakes described of old.

LXXXIV

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
Of a foe o'er him, snatch'd at it, and bit
The very tendon which is most acute
(That which some ancient Muse or modern wit
Named after thee, Achilles), and quite through 't
He made the teeth meet, nor relinquish'd it
Even with his life -- for (but they lie) 't is said
To the live leg still clung the sever'd head.

LXXXV

However this may be, 't is pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and maim'd:
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then let go.

LXXXVI

But then the fact's a fact -- and 't is the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction

Whene'er he can; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the restriction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes called poetic diction,
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Satan angles with for souls, like flies.

LXXXVII

The city's taken, but not render'd! -- No!
There's not a Moslem that hath yielded sword:
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's flow
Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or foe:
In vain the yell of victory is roar'd
By the advancing Muscovite -- the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavish'd everywhere,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
When the stripp'd forest bows to the bleak air,
And groans; and thus the peopled city grieves,
Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left bare;
But still it falls in vast and awful splinters,
As oaks blown down with all their thousand winters.

LXXXIX

It is an awful topic -- but 't is not
My cue for any time to be terrific:
For checker'd as is seen our human lot
With good, and bad, and worse, alike prolific
Of melancholy merriment, to quote
Too much of one sort would be soporific; --
Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC

And one good action in the midst of crimes
Is “quite refreshing,” in the affected phrase
Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
And may serve therefore to bedew these rhymes,
A little scorch’d at present with the blaze
Of conquest and its consequences, which
Make epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
Thousands of slaughter’d men, a yet warm group
Of murder’d women, who had found their way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
And shudder; -- while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lull’d in bloody rest.

XCII

Two villainous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons: match’d with *them*,
The rudest brute that roams Siberia’s wild
Has feelings pure and polish’d as a gem, --
The bear is civilised, the wolf is mild;
And whom for this at last must we condemn?
Their natures? or their sovereigns, who employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy?

XCIII

Their sabres glitter’d o’er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead:
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight,

I shall not say exactly what he *said*,
Because it might not solace “ears polite;”
But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

XCIV

One’s hip he slash’d, and split the other’s shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
If there might be surgeons who could solder
The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain; while waxing colder
As he turn’d o’er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

XCV

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race;
For the same blow which laid her mother here
Had scarr’d her brow, and left its crimson trace,
As the last link with all she had held dear;
But else unhurt, she open’d her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise.

XCVI

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fix’d
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan’s look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mix’d
With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
Unto his protégée; while hers, transfix’d
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase; --

XCVII

Up came John Johnson (I will not say “*Jack*,”
For that were vulgar, cold, and commonplace
On great occasions, such as an attack
On cities, as hath been the present case):
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
Exclaiming; -- “Juan! Juan! On, boy! brace
Your arm, and I’ll bet Moscow to a dollar
That you and I will win St. George’s collar.

XCVIII

“The Seraskier is knock’d upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly ‘midst the din
Of our artillery and his own: ‘t is said
Our kill’d, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX

“Then up with me!” -- But Juan answer’d, “Look
Upon this child -- I saved her -- must not leave
Her life to chance; but point me out some nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,
And I am with you.” -- Whereon Johnson took
A glance around -- and shrugg’d -- and twitch’d his sleeve
And black silk neckcloth -- and replied, “You’re right;
Poor thing! what’s to be done? I’m puzzled quite.”

C

Said Juan: “Whatsoever is to be
Done, I’ll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we.”
Quoth Johnson: “*Neither* will I quite ensure;
But at the least *you* may die gloriously.”
Juan replied: “At least I will endure

Whate'er is to be borne -- but not resign
This child, who is parentless, and therefore mine."

CI

Johnson said: "Juan, we've no time to lose;
The child's a pretty child -- a very pretty --
I never saw such eyes -- but hark! now choose
Between your fame and feelings, pride and pity; --
Hark! how the roar increases! -- no excuse
Will serve when there is plunder in a city; --
I should be loth to march without you, but,
By God! we'll be too late for the first cut."

CII

But Juan was immovable; until
Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
Pick'd out amongst his followers with some skill
Such as he thought the least given up to prey;
And swearing if the infant came to ill
That they should all be shot on the next day;
But if she were deliver'd safe and sound,
They should at least have fifty rubles round,

CIII

And all allowances besides of plunder
In fair proportion with their comrades; -- then
Juan consented to march on through thunder,
Which thinn'd at every step their ranks of men:
And yet the rest rush'd eagerly -- no wonder,
For they were heated by the hope of gain,
A thing which happens everywhere each day --
No hero trusteth wholly to half pay.

CIV

And such is victory, and such is man!

At least nine tenths of what we call so; -- God
May have another name for half we scan
As human beings, or his ways are odd.
But to our subject: a brave Tartar khan --
Or “sultan,” as the author (to whose nod
In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
This chieftain -- somehow would not yield at all:

CV

But flank’d by five brave sons (such is polygamy,
That she spawns warriors by the score, where none
Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy),
He never would believe the city won
While courage clung but to a single twig. -- Am I
Describing Priam’s, Peleus’, or Jove’s son?
Neither -- but a good, plain, old, temperate man,
Who fought with his five children in the van.

CVI

To *take* him was the point. The truly brave,
When they behold the brave oppress’d with odds,
Are touch’d with a desire to shield and save; --
A mixture of wild beasts and demigods
Are they -- now furious as the sweeping wave,
Now moved with pity: even as sometimes nods
The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

CVII

But he would *not* be *taken*, and replied
To all the propositions of surrender
By mowing Christians down on every side,
As obstinate as Swedish Charles at Bender.
His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
Whereon the Russian pathos grew less tender,
As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,

Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
 Expended all their Eastern phraseology
In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
 So much less fight as might form an apology
For *them* in saving such a desperate foe --
 He hew'd away, like doctors of theology
When they dispute with sceptics; and with curses
Struck at his friends, as babies beat their nurses.

CIX

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly, both
 Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
 Upon his angry sultanship, pell-mell,
And all around were grown exceeding wroth
 At such a pertinacious infidel,
And pour'd upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain

CX

That drinks and still is dry. At last they perish'd --
 His second son was levell'd by a shot;
His third was sabred; and the fourth, most cherish'd
 Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
The fifth, who, by a Christian mother nourish'd,
 Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
Because deform'd, yet died all game and bottom,
To save a sire who blush'd that he begot him.

CXI

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
 As great a scorner of the Nazarene

As ever Mahomet pick'd out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
Who make the beds of those who won't take quarter
On earth, in Paradise; and when once seen,
Those houris, like all other pretty creatures,
Do just whate'er they please, by dint of features.

CXII

And what they pleased to do with the young khan
In heaven I know not, nor pretend to guess;
But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
To tough old heroes, and can do no less;
And that's the cause no doubt why, if we scan
A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
You'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs bloody.

CXIII

Your houris also have a natural pleasure
In lopping off your lately married men,
Before the bridal hours have danced their measure
And the sad, second moon grows dim again,
Or dull repentance hath had dreary leisure
To wish him back a bachelor now and then.
And thus your houri (it may be) disputes
Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

CXIV

Thus the young khan, with houris in his sight,
Thought not upon the charms of four young brides,
But bravely rush'd on his first heavenly night.
In short, howe'er *our* better faith derides,
These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems fight,
As though there were one heaven and none besides, --
Whereas, if all be true we hear of heaven
And hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV

So fully flash'd the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart,
He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
And bright eternity without disguise
On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart: --
With prophets, houris, angels, saints, descried
In one voluptuous blaze, -- and then he died,

CXVI

But with a heavenly rapture on his face.
The good old khan, who long had ceased to see
Houris, or aught except his florid race
Who grew like cedars round him gloriously --
When he beheld his latest hero grace
The earth, which he became like a fell'd tree,
Paused for a moment, from the fight, and cast
A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopp'd as if once more willing to concede
Quarter, in case he bade them not "aroynt!"
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
As he look'd down upon his children gone,
And felt -- though done with life -- he was alone

CXVIII

But 't was a transient tremor; -- with a spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung,
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he clung

Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound pour'd forth his soul at once.

CXIX

'T is strange enough -- the rough, tough soldiers, who
Spared neither sex nor age in their career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced through,
And lay before them with his children near,
Touch'd by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment: though no tear
Flow'd from their bloodshot eyes, all red with strife,
They honour'd such determined scorn of life.

CXX

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief pacha calmly held his post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host;
At length he condescended to inquire
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey
To answer Ribas' summons to give way.

CXXI

In the mean time, cross-legg'd, with great sang-froid,
Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
Tobacco on a little carpet; -- Troy
Saw nothing like the scene around: -- yet looking
With martial stoicism, nought seem'd to annoy
His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
His beard, he puff'd his pipe's ambrosial gales,
As if he had three lives, as well as tails.

CXXII

The town was taken -- whether he might yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er the field,
But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

CXXIII

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
All that the devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which hell is peopled, or as sad
As hell -- mere mortals who their power abuse --
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

CXXIV

If here and there some transient trait of pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and saved perhaps some pretty
Child, or an agéd, helpless man or two --
What's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties grew?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

CXXV

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in aftertimes.
Meantime the Taxes, Castlereagh, and Debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.

Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

CXXVI

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its king,
A subject of sublimest exultation --
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne --
Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone.

CXXVII

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail -- hapless town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown:
Of forty thousand who had mann'd the wall,
Some hundreds breathed -- the rest were silent all!

CXXVIII

In one thing ne'ertheless 't is fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase --
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste; -- they ravish'd very little.

CXXIX

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less

Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line; -- but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX

Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste --
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes, -- besides such things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

CXXXI

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of "single blessedness," and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

CXXXII

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
"Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!"
But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid

In darkness -- I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII

Suwarrow now was conqueror -- a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;
And here exactly follows what he said: --
"Glory to God and to the Empress!" (*Powers
Eternal! such names mingled!*) "Ismail's ours."

CXXXIV

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since "*Mene, Mene, Tekel,*" and "*Upharsin,*"
Which hands or pens have ever traced of swords.
Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no farce on
The fate of nations; -- but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.

CXXXV

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it --
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones; --
But ye -- our children's children! think how we
Show'd *what things were* before the world was free!

CXXXVI

That hour is not for us, but 't is for you:
And as, in the great joy of your millennium,

You hardly will believe such things were true
As now occur, I thought that I would pen you 'em;
But may their very memory perish too! --
Yet if perchance remember'd, still disdain you 'em
More than you scorn the savages of yore,
Who painted their bare limbs, but not with gore.

CXXXVII

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
"And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of futurity --
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII

Reader! I have kept my word, -- at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war --
All very accurate, you must allow,
And epic, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phoebus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle.
What farther hath befallen or may befall
The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
I by and by may tell you, if at all:
But now I choose to break off in the middle,
Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall,
While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
For which all Petersburg is on the watch.

CXL

This special honour was conferr'd, because
He had behaved with courage and humanity --
Which *last* men like, when they have time to pause
From their ferocities produced by vanity.
His little captive gain'd him some applause
For saving her amidst the wild insanity
Of carnage, -- and I think he was more glad in her
Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

CXLI

The Moslem orphan went with her protector,
For she was homeless, houseless, helpless; all
Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
Had perish'd in the field or by the wall:
Her very place of birth was but a spectre
Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's cal
To prayer was heard no more! -- and Juan wept,
And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE NINTH

I

Oh, Wellington! (or “Villainton” -- for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn’d it down to this facetious phrase --
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same),
You have obtain’d great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder “Nay!”

II

I don’t think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinet’s affair -- in fact, ‘t was shabby,
And like some other things won’t do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster’s old abbey.
Upon the rest ‘t is not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young hero*.

III

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair’d Legitimacy’s crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

IV

You are “the best of cut-throats:” -- do not start;

The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.
If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

V

I am no flatterer -- you've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too -- 't is no great wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations" -- not yet saved,
And "Europe's Liberator" -- still enslaved.

VI

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people feels: --
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,
But pray give back a little to the nation.

VII

I don't mean to reflect -- a man so great as
You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:
The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,
With modern history has but small connection:
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
You need not take them under your direction;
And half a million for your Sabine farm

Is rather dear! -- I'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII

Great men have always scorn'd great recompenses:

Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:

George Washington had thanks and nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is)

To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX

Never had mortal man such opportunity,

Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:
And *now* -- what *is* your fame? Shall the Muse tune it ye?

Now -- that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

X

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,

To you the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,

But which 't is time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
Must be recited, and -- without a bribe.

You *did great* things; but not being *great* in mind,
Have left *undone* the *greatest* -- and mankind.

XI

Death laughs -- Go ponder o'er the skeleton

With which men image out the unknown thing

That hides the past world, like to a set sun
Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring --
Death laughs at all you weep for: -- look upon
This hourly dread of all! whose *threaten'd sting*
Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:
Mark how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

XII

Mark how it laughs and scorns at all you are!
And yet *was* what you are: from *ear* to *ear*
It *laughs not* -- there is now no fleshy bar
So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to *hear*,
But still he *smiles*; and whether near or far,
He strips from man that mantle (far more dear
Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,
White, black, or copper -- the dead bones will grin.

XIII

And thus Death laughs, -- it is sad merriment,
But still it is so; and with such example
Why should not Life be equally content
With his superior, in a smile to trample
Upon the nothings which are daily spent
Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample
Than the eternal deluge, which devours
Suns as rays -- worlds like atoms -- years like hours?

XIV

"To be, or not to be? *that* is the question,"
Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.
I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,
Nor ever had for abstract fame much passion;
But would much rather have a sound digestion
Than Buonaparte's cancer: could I dash on
Through fifty victories to shame or fame --
Without a stomach what were a good name?

XV

“*O dura ilia messorum!*” -- “Oh
Ye rigid guts of reapers!” I translate
For the great benefit of those who know
What indigestion is -- that inward fate
Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.
A peasant’s sweat is worth his lord’s estate:
Let *this* one toil for bread -- *that* rack for rent,
He who sleeps best may be the most content.

XVI

“To be, or not to be?” -- Ere I decide,
I should be glad to know that which *is being?*
‘T is true we speculate both far and wide,
And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-seeing*:
For my part, I’ll enlist on neither side,
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.
For me, I sometimes think that life is death,
Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

XVII

“*Que scais-je?*” was the motto of Montaigne,
As also of the first academicians:
That all is dubious which man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.
There’s no such thing as certainty, that’s plain
As any of Mortality’s conditions;
So little do we know what we’re about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

XVIII

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?
Your wise men don’t know much of navigation;

And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

XIX

“But heaven,” as Cassio says, “is above all --
No more of this, then, -- let us pray!” We have
Souls to save, since Eve’s slip and Adam’s fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. “The sparrow’s fall
Is special providence,” though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perch’d
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search’d.

XX

Oh, ye immortal gods! what is theogony?
Oh, thou too, mortal man! what is philanthropy?
Oh, world! which was and is, what is cosmogony?
Some people have accused me of misanthropy;
And yet I know no more than the mahogany
That forms this desk, of what they mean; *Lykanthropy*
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

XXI

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne’er
Done anything exceedingly unkind, --
And (though I could not now and then forbear
Following the bent of body or of mind)
Have always had a tendency to spare, --
Why do they call me misanthrope? Because
They hate me, not I them. -- and here we’ll pause.

XXII

‘T is time we should proceed with our good poem, --
For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now, -- but by and by the Truth will show ‘em
Herself in her sublimest attitude:
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her beauty and her banishment.

XXIII

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader, yours)
Was left upon his way to the chief city
Of the immortal Peter’s polish’d boors
Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty.
I know its mighty empire now allures
Much flattery -- even Voltaire’s, and that’s a pity.
For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

XXIV

And I will war, at least in words (and -- should
My chance so happen -- deeds), with all who war
With Thought; -- and of Thought’s foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every depotism in every nation.

XXV

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without *me*, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,

I do not know; -- I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings -- from you as me.

XXVI

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties: never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

XXVII

That's an appropriate simile, *that jackal*; --
I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.
However, the poor jackals are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

XXVIII

Raise but an arm! 't will brush their web away,
And without that, their poison and their claws
Are useless. Mind, good people! what I say
(Or rather peoples) -- *go on* without pause!
The web of these tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,

Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of water;
And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime -- who look'd on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

XXX

And there in a *kibitka* he roll'd on
(A curséd sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone),
Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
And orders, and on all that he had done --
And wishing that post-horses had the wings
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

XXXI

At every jolt -- and they were many -- still
He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill
Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On her canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
To be the first of what we used to call
"Gentlemen farmer" -- a race worn out quite,
Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And "gentlemen" are in a piteous plight,
And "farmers" can't raise Ceres from her fall:
She fell with Buonaparte -- What strange thoughts

Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

XXXIII

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child
Whom he had saved from slaughter -- what a trophy!
Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive sophy,
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!
Because he could no more digest his dinner; --

XXXIV

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
That *one* life saved, especially if young
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
From the manure of human clay, though deck'd
With all the praises ever said or sung:
Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within
Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!
Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers, illumine us!
Whether you're paid by government in bribes,
To prove the public debt is not consuming us --
Or, roughly treading on the "courtier's kibes"
With clownish heel, your popular circulation
Feeds you by printing half the realm's starvation; --

XXXVI

Oh, ye great authors! -- "*Apropos des bottes*," --
I have forgotten what I meant to say,

As sometimes have been greater sages' lots; --

'T was something calculated to allay
All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:

Certes it would have been but thrown away,
And that's one comfort for my lost advice,
Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII

But let it go: -- it will one day be found

With other relics of "a former world,"
When this world shall be *former*, underground,

Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,
Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,

Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd
First out of, and then back again to chaos,
The superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII

So Cuvier says; -- and then shall come again

Unto the new creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain

Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt:
Like to the notions we now entertain

Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, not to say *miles*,
And mammoths, and your wingéd crocodiles.

XXXIX

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!

How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!

(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,

And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material --
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

XL

How will -- to these young people, just thrust out
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,
Till all the arts at length are brought about,
Especially of war and taxing, -- *how*,
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,
Look like the monsters of a new museum?

XLI

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
"The time is out of joint," -- and so am I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical: men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

XLII

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering: -- it is time we should narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting --
Now we'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.
I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

XLIII

Suppose him in a handsome uniform, --
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,

And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,
Of yellow casimere we may presume,
White stocking drawn uncurdled as new milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

XLIV

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor --
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a gaoler), --
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery: --

XLV

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at
His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;
But still so like, that Psyche were more clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd, and
The empress smiled: the reigning favourite frown'd --
I quite forget which of them was in hand
Just then; as they are rather numerous found,
Who took by turns that difficult command
Since first her majesty was singly crown'd:
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless
There was a something in his turn of limb,
And still more in his eye, which seem'd to express,
That though he look'd one of the seraphim,
There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's dress.
Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.

XLVIII

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*
Or *on*, might dread her majesty had not room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that "high official situation."

XLIX

O, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no* meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

L

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey --
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day --
That monstrous hieroglyphic -- that long spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!

And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing some women set a value on,
Which hovers oft about some married beauties,
Called "Cavalier servente?" -- a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true 't is)
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to disclose them,
Said -- "Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them*."

LII

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.
'T was a high place, the highest in the nation
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

LIII

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retain'd his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like, the fond
Parisian aspect which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons: -- I have conn'd
The history of divorces, which, though chequer'd,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,

Who was gone to his place), and pass'd for much
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorr'd)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment; and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoi, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV

Oh thou "*teterrima causa*" of all "*belli*" --
Thou gate of life and death -- thou nondescript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance, -- well I
May pause in pondering how all souls are dipt
In thy perennial fountain: -- how man fell I
Know not, since knowledge saw her branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises
Since, thou hast settled beyond all surmises.

LVI

Some call thee "the worst cause of war," but I
Maintain thou art the best: for after all
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small:
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry land!

LVII

Catherine, who was the grand Epitome
Of that great cause of war, or peace, or what
You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or that) --
Catherine, I say. was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat
Victory; and pausing as she saw him kneel

With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor
Forgetting quite the woman (which composed
At least three parts of this great whole), she tore
The letter open with an air which posed
The court, that watch'd each look her visage wore,
Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,
Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.

LIX

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian sunrise on the main.
These quench'd a moment her ambition's thirst --
So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:
In vain! -- As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

LX

Her next amusement was more fanciful;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.
Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns think it best
To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

LXI

The two first feelings ran their course complete,
And lighted first her eye, and then her mouth:

The whole court look'd immediately most sweet,
Like flowers well water'd after a long drouth.
But when on the lieutenant at her feet
Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth
Almost as much as on a new despatch,
Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

LXII

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
When *wroth* -- while *pleased*, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

LXIII

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce look'd lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your "fortune" was in a fair way "to swell
A man" (as Giles says); for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked man as an individual.

LXIV

What a strange thing is man? and what a stranger
Is woman! What a whirlwind is her head,
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed
Or widow, maid or mother, she can change her
Mind like the wind: whatever she has said
Or done, is light to what she'll say or do; --
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

LXV

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,
To thee both *oh!* and *ah!* belong of right
In love and war) how odd are the connections
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight!
Just now yours were cut out in different sections:
First Ismail's capture caught your fancy quite;
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious batch;
And *thirdly* he who brought you the despatch!

LXVI

Shakspeare talks of "the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;"
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her still.
'T is very true the hill seem'd rather high,
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and by God's blessing
With youth and health all kisses are "heaven-kissing."

LXVII

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd up --
And so they fell in love; -- she with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or "black drop,"
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

LXVIII

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love -- which, when some sort of thing above
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,

Or duchess, princess, empress, “deigns to prove”
 (‘T is Pope’s phrase) a great longing, though a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

LXIX

Besides, he was of that delighted age
 Which makes all female ages equal -- when
We don’t much care with whom we may engage,
 As bold as Daniel in the lion’s den,
So that we can our native sun assuage
 In the next ocean, which may flow just then,
To make a *twilight* in, just as Sol’s heat is
Quench’d in the lap of the salt sea, or Thetis.

LXX

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine),
 Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
 Because each lover look’d a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
 A royal husband in all save the *ring* --
Which, being the damn’dest part of matrimony,
Seem’d taking out the sting to leave the honey.

LXXI

And when you add to this, her womanhood
 In its meridian, her blue eyes or gray
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
 Or better, as the best examples say:
Napoleon’s, Mary’s (queen of Scotland), should
 Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or blue) --

LXXII

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension),
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other extras, which we need not mention, --
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

LXXIII

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 't is a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with beauty's frail inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to depend:
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make love the main spring of the universe.

LXXIV

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs (I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst reason -- Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense) -- beside all these pretences
To love, there are those things which words name senses;

LXXV

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,
For such all women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout

Of our sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

LXXVI

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,
To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christen'd love canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is when chaste matrons to their other ties
Add what may be call'd *marriage in disguise*.

LXXVII

Well, we won't analyse -- our story must
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust; --
I cannot stop to alter words once written,
And the two are so mix'd with human dust,
That he who names one, both perchance may hit on:
But in such matters Russia's mighty empress
Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

LXXVIII

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,
And all lips were applied unto all ears!
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much crisper
As they beheld; the younger cast some leers
On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but tears
Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX

All the ambassadors of all the powers

Enquired, Who was this very new young man,
Who promised to be great in some few hours?
Which is full soon -- though life is but a span.
Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.

LXXX

Catherine was generous, -- all such ladies are:
Love, that great opener of the heart and all
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small, --
Love (though she had a curséd taste for war,
And was not the best wife, unless we call
Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 't is better
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter) --

LXXXI

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune,
Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,
If history, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth; and though grief her old age might shorten,
Because she put a favourite to death,
Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

LXXXII

But when the levée rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'
Ambassadors began as 't were to hustle
Round the young man with their congratulations.
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,

Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,
As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd brow
Nature had written "gentleman." He said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

LXXXIV

An order from her majesty consign'd
Our young lieutenant to the genial care
Of those in office: all the world look'd kind
(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,
Which youth would not act ill to keep in mind),
As also did Miss Protasoff then there,
Named from her mystic office "l'Epreuveuse,"
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV

With *her* then, as in humble duty bound,
Juan retired, -- and so will I, until
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.
We have just lit on a "heaven-kissing hill,"
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
To take a quiet ride in some green Lane.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE TENTH

I

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation --
'T is said (for I'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation) --
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round
In a most natural whirl, called "gravitation;"
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall or with an apple.

II

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

III

And wherefore this exordium? -- Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

IV

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for

The stars, I own my telescope is dim:
But at least I have shunn'd the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But still sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many a boat.

V

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
Of favouritism, but not yet in the *blush*;
And far be it from my Muses to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings.

VI

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.
"Oh!" saith the Psalmist, "that I had a dove's
Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!"
And who that recollects young years and loves, --
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,
And palsied fancy, which no longer roves
Beyond its dimm'd eye's sphere, -- but would much rather
Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

VII

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows') shrink,
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!
Such difference doth a few months make. You'd think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;
No more it doth, its ploughs but change their boys,

Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

VIII

But coughs will come when sighs depart -- and now
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun
Of life reach'd ten o'clock: and while a glow,
Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,
O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die, -- how happy they!

IX

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
We left him in the focus of such glory
As may be won by favour of the moon
Or ladies' fancies -- rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X

Besides, he had some qualities which fix
Middle-aged ladies even more than young:
The former know what's what; while new-fledged chicks
Know little more of love than what is sung
In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play tricks)
In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.
Some reckon women by their suns or years,
I rather think the moon should date the dears.

XI

And why? because she's changeable and chaste.
I know no other reason, whatsoe'er

Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,
 May choose to tax me with; which is not fair,
Nor flattering to “their temper or their taste,”
 As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:
However, I forgive him, and I trust
He will forgive himself; -- if not, I must.

XII

Old enemies who have become new friends
 Should so continue -- ‘t is a point of honour;
And I know nothing which could make amends
 For a return to hatred: I would shun her
Like garlic, howsoever she extends
 Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes --
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

XIII

This were the worst desertion: -- renegadoes,
 Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
Would scarcely join again the “reformadoes,”
 Whom he forsook to fill the laureate’s sty:
And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,
 Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

XIV

The lawyer and the critic but behold
 The baser sides of literature and life,
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
 By those who scour those double vales of strife.
While common men grow ignorantly old,
 The lawyer’s brief is like the surgeon’s knife,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.

XV

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty;
The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits; -- not so *you*, I own;
As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

XVI

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
Dear Jefferson, once my most redoubted foe
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over: Here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face -- but you have acted on the whole
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"
'T is not address'd to you -- the more's the pity
For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.
But somehow, -- it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head, --

XVIII

As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams,
The Dee -- the Don -- Balgounie's brig's *black wall*,
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams

Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring; -- floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not -- 't is a glimpse of "*Auld Lang Syne*."

XIX

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
Which must be own'd was sensitive and surly,
Yet 't is in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early:
I "*scotch'd* not kill'd" the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of "mountain and of flood."

XX

Don Juan, who was real, or ideal, --
For both are much the same, since what men think
Exists when the once thinkers are less real
Than what they thought, for mind can never sink,
And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;
And yet 't is very puzzling on the brink
Of what is call'd eternity, to stare,
And know no more of what is *here*, than *there*; --

XXI

Don Juan grew a very polish'd Russian --
How we won't mention, *why* we need not say:
Few youthful minds can stand the strong concussion
Of any slight temptation in their way;
But his just now were spread as is a cushion
Smooth'd for a monarch's seat of honour; gay
Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII

The favour of the empress was agreeable;
And though the duty wax'd a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be able
To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree, able
For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII

About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but -- as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity -- must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV

This we pass over. We will also pass
The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!
A young lieutenant's with a not old queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was
In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.
Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
And wrinkles, the d---d democrats! won't flatter.

XXV

And Death, the sovereign's sovereign, though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
With his Agrarian laws the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils

Who never had a foot of land till now, --
Death's a reformer -- all men must allow.

XXVI

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and furry --
Which (though I hate to say a thing that's bitter)
Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,
Through all the "purple and fine linen," fitter
For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot --
And neutralize her outward show of scarlet.

XXVII

And this same state we won't describe: we would
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante's "obscure wood,"
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give *one* tear; --

XXVIII

I won't describe, -- that is, if I can help
Description; and I won't reflect, -- that is,
If I can stave off thought, which -- as a whelp
Clings to its teat -- sticks to me through the abyss
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips: -- but, as I said,
I *won't* philosophise, and *will* be read.

XXIX

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted, --

A thing which happens rarely: this he owed
Much to his youth, and much to his reported
Valour; much also to the blood he show'd,
Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
Which set the beauty off in which he glow'd,
As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

XXX

He wrote to Spain: -- and all his near relations,
Perceiving he was in a handsome way
Of getting on himself, and finding stations
For cousins also, answer'd the same day.
Several prepared themselves for emigrations;
And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a piece.

XXXI

His mother, Donna Inez, finding, too,
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor, --
Replied, "that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker;
As the sole sign of man's being in his senses
Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII

"She also recommended him to God,
And no less to God's Son, as well as Mother,
Warn'd him against Greek worship, which looks odd
In Catholic eyes; but told him, too, to smother
Outward dislike, which don't look well abroad;
Inform'd him that he had a little brother
Born in a second wedlock; and above

All, praised the empress's *maternal* love.

XXXIII

"She could not too much give her approbation
Unto an empress, who preferr'd young men
Whose age, and what was better still, whose nation
And climate, stopp'd all scandal (now and then): --
At home it might have given her some vexation;
But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
Believe that virtue thaw'd before the river."

XXXIV

Oh for a *forty-parson power* to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trumps of cherubim!
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

XXXV

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the elected roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others' properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights' fees.

XXXVI

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus -- eight-and-forty manors

(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy's banners:
And though I can't help thinking 't was scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*, like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

XXXVII

The gentle Juan flourish'd, though at times
He felt like other plants called sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
Save such as Southey can afford to give.
Perhaps he long'd in bitter frosts for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty's vast arms he sighed for beauty:

XXXVIII

Perhaps -- but, *sans* perhaps, we need not seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the wither'd form:
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and however we may storm,
They must be paid: though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
The empress was alarm'd, and her physician
(The same who physick'd Peter) found the tick
Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augur'd of the dead, however quick
Itself, and show'd a feverish disposition;
At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
The sovereign shock'd, and all his medicines doubled.

XL

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
Some said he had been poison'd by Potemkin;
Others talk'd learnedly of certain tumours,
Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin;
Some said 't was a concoction of the humours,
Which with the blood too readily will claim kin;
Others again were ready to maintain,
“‘T was only the fatigue of last campaign.”

XLI

But here is one prescription out of many:
”*Sodæ-Sulphat. 3vj. 3fs. Mannæ optim.*
Aq. fervent. f. /3ifs. 3ij. tinct. Sennæ
Haustus” (And here the surgeon came and cupp'd him)
“*Rx Pulv. Com. gr. iij. Ipecacuanhæ*”
(With more beside if Juan had not stopp'd 'em).
“*Bolus Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,*
Et haustus ter in die capiendus.”

XLII

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health -- when ill, we call them to attend us,
Without the least propensity to jeer:
While that “*hiatus maxime deflendus*”
To be fill'd up by spade or mattock's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

XLIII

Juan demurr'd at this first notice to
Quit; and though death had threaten'd an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
And sent the doctors in a new direction.

But still his state was delicate: the hue
Of health but flicker'd with a faint reflection
Along his wasted cheek, and seem'd to gravel
The faculty -- who said that he must travel.

XLIV

The climate was too cold, they said, for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion:
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

XLV

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintain'd with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their "*uti possidetis*."

XLVI

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferr'd
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kiss'd hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which show'd what great discernment was the donor's.

XLVII

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
But to continue: though her years were waning
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brook'd no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII

But time, the comforter, will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber: --
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

XLIX

While this high post of honour's in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You'll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburg: the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair czarina's autocratic crest,
When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
Was given to her favourite, and now *bore his*.

L

A bull-dog, and a bullfinch, and an ermine,
All private favourites of Don Juan; -- for
(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore

For cats and birds more penchant ne'er display'd,
Although he was not old, nor even a maid; --

LI

The animals aforesaid occupied
Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side
Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres, in the wide
Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved, a pure and living pearl.

LII

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossile
Man, 'midst thy mouldy mammoths, "grand Cuvier!"
Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle
With this o'erwhelming world, where all must err:
But she was yet but ten years old, and therefore
Was tranquil, though she knew not why or wherefore.

LIII

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as
Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.
I cannot tell exactly what it was;
He was not yet quite old enough to prove
Parental feelings, and the other class,
Call'd brotherly affection, could not move
His bosom, -- for he never had a sister:
Ah! if he had, how much he would have miss'd her!

LIV

And still less was it sensual; for besides

That he was not an ancient debauchee
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt tides,
As acids rouse a dormant alkali),
Although (*'t will* happen as our planet guides)
His youth was not the chastest that might be,
There was the purest Platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings -- only he forgot 'em.

LV

Just now there was no peril of temptation;
He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
As patriots (now and then) may love a nation;
His pride, too, felt that she was not enslaved
Owing to him; -- as also her salvation
Through his means and the church's might be paved.
But one thing's odd, which here must be inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

LVI

'T was strange enough she should retain the impression
Through such a scene of change, and dread, and slaughter;
But though three bishops told her the transgression,
She show'd a great dislike to holy water:
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess: -- no matter,
Whate'er the cause, the church made little of it --
She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

LVII

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan; whom she seem'd to have selected
In place of what her home and friends once were.
He naturally loved what he protected:
And thus they form'd a rather curious pair,
A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her defender;

And yet this want of ties made theirs more tender.

LVIII

They journey'd on through Poland and through Warsaw,
Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron:
Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw
Which gave her dukes the graceless name of "Biron."
'T is the same landscape which the modern Mars saw,
Who march'd to Moscow, led by Fame, the siren!
To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

LIX

Let this not seem an anti-climax: -- "Oh!
My guard! my old guard exclaim'd!" exclaim'd that god of day.
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below
Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh!
Alas, that glory should be chill'd by snow!
But should we wish to warm us on our way
Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's flame.

LX

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Königsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postilions.

LXI

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
Until he reach'd the castellated Rhine: --

Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine;
A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and hover
Upon their airy confine, half-seas-over.

LXII

But Juan posted on through Mannheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
Of the good feudal times forever gone,
On which I have not time just now to lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.

LXIII

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches.
Senates and sages have condemn'd its use --
But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems but cruel.

LXIV

Here he embark'd, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale;
High dash'd the spray, the bows dipp'd in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turn'd somewhat pale;
But Juan, season'd, as he well might be,
By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which pass'd, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

LXV

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan felt --
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt --
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXVI

I've no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the noblest nation;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mix'd regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

LXVII

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorr'd:
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very *mind*: --

LXVIII

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison, -- but the gaoler, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.

Is the poor privilege to turn the key
 Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.

LXIX

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,
 Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
 Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
 To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

LXX

Juan, though careless, young, and *magnifique*,
 And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
 Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it
(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
 Before him summ'd the awful scroll and read it);
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
 Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash, splash through puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!
 Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
 Their fare; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With "schnapps" -- sad dogs! whom "Hundsot," or "Verflucter,"
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
 Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed -- no matter where its
 Direction be, so 't is but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
 For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great *end* of travel -- which is driving.

LXXIII

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral;
 Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
 In the same quaint, uninterested tone: --
There's glory again for you, gentle reader! All
 Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into these sodas or magnesias;
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

LXXIV

The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
 He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he saw
That casque, which never stoop'd except to Time.
 Even the bold Churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
 O'er kings, who now at least must *talk* of law
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And ask'd why such a structure had been raised:

LXXV

And being told it was "God's house," she said
 He was well lodged, but only wonder'd how
He suffer'd Infidels in his homestead,
 The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred
 The True Believers: -- and her infant brow

Was bent with grief that Mahomet should resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

LXXVI

Oh! oh! through meadows managed like a garden,
A paradise of hops and high production;
For after years of travel by a bard in
Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction,
A green field is a sight which makes him pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction,
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

LXXVII

And when I think upon a pot of beer --
But I won't weep! -- and so drive on, postilions!
As the smart boys spurr'd fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free millions;
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,
Who "kick against the pricks" just at this juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road!
So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail; -- but onward as we roll,
"*Surgit amari aliquid*" -- the toll!

LXXIX

Alas, how deeply painful is all payment!

Take lives, take wives, take aught except men's purses:
As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,
Such is the shortest way to general curses.
They hate a murderer much less than a claimant
On that sweet ore which every body nurses; --
Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket.

LXXX

So said the Florentine: ye monarchs, hearken
To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,
O'er the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn
Toward the great city. -- Ye who have a spark in
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn
According as you take things well or ill; --
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill!

LXXXI

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the "Devil's drawing-room,"
As some have qualified that wondrous place:
But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied t' other.

LXXXII

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown

On a fool's head -- and there is London Town!

LXXXIII

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
 Appear'd to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
 The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper):
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
 Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

LXXXIV

He paused -- and so will I; as doth a crew
 Before they give their broadside. By and by,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew
 Our old acquaintance; and at least I'll try
To tell you truths you will not take as true,
 Because they are so; -- a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV

Oh Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
 Preach to *poor* rogues? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try
 Your head at harden'd and imperial sin.
To mend the people's an absurdity,
 A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better: -- Fy!
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI

Teach *them* the decencies of good threescore;
 Cure *them* of tours, hussar and highland dresses;

Tell *them* that youth once gone returns no more,
That hired huzzas redeem no land's distresses;
Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

LXXXVII

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late,
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain pretence of being *great*,
'T is not so to be *good*; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state;
And tell them -- But you won't, and I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I'll prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE ELEVENTH

I

When Bishop Berkeley said “there was no matter,”
And proved it -- ‘t was no matter what he said:
They say his system ‘t is in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the world a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II

What a sublime discovery ‘t was to make the
Universe universal egotism,
That all’s ideal -- *all ourselves!* -- I’ll stake the
World (be it what you will) that *that’s* no schism.
Oh Doubt! -- if thou be’st Doubt, for which some take thee;
But which I doubt extremely -- thou sole prism
Of the Truth’s rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!
Heaven’s brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III

For ever and anon comes Indigestion,
(Not the most “dainty Ariel”) and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question:
And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,
Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The world, which at the worst’s a *glorious* blunder --

IV

If it be chance; or if it be according

To the old text, still better: -- lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude.
They're right; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what no one ever could
Decide, and *everybody one day* will
Know very clearly -- or at least lie still.

V

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is; then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;
The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical:
I don't know what the reason is -- the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI

The first attack at once proved the Divinity
(But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity
On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wish'd the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII

To our Theme. -- The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And look'd down over Attica; or he
Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance --

But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence?

VIII

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;

Sunset the time, the place the same declivity
Which looks along that vale of good and ill

Where London streets ferment in full activity;
While every thing around was calm and still,

Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he
Heard, -- and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum
Of cities, that boil over with their scum: --

IX

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,

Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,

Gave way to 't, since he could not overcome it.
"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;

Here peals the people's voice, nor can entomb it
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

X

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here people pay

But what they please; and if that things be dear,
'T is only that they love to throw away

Their cash, to show how much they have a-year.
Here laws are all inviolate; none lay

Traps for the traveller; every highway's clear:
Here" -- he was interrupted by a knife,

With, -- "Damn your eyes! your money or your life!" --

XI

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads

In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter

Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,
May find himself within that isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII

Juan, who did not understand a word
Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"
And even that he had so rarely heard,
He sometimes thought 't was only their "Salam,"
Or "God be with you!" -- and 't is not absurd
To think so: for half English as I am
(To my misfortune), never can I say
I heard them wish "God with you," save that way; --

XIII

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
And being somewhat choleric and sudden,
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,
And fired it into one assailant's pudding --
Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
And roar'd out, as he writhed his native mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
"Oh Jack! I'm floor'd by that 'ere bloody Frenchman!"

XIV

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,
And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,
And offering, as usual, late assistance.
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed
As if his veins would pour out his existence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wish'd he had been less hasty with his flint.

XV

“Perhaps,” thought he, “it is the country’s wont
To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don’t
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.
But what is to be done? I can’t allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up; I’ll help you with the load.”

XVI

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
The dying man cried, “Hold! I’ve got my gruel!
Oh for a glass of *max*! We’ve miss’d our booty;
Let me die where I am!” And as the fuel
Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty
The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill
His breath, -- he from his swelling throat untied
A kerchief, crying, “Give Sal that!” -- and died.

XVII

The cravat stain’d with bloody drops fell down
Before Don Juan’s feet: he could not tell
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man’s farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.

XVIII

Don Juan, having done the best he could
In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as “Crownner’s quest” allow’d, pursued
His travels to the capital apace; --

Esteeming it a little hard he should
In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native
In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XIX

He from the world had cut off a great man,
Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bow Street's ban)
On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?
Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?

XX

But Tom's no more -- and so no more of Tom.
Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 't is
Not long before the most of them go home.
Hail! Thamis, Hail! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum
In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other "tons,"
Which makes us wish ourselves in town at once; --

XXI

Through Groves, so call'd as being void of trees
(Like lucus from no light); through prospects named
Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
Nor much to climb; through little boxes framed
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
With "To be let" upon their doors proclaim'd;
Through "Rows" most modestly call'd "Paradise,"
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice; --

XXII

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl
Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of "purl,"
There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl
In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass
(For in those days we had not got to gas); --

XXIII

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
Upon the Guide-book's privilege. The sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge, --

XXIV

That's rather fine. The gentle sound of Thamis --
Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream,
Though hardly heard through multifarious "damme's" --
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where fame is
A spectral resident -- whose pallid beam
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile --
Make this a sacred part of Albion's isle.

XXV

The Druids' groves are gone -- so much the better:
Stone-Henge is not -- but what the devil is it? --
But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;
The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;
The Mansion House too (though some people quiz it)

To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.

XXVI

The line of lights, too, up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Match'd with the Continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss.
The French were not yet a lamplighting nation,
And when they grew so -- on their new-found lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.

XXVII

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats;
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of *ignis fatuus* to the mind,
Which, though 't is certain to perplex and frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,
And found him not amidst the various progenies
Of this enormous city's spreading span,
'T were not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What *I* can,
I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
But see the world is only one attorney.

XXIX

Over the stones still rattling up Pall Mall,

Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
As thunder'd knockers broke the long seal'd spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell, --
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some hotels,
St. James's Palace and St. James's "Hells."

XXX

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd from the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound
In decent London when the daylight's o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage. --
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners -- and mostly
For those whom favour or whom fortune swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

XXXII

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'T was merely known, that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,
Young, handsome, and accomplish'd, who was said

(In whispers) to have turn'd his sovereign's head.

XXXIII

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

XXXIV

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary; but then 't is in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?

XXXV

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placemen, every Russ credential;
And was received with all the due grimace
By those who govern in the mood potential,
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.

XXXVI

They err'd, as agéd men will do; but by
And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,

‘T will be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie: --
Now what I love in women is, they won’t
Or can’t do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII

And, after all, what is a lie? ‘T is but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers. priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy -- except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the world’s “Te Deum,” and her brow
Blushes for those who will not: -- but to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,
After the good example of “Green Erin,”
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

XXXIX

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration --
I don’t know which was more admired or less:
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,
Which Catherine in a moment of “ivresse”
(In love or brandy’s fervent fermentation)
Bestow’d upon him, as the public learn’d;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn’d.

XL

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks, -- those somewhat dirty springs
Of office, or the house of office, fed
By foul corruption into streams, -- even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay:

XLI

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employ'd for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neighbour,
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),
If he found not his spawn of taxborn riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b----s.

XLII

But Juan was received with much "*empressement*:" --
These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbours' land, where, like a chessman,
There is a move set down for joy or sorrow
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man
In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,
More than on continents -- as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.

XLIII

And yet the British "Damme"'s rather Attic:
Your continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent

This subject quote; as it would be schismatic

In *politesse*, and have a sound affronting in 't: --
But "Damme"'s quite ethereal, though too daring --
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;
For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam --
The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind, the next of much you come
To meet. However, 't is no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to unity, like this of mine.

XLV

In the great world, -- which, being interpreted,
Meaneth the west or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred
By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the universe with pity, --
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

XLVI

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)
'T is also of some moment to the latter:
A rib's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin -- and what's still worse, the trouble.

XLVII

But Juan was a bachelor -- of arts,
And parts, and hearts: he danced and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any "flaws or starts,"
Just at the proper time; and though a lad,
Had seen the world -- which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded dames
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
The painting and the painted; youth, ceruse,
Against his heart preferr'd their usual claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse:
Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
Inquired his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses"
Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the honey-moon's last kisses
Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlook'd -- and gave such credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and sigh'd, and paid it.

L

The Blues, that tender tribe who sigh o'er sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue:
They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and upon its
Late authors ask'd him for a hint or two;

And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?

LI

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer:
His duties warlike, loving or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green.

LII

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And pass'd for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith
(Who at sixteen translated "Hercules Furens"
Into as furious English), with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

LIII

Juan knew several languages -- as well
He might -- and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplish'd belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both long'd extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV

However, he did pretty well, and was

Admitted as an aspirant to all
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral;
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show *its*.

LV

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing.
Even I -- albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king --
Was reckon'd a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mount Saint Jean seems Cain:
"*La Belle Alliance*" of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise again:
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus hath a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,

A modern Ancient Pistol -- by the hilts?

LVIII

Still he excels that artificial hard

Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine
Yields him but vinegar for his reward, --

That neutralised dull Dorus of the Nine;
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;

That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every line: --
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest. --

LIX

Then there's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,

Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;

He'll find it rather difficult some day

To turn out both, or either, it may be.

Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;

And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;

And that deep-mouth'd Boeotian "Savage Landor"

Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,

Just as he really promised something great,

If not intelligible, without Greek

Contrived to talk about the gods of late,

Much as they might have been supposed to speak.

Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;

'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,

Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

LXI

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders

To that which none will gain -- or none will know

The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances; they're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

LXII

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter; --
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXIII

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks; -- but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

LXIV

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and *blue* ladies, past
With some small profit through that field so sterile,
Being tired in time, and, neither least nor last,
Left it before he had been treated very ill;
And henceforth found himself more gaily class'd
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXV

His morns he pass'd in business -- which, dissected,
Was like all business a laborious nothing
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good --
Which grows no better, though 't is time it should.

LXVI

His afternoons he pass'd in visits, luncheons,
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Call'd "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only "bower"
(In Moore's phrase), where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVII

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd
Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirl'd;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly paradise of "*Or Molu*."

LXVIII

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtsy; there the waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.

Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner,"
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

LXXI

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste: impatience is a blundering guide,
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXII

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle: --
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon memory's crupper,
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in vogue! Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXIII

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch, and ward; whose plans a word too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,
Permits whate'er they please, or *did* not long since.

LXXIV

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom,
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble; --
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV

They are young, but know not youth -- it is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;

And having voted, dined, drunk, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXVI

“Where is the world?” cries Young, at *eighty*” -- “Where
The world in which a man was born?” Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past? ‘*T was there* --
I look for it -- ‘t is gone, a globe of glass!
Crack’d, shiver’d, vanish’d, scarcely gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the wind’s wings.

LXXVII

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows.
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
Who bound the bar or senate in their spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?
And where the Daughter, whom the Isles loved well?
Where are those martyr’d saints the Five per Cents?
And where -- oh, where the devil are the rents?

LXXVIII

Where’s Brummel? Dish’d. Where’s Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled.
Where’s Whitbread? Romilly? Where’s George the Third?
Where is his will? (That’s not so soon unriddled.)
And where is “Fum” the Fourth, our “royal bird?”
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be fiddled
Unto by Sawney’s violin, we have heard:
“Caw me, caw thee” -- for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXIX

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady That?

The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried (this is
An evolution oft performed of late).
Where are the Dublin shouts -- and London hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd as usual. Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.

LXXX

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?
Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is, --
Thou Morning Post, sole record of the panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion, -- say what streams now fill those channels?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one* tenant.

LXXXI

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:
Some maids have been made wives, some merely mothers;
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXII

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through.
I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
Change grows too changeable, without being new:
Nought's permanent among the human race,

Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXIII

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite a Jupiter,
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden look.
But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter,"
And sail for a new theme: -- I have seen -- and shook
To see it -- the king hiss'd, and then caress'd;
But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIV

I have seen the Landholders without a rap --
I have seen Joanna Southcote -- I have seen --
The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-trap --
I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen --
I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap --
I have seen a Congress doing all that's mean --
I have seen some nations like o'erloaded asses
Kick off their burthens, meaning the high classes.

LXXXV

I have seen small poets, and great prozers, and
Interminable -- *not eternal* -- speakers --
I have seen the funds at war with house and land --
I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers --
I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand
By slaves on horseback -- I have seen malt liquors
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull --
I have seen John half detect himself a fool. --

LXXXVI

But "*carpe diem*," Juan, "*carpe, carpe!*"
To-morrow sees another race as gay

And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.

"Life's a poor player," -- then "play out the play,
Ye villains!" above all keep a sharp eye

Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

LXXXVII

But how shall I relate in other cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 't is the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country? But I hold my hand --
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;
But 't is as well at once to understand,
You are *not* a moral people, and you know it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
My topic, with of course the due restriction
Which is required by proper courtesy;
And recollect the work is only fiction,
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,
Will hint allusions never *meant*. Ne'er doubt
This -- when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*.

LXXXIX

Whether he married with the third or fourth
Offspring of some sage husband-hunting countess,
Or whether with some virgin of more worth
(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties)
He took to regularly peopling Earth,
Of which your lawful awful wedlock fount is, --
Or whether he was taken in for damages,
For being too excursive in his homages, --

XC

Is yet within the unread events of time.

Thus far, go forth, thou lay, which I will back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,

For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,

By those who love to say that white is black.
So much the better! -- I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE TWELFTH

I

Of all the barbarous middle ages, that
Which is most barbarous is the middle age
Of man; it is -- I really scarce know what;
But when we hover between fool and sage,
And don't know justly what we would be at --
A period something like a printed page,
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were; --

II

Too old for youth, -- too young, at thirty-five,
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore, --
I wonder people should be left alive;
But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
Love lingers still, although 't were late to wive;
And as for other love, the illusion's o'er;
And money, that most pure imagination,
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

III

O Gold! Why call we misers miserable?
Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall;
Theirs is the best bower anchor, the chain cable
Which holds fast other pleasures great and small.
Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

IV

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker;

Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;
But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
And adding still a little through each cross
(Which *will* come over things), beats love or liquor,
The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*.
O Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bank of *vapour*.

V

Who hold the balance of the world? Who reign
O'er congress, whether royalist or liberal?
Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain? [*]
(That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber all.)
Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain
Or pleasure? Who make politics run glibber all?
The shade of Buonaparte's noble daring? --
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-Christian, Baring.

VI

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,
Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan
Is not a merely speculative hit,
But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
Republics also get involved a bit;
Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown
On 'Change; and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII

Why call the miser miserable? as
I said before: the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise: a hermit would not miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt wealth's austerities?
Because, you'll say, nought calls for such a trial; --

Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII

He is your only poet; -- passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays,
Possess'd, the ore, of which mere hopes allure
Nations athwart the deep: the golden rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure;
On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze,
While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dies
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX

The lands on either side are his; the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads
For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
His very cellars might be kings' abodes;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands -- the intellectual lord of all.

X

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
To build a college, or to found a race,
A hospital, a church, -- and leave behind
Some dome surmounted by his meagre face:
Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind
Even with the very ore which makes them base;
Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,
Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI

But whether all, or each, or none of these
May be the hoarder's principle of action,

The fool will call such mania a disease: --
What is his own? Go -- look at each transaction,
Wars, revels, loves -- do these bring men more ease
Than the mere plodding through each "vulgar fraction"?
Or do they benefit mankind? Lean miser!
Let spendthrifts' heirs enquire of yours -- who's wiser?

XII

How beauteous are rouleaus! how charming chests
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old victors, all whose heads and crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their visage shines,
But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering cirque confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp: --
Yes! ready money *is* Aladdin's lamp.

XIII

"Love rules the camp, the court, the grove," -- "for love
Is heaven, and heaven is love:" -- so sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
Perhaps there may be something in "the grove,"
At least it rhymes to "love;" but I'm prepared
To doubt (no less than landlords of their rental)
If "courts" and "camps" be quite so sentimental.

XIV

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and Cash alone:
Cash rules the grove, and fells it too besides;
Without cash, camps were thin, and courts were none;
Without cash, Malthus tells you -- "take no brides."
So Cash rules Love the ruler, on his own
High ground, as virgin Cynthia sways the tides:
And as for Heaven "Heaven being Love," why not say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 't is Matrimony.

XV

Is not all love prohibited whatever,
 Excepting marriage? which is love, no doubt,
After a sort; but somehow people never
 With the same thought the two words have help'd out:
Love may exist with marriage, and should ever,
 And marriage also may exist without;
But love *sans* bans is both a sin and shame,
And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI

Now if the "court," and "camp," and "grove," be not
 Recruited all with constant married men,
Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
 I say *that* line's a lapsus of the pen; --
Strange too in my "*buon camerado*" Scott,
 So celebrated for his morals, when
My Jeffrey held him up as an example
To me; -- of whom these morals are a sample.

XVII

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
 And that's enough; succeeded in my youth,
The only time when much success is needed:
 And my success produced what I, in sooth,
Cared most about; it need not now be pleaded --
 Whate'er it was, 't was mine; I've paid, in truth,
Of late the penalty of such success,
But have not learn'd to wish it any less.

XVIII

That suit in Chancery, -- which some persons plead
 In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
In the faith of their procreative creed,
 Baptize posterity, or future clay, --

To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
To lean on for support in any way;
Since odds are that posterity will know
No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX

Why, I'm posterity -- and so are you;
And whom do we remember? Not a hundred.
Were every memory written down all true,
The tenth or twentieth name would be but blunder'd;
Even Plutarch's Lives have but pick'd out a few,
And 'gainst those few your annalists have thunder'd;
And Mitford in the nineteenth century [*]
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.

XX

Good people all, of every degree,
Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
In this twelfth Canto 't is my wish to be
As serious as if I had for inditers
Malthus and Wilberforce: -- the last set free
The Negroes and is worth a million fighters;
While Wellington has but enslaved the Whites,
And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes.

XXI

I'm serious -- so are all men upon paper;
And why should I not form my speculation,
And hold up to the sun my little taper?
Mankind just now seem wrapt in mediation
On constitutions and steam-boats of vapour;
While sages write against all procreation,
Unless a man can calculate his means
Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

XXII

That's noble! That's romantic! For my part,
I think that "Philo-genitiveness" is
(Now here's a word quite after my own heart,
Though there's a shorter a good deal than this,
If that politeness set it not apart;
But I'm resolved to say nought that's amiss) --
I say, methinks that "Philo-genitiveness"
Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

XXIII

And now to business. -- O my gentle Juan,
Thou art in London -- in that pleasant place,
Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing,
Which can await warm youth in its wild race.
'T is true, that thy career is not a new one;
Thou art no novice in the headlong chase
Of early life; but this is a new land,
Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV

What with a small diversity of climate,
Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
I could send forth my mandate like a primate
Upon the rest of Europe's social state;
But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
Great Britain, which the Muse may penetrate.
All countries have their "Lions," but in thee
There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
"Paulo Majora." Juan, undecided
Amongst the paths of being "taken in,"
Above the ice had like a skater glided:
When tired of play, he flirted without sin
With some of those fair creatures who have prided

Themselves on innocent tantalisation,
And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI

But these are few, and in the end they make
Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
That even the purest people may mistake
Their way through virtue's primrose paths of snows;
And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note it)
With the kind world's amen -- "Who would have thought it?"

XXVII

The little Leila, with her orient eyes,
And taciturn Asiatic disposition
(Which saw all western things with small surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition),
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII

The women much divided -- as is usual
Amongst the sex in little things or great.
Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to abuse you all --
I have always liked you better than I state:
Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse you all
Of being apt to talk at a great rate;
And now there was a general sensation
Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX

In one point only were you settled -- and

You had reason; 't was that a young child of grace,
As beautiful as her own native land,
And far away, the last bud of her race,
Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command
Himself for five, four, three, or two years' space,
Would be much better taught beneath the eye
Of peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX

So first there was a generous emulation,
And then there was a general competition,
To undertake the orphan's education.
As Juan was a person of condition,
It had been an affront on this occasion
To talk of a subscription or petition;
But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages,
Whose tale belongs to "Hallam's Middle Ages,"

XXXI

And one or two sad, separate wives, without
A fruit to bloom upon their withering bough --
Begg'd to bring *up* the little girl and "*out*," --
For that's the phrase that settles all things now,
Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
And all her points as thorough-bred to show:
And I assure you, that like virgin honey
Tastes their first season (mostly if they have money).

XXXII

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy,
The watchful mothers, and the careful sisters
(Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy
At making matches, where "'t is gold that glisters,"
Than their *he* relatives), like flies o'er candy
Buzz round "the Fortune" with their busy battery,

To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery!

XXXIII

Each aunt, each cousin, hath her speculation;

Nay, married dames will now and then discover
Such pure disinterestedness of passion,

I've known them court an heiress for their lover.
“*Tantæne!*” Such the virtues of high station,

Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet 's “Dover!”
While the poor rich wretch, object of these cares,
Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

XXXIV

Some are soon bagg'd, and some reject three dozen.

'T is fine to see them scattering refusals
And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin
(Friends of the party), who begin accusals,
Such as -- “Unless Miss (Blank) meant to have chosen
Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals
To his billets? Why waltz with him? Why, I pray,
Look yes last night, and yet say no to-day?”

XXXV

“Why? -- Why? -- Besides, Fred really was *attach'd*;

'T was not her fortune -- he has enough without:
The time will come she'll wish that she had snatch'd

So good an opportunity, no doubt: --
But the old marchioness some plan had hatch'd,

As I'll tell Aurea at to-morrow's rout:
And after all poor Frederick may do better --
Pray did you see her answer to his letter?”

XXXVI

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets

Are spurn'd in turn, until her turn arrives,

After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
 Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives;
And when at last the pretty creature gets
 Some gentleman, who fights, or writes, or drives,
It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected
To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,
 Worn out with importunity; or fall
(But here perhaps the instances are fewer)
 To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
A hazy widower turn'd of forty's sure [*]
 (If 't is not vain examples to recall)
To draw a high prize: now, howe'er he got her, I
See nought more strange in this than t' other lottery.

XXXVIII

I, for my part (one "modern instance" more,
 "True, 't is a pity -- pity 't is, 't is true"),
Was chosen from out an amatory score,
 Albeit my years were less discreet than few;
But though I also had reform'd before
 Those became one who soon were to be two,
I'll not gainsay the generous public's voice,
That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

XXXIX

Oh, pardon my digression -- or at least
 Peruse! 'T is always with a moral end
That I dissert, like grace before a feast:
 For like an aged aunt, or tiresome friend,
A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
 My Muse by exhortation means to mend
All people, at all times, and in most places,
Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

XL

But now I'm going to be immoral; now
I mean to show things really as they are,
Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
That till we see what's what in fact, we're far
From much improvement with that virtuous plough
Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a scar
Upon the black loam long manured by Vice,
Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI

But first of little Leila we'll dispose;
For like a day-dawn she was young and pure,
Or like the old comparison of snows,
Which are more pure than pleasant to be sure.
Like many people everybody knows,
Don Juan was delighted to secure
A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
Who might not profit much by being at large.

XLII

Besides, he had found out he was no tutor
(I wish that others would find out the same);
And rather wish'd in such things to stand neuter,
For silly wards will bring their guardians blame:
So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor
To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
Consulting "the Society for Vice
Suppression," Lady Pinchbeck was his choice.

XLIII

Olden she was -- but had been very young;
Virtuous she was -- and had been, I believe;
Although the world has such an evil tongue
That -- but my chaster ear will not receive

An echo of a syllable that's wrong:

In fact, there's nothing makes me so much grieve,
As that abominable tittle-tattle,
Which is the cud eschew'd by human cattle.

XLIV

Moreover I've remark'd (and I was once
A slight observer in a modest way),
And so may every one except a dunce,
That ladies in their youth a little gay,
Besides their knowledge of the world, and sense
Of the sad consequence of going astray,
Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
Which the mere passionless can never know.

XLV

While the harsh prude indemnifies her virtue
By railing at the unknown and envied passion,
Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,
Or, what's still worse, to put you out of fashion, --
The kinder veteran with calm words will court you,
Entreating you to pause before you dash on;
Expounding and illustrating the riddle
Of epic Love's beginning, end, and middle.

XLVI

Now whether it be thus, or that they are stricter,
As better knowing why they should be so,
I think you'll find from many a family picture,
That daughters of such mothers as may know
The world by experience rather than by lecture,
Turn out much better for the Smithfield Show
Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

XLVII

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talk'd about --
As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalk'd about;
She merely was deem'd amiable and witty,
And several of her best *bons-mots* were hawk'd about:
Then she was given to charity and pity,
And pass'd (at least the latter years of life)
For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
She was the mild reprover of the young,
Whenever -- which means every day -- they'd shown
An awkward inclination to go wrong.
The quantity of good she did's unknown,
Or at the least would lengthen out my song:
In brief, the little orphan of the East
Had raised an interest in her, which increased.

XLIX

Juan, too, was a sort of favourite with her,
Because she thought him a good heart at bottom,
A little spoil'd, but not so altogether;
Which was a wonder, if you think who got him,
And how he had been toss'd, he scarce knew whither:
Though this might ruin others, it did not him,
At least entirely -- for he had seen too many
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

L

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
For when they happen at a riper age,
People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,
And wonder Providence is not more sage.
Adversity is the first path to truth:
He who hath proved war, storm, or woman's rage,

Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
Hath won the experience which is deem'd so weighty.

LI

How far it profits is another matter. --
Our hero gladly saw his little charge
Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter
Being long married, and thus set at large,
Had left all the accomplishments she taught her
To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's barge,
To the next comer; or -- as it will tell
More Muse-like -- like to Cytherea's shell.

LII

I call such things transmission; for there is
A floating balance of accomplishment
Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
According as their minds or backs are bent.
Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss
Of metaphysics; others are content
With music; the most moderate shine as wits;
While others have a genius turn'd for fits.

LIII

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
Theology, fine arts, or finer stays,
May be the baits for gentlemen or lords
With regular descent, in these our days,
The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
New vestals claim men's eyes with the same praise
Of "elegant" *et cætera*, in fresh batches --
All matchless creatures, and yet bent on matches.

LIV

But now I will begin my poem. 'T is

Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this
I've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,
Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
About what's call'd success, or not succeeding:
Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have chosen;
'T is a "great moral lesson" they are reading.
I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading,
If that my Pegasus should not be founder'd,
I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,
Yclept the Great World; for it is the least,
Although the highest: but as swords have hilts
By which their power of mischief is increased,
When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
Thus the low world, north, south, or west, or east,
Must still obey the high -- which is their handle,
Their moon, their sun, their gas, their farthing candle.

LVII

He had many friends who had many wives, and was
Well look'd upon by both, to that extent
Of friendship which you may accept or pass,
It does nor good nor harm being merely meant
To keep the wheels going of the higher class,
And draw them nightly when a ticket's sent:
And what with masquerades, and fetes, and balls,

For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII

A young unmarried man, with a good name
And fortune, has an awkward part to play;
For good society is but a game,
"The royal game of Goose," as I may say,
Where every body has some separate aim,
An end to answer, or a plan to lay --
The single ladies wishing to be double,
The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

LIX

I don't mean this as general, but particular
Examples may be found of such pursuits:
Though several also keep their perpendicular
Like poplars, with good principles for roots;
Yet many have a method more reticular --
"Fishers for men," like sirens with soft lutes:
For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

LX

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd;
Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
All strut, and stays, and whiskers, to demand
What "your intentions are?" -- One way or other
It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand:
And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI

I've known a dozen weddings made even thus,
And some of them high names: I have also known

Young men who -- though they hated to discuss
Pretensions which they never dream'd to have shown --
Yet neither frighten'd by a female fuss,
Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they form'd a pair.

LXII

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,
A peril -- not indeed like love or marriage,
But not the less for this to be depreciated:
It is -- I meant and mean not to disparage
The show of virtue even in the vitiated --
It adds an outward grace unto their carriage --
But to denounce the amphibious sort of harlot,
"*Couleur de rose*," who's neither white nor scarlet.

LXIII

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say "No,"
And won't say "Yes," and keeps you on and off-ing
On a lee-shore, till it begins to blow --
Then sees your heart wreck'd, with an inward scoffing.
This works a world of sentimental woe,
And sends new Werters yearly to their coffin;
But yet is merely innocent flirtation,
Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV

"Ye gods, I grow a talker!" Let us prate.
The next of perils, though I place it *sternest*,
Is when, without regard to "church or state,"
A wife makes or takes love in upright earnest.
Abroad, such things decide few women's fate --
(Such, early traveller! is the truth thou learnest) --
But in old England, when a young bride errs,
Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to hers.

LXV

For 't is a low, newspaper, humdrum, lawsuit
Country, where a young couple of the same ages
Can't form a friendship, but the world o'erawes it.
Then there's the vulgar trick of those damned damages!
A verdict -- grievous foe to those who cause it! --
Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
Besides those soothing speeches of the pleaders,
And evidences which regale all readers.

LXVI

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners;
A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
The loveliest oligarchs of our gynocracy;
You may see such at all the balls and dinners,
Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste --
And all by having tact as well as taste.

LXVII

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament
Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more;
For he was sick -- no, 't was not the word sick I meant --
But he had seen so much love before,
That he was not in heart so very weak; -- I meant
But thus much, and no sneer against the shore
Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer stockings,
Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double knockings.

LXVIII

But coming young from lands and scenes romantic,
Where lives, not lawsuits, must be risk'd for Passion,
And Passion's self must have a spice of frantic,
Into a country where 't is half a fashion,

Seem'd to him half commercial, half pedantic,
Howe'er he might esteem this moral nation:
Besides (alas! his taste -- forgive and pity!)
At first he did not think the women pretty.

LXIX

I say at *first* -- for he found out at *last*,
But by degrees, that they were fairer far
Than the more glowing dames whose lot is cast
Beneath the influence of the eastern star.
A further proof we should not judge in haste;
Yet inexperience could not be his bar
To taste: -- the truth is, if men would confess,
That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

LXX

Though travell'd, I have never had the luck to
Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or Niger,
To that impracticable place, Timbuctoo,
Where Geography finds no one to oblige her
With such a chart as may be safely stuck to --
For Europe ploughs in Afric like "*bos piger*:"
But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
No doubt I should be told that black is fair.

LXXI

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
But I suspect in fact that white is black,
And the whole matter rests upon eyesight.
Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll attack
Perhaps this new position -- but I'm right;
Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en aback: --
He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
Within; and what seest thou? A dubious spark.

LXXII

But I'm relapsing into metaphysics,
That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
Construction as your cures for hectic phthisis,
Those bright moths fluttering round a dying flame;
And this reflection brings me to plain physics,
And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
Compared with those of our pure pearls of price,
Those polar summers, all sun, and some ice.

LXXIII

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose
Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere fishes; --
Not that there's not a quantity of those
Who have a due respect for their own wishes.
Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows [*]
Are they, at bottom virtuous even when vicious:
They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXIV

But this has nought to do with their outsides.
I said that Juan did not think them pretty
At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
Half her attractions -- probably from pity --
And rather calmly into the heart glides,
Than storms it as a foe would take a city;
But once there (if you doubt this, prithee try)
She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXV

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning;
Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warb-
le those *bravuras* (which I still am learning

To like, though I have been seven years in Italy,
And have, or had, an ear that served me prettily); --

LXXVI

She cannot do these things, nor one or two
Others, in that off-hand and dashing style
Which takes so much -- to give the devil his due;
Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
Nor settles all things in one interview
(A thing approved as saving time and toil); --
But though the soil may give you time and trouble,
Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVII

And if in fact she takes to a "*grande passion*,"
It is a very serious thing indeed:
Nine times in ten 't is but caprice or fashion,
Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,
The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,
Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed:
But the *tenth* instance will be a tornado,
For there's no saying what they will or may do.

LXXVIII

The reason's obvious; if there's an *éclat*,
They lose their caste at once, as do the Parias;
And when the delicacies of the law
Have fill'd their papers with their comments various,
Society, that china without flaw
(The hypocrite!), will banish them like Marius,
To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt:
For Fame's a Carthage not so soon rebuilt.

LXXIX

Perhaps this is as it should be; -- it is

A comment on the Gospel's "Sin no more,
And be thy sins forgiven:" -- but upon this
I leave the saints to settle their own score.
Abroad, though doubtless they do much amiss,
An erring woman finds an opener door
For her return to Virtue -- as they call
That lady, who should be at home to all.

LXXX

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
Knowing that such uneasy virtue leads
People some ten times less in fact to mind it,
And care but for discoveries and not deeds.
And as for chastity, you'll never bind it
By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,
But aggravate the crime you have not prevented,
By rendering desperate those who had else repented.

LXXXI

But Juan was no casuist, nor had ponder'd
Upon the moral lessons of mankind:
Besides, he had not seen of several hundred
A lady altogether to his mind.
A little "*blasé*" -- 't is not to be wonder'd
At, that his heart had got a tougher rind:
And though not vainer from his past success,
No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXII

He also had been busy seeing sights --
The Parliament and all the other houses;
Had sat beneath the gallery at nights,
To hear debates whose thunder roused (not rouses)
The world to gaze upon those northern lights
Which flash'd as far as where the musk-bull browses; [*]
He had also stood at times behind the throne --

But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham gone.

LXXXIII

He saw, however, at the closing session,
That noble sight, when really free the nation,
A king in constitutional possession
Of such a throne as is the proudest station,
Though despots know it not -- till the progression
Of freedom shall complete their education.
'T is not mere splendour makes the show august
To eye or heart -- it is the people's trust.

LXXXIV

There, too, he saw (whate'er he may be now)
A Prince, the prince of princes at the time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had then the grace, too, rare in every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finish'd gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXV

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
Into the best society: and there
Occurr'd what often happens, I'm afraid,
However disciplined and debonnaire: --
The talent and good humour he display'd,
Besides the mark'd distinction of his air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXVI

But what, and where, with whom, and when, and why,
Is not to be put hastily together;

And as my object is morality
 (Whatever people say), I don't know whether
I'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
 But harrow up his feelings till they wither,
And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos. [*]

LXXXVII

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction
 Ends. When the body of the book's begun,
You'll find it of a different construction
 From what some people say 't will be when done:
The plan at present's simply in concoction,
 I can't oblige you, reader, to read on;
That's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
Should neither court neglect, nor dread to bear it.

LXXXVIII

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
 Remember, reader! you have had before
The worst of tempests and the best of battles
 That e'er were brew'd from elements or gore,
Besides the most sublime of -- Heaven knows what else:
 An usurer could scarce expect much more --
But my best canto, save one on astronomy,
Will turn upon "political economy."

LXXXIX

That is your present theme for popularity:
 Now that the public hedge hath scarce a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity,
 To show the people the best way to break.
My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
 Reserve it) will be very sure to take.
Meantime, read all the national debt-sinkers,
And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE THIRTEENTH

I

I now mean to be serious; -- it is time,
 Since laughter now-a-days is deem'd too serious.
A jest at Vice by Virtue's call'd a crime,
 And critically held as deleterious:
Besides, the sad's a source of the sublime,
 Although when long a little apt to weary us;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn,
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
 ('T is an old Norman name, and to be found
In pedigrees, by those who wander still
 Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
Was high-born, wealthy by her father's will,
 And beauteous, even where beauties most abound,
In Britain -- which of course true patriots find
The goodliest soil of body and of mind.

III

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
 I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the best:
An eye's an eye, and whether black or blue,
 Is no great matter, so 't is in request,
'T is nonsense to dispute about a hue --
 The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there's a plain woman.

IV

And after that serene and somewhat dull

Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for days
More quiet, when our moon's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 't is time to give the younger place.

V

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial line:
But then they have their claret and Madeira
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

VI

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's call'd the "Nation"?
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

VII

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!" --
The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later.
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest: --
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,

Much in the mode of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

VIII

But neither love nor hate in much excess;

Though 't was not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,

And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress

Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

IX

Of all tales 't is the saddest -- and more sad,
Because it makes us smile: his hero's right,
And still pursues the right; -- to curb the bad

His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
His guerdon: 't is his virtue makes him mad!

But his adventures form a sorry sight;
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real epic unto all who have thought.

X

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,

To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,

From foreign yoke to free the helpless native: --
Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,

Be for mere fancy's sport a theme creative,
A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and thick sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?

XI

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;

A single laugh demolish'd the right arm

Of his own country; -- seldom since that day
Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright array;
And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

XII

I'm "at my old lunes" -- digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil nor meant ill;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net
(Fate is a good excuse for our own will),
And caught them; -- what do they *not* catch, methinks?
But I'm not Oedipus, and life's a Sphinx.

XIII

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution: "*Davus sum!*"
And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that's fair;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last's a miracle, and such was reckon'd,
And since that time there has not been a second.

XIV

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well --
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion,
Proud of himself and her: the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seem'd secure --
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

XV

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
 Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
 Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
 And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And form'd a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what courtesy calls friends.

XVI

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
 Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow
In judging men -- when once his judgment was
 Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
Had all the pertinacity pride has,
 Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

XVII

His friendships, therefore, and no less aversions,
 Though oft well founded, which confirm'd but more
His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
 And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went before.
His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,
 Of common likings, which make some deplore
What they should laugh at -- the mere ague still
Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII

“‘T is not in mortals to command success:
 But *do you more*, Sempronius -- *don't* deserve it,”
And take my word, you won't have any less.
 Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it;

Give gently way, when there's too great a press;
And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it,
For, like a racer, or a boxer training,
'T will make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

XIX

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,
As most men do, the little or the great;
The very lowest find out an inferior,
At least they think so, to exert their state
Upon: for there are very few things wearier
Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,
Which mortals generously would divide,
By bidding others carry while they ride.

XX

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel;
And, as he thought, in country much the same --
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
At which all modern nations vainly aim;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the house up later.

XXI

These were advantages: and then he thought --
It was his foible, but by no means sinister --
That few or none more than himself had caught
Court mysteries, having been himself a minister:
He liked to teach that which he had been taught,
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir;
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a patriot, and sometimes a placeman.

XXII

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honour'd him for his docility;
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop --
For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII

And then he talk'd with him about Madrid,
Constantinople, and such distant places;
Where people always did as they were bid,
Or did what they should not with foreign graces.
Of coursers also spake they: Henry rid
Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
Could back a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

XXIV

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
And diplomatic dinners, or at other --
For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding matches with his quality.

XXV

At Blank-Blank Square; -- for we will break no squares
By naming streets: since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,

That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank Square.

XXVI

Also there bin another pious reason
For making squares and streets anonymous;
Which is, that there is scarce a single season
Which doth not shake some very splendid house
With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason --
A topic scandal doth delight to rouse:
Such I might stumble over unawares,
Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

XXVII

'T is true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
A place where peccadillos are unknown;
But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
Therefore I name not square, street, place, until I
Find one where nothing naughty can be shown,
A vestal shrine of innocence of heart:
Such are -- but I have lost the London Chart.

XXVIII

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
And some who had but talent for their crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport every where;
Or even mere fashion, which indeed's the best
Recommendation; and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX

And since "there's safety in a multitude

Of counsellors," as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood; --
Indeed we see the daily proof display'd
In senates, at the bar, in wordy feud,
Where'er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain's present wealth and happiness; --

XXX

But as "there's safety" grafted in the number
"Of counsellors" for men, thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber;
Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex --
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe'er it shocks some's
Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

XXXI

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judg'd mankind at their due estimation;
And for coquetry, she disdain'd to wear it:
Secure of admiration, its impression
Was faint, as of an every-day possession.

XXXII

To all she was polite without parade;
To some she show'd attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery convey'd
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid; --
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
To those who were, or pass'd for meritorious,

Just to console sad glory for being glorious;

XXXIII

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the shades of those distinguish'd men
Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise,
The praise of persecution; gaze again
On the most favour'd; and amidst the blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-brow'd,
What can ye recognise? -- a gilded cloud.

XXXIV

There also was of course in Adeline
That calm patrician polish in the address,
Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
Of any thing which nature would express;
Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine, --
At least his manner suffers not to guess
That any thing he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the Chinese --

XXXV

Perhaps from Horace: his "*Nil admirari*"
Was what he call'd the "Art of Happiness;"
An art on which the artists greatly vary,
And have not yet attain'd to much success.
However, 't is expedient to be wary:
Indifference certes don't produce distress;
And rash enthusiasm in good society
Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

XXXVI

But Adeline was not indifferent: for
(Now for a common-place!) beneath the snow,

As a volcano holds the lava more
 Within -- *et cætera*. Shall I go on? -- No!
I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,
 So let the often-used volcano go.
Poor thing! How frequently, by me and others,
It hath been stirr'd up till its smoke quite smothers!

XXXVII

I'll have another figure in a trice: --
 What say you to a bottle of champagne?
Frozen into a very vinous ice,
 Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,
Yet in the very centre, past all price,
 About a liquid glassful will remain;
And this is stronger than the strongest grape
Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

XXXVIII

'T is the whole spirit brought to a quintessence;
 And thus the chilliest aspects may concentrate
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
 And such are many -- though I only meant her
From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,
 On which the Muse has always sought to enter.
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you have broken their confounded ice.

XXXIX

But after all they are a North-West Passage
 Unto the glowing India of the soul;
And as the good ships sent upon that message
 Have not exactly ascertain'd the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage),
 Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost
(A chance still), 't is a voyage or vessel lost.

XL

And young beginners may as well commence
With quiet cruising o'er the ocean woman;
While those who are not beginners should have sense
Enough to make for port, ere time shall summon
With his grey signal-flag; and the past tense,
The dreary "*Fuimus*" of all things human,
Must be declined, while life's thin thread's spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

XLI

But heaven must be diverted; its diversion
Is sometimes truculent -- but never mind:
The world upon the whole is worth the assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,
Of the two principles, but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

XLII

The English winter -- ending in July,
To recommence in August -- now was done.
'T is the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
On roads, east, south, north, west, there is a run.
But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
Man's pity's for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

XLIII

The London winter's ended in July --
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver

My Muse a glass of *Weatherology*;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV

When its quicksilver's down at zero, -- lo
Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,
And happiest they who horses can engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten Row
Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
Sigh -- as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV

They and their bills, "Arcadians both," are left
To the Greek kalends of another session.
Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
What hope remains? Of hope the full possession,
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
At a long date -- till they can get a fresh one --
Hawk'd about at a discount, small or large;
Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI

But these are trifles. Downward flies my lord,
Nodding beside my lady in his carriage.
Away! away! "Fresh horses!" are the word,
And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;
The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads too for a reminiscence.

XLVII

'T is granted; and the valet mounts the dickey --
That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
Trick'd out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint, -- "*Così viaggino i Ricchi!*"
(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd; and what's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII

The London winter and the country summer
Were well nigh over. 'T is perhaps a pity,
When nature wears the gown that doth become her,
To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or witty,
Ere patriots their true *country* can remember; --
But there's no shooting (save grouse) till September.

XLIX

I've done with my tirade. The world was gone;
The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
Were vanish'd to be what they call alone --
That is, with thirty servants for parade,
As many guests, or more; before whom groan
As many covers, duly, daily, laid.
Let none accuse Old England's hospitality --
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
Departed like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine;
The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a longer line,
Where time through heroes and through beauties steers;

And oaks as olden as their pedigree
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

LI

A paragraph in every paper told
Of their departure: such is modern fame:
'T is pity that it takes no farther hold
Than an advertisement, or much the same;
When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.
The Morning Post was foremost to proclaim --
"Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

LII

"We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends;
'Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite correct,
The Duke of D— the shooting season spends,
With many more by rank and fashion deck'd;
Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission."

LIII

And thus we see -- who doubts the Morning Post?
(Whose articles are like the "Thirty-nine,"
Which those most swear to who believe them most) --
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordain'd to shine,
Deck'd by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, "greatly daring dine."
'T is odd, but true, -- last war the News abounded
More with these dinners than the kill'd or wounded; --

LIV

As thus: "On Thursday there was a grand dinner;

Present, Lords A. B. C." -- Earls, dukes, by name
Announced with no less pomp than victory's winner:
Then underneath, and in the very same
Column; date, "Falmouth. There has lately been here
The Slap-dash regiment, so well known to fame,
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are fill'd up -- see Gazette."

LV

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble pair, --
An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion; of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

LVI

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunderstroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters -- as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

LVII

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood

With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

LVIII

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
 Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
Its shriller echoes -- like an infant made
 Quiet -- sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd,
 Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

LIX

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
 (While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle.
 These last had disappear'd -- a loss to art:
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
 And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

LX

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
 Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
 But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice, as tell
 The annals of full many a line undone, --
The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

LXI

But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,
 The Virgin Mother of the God-born Child,

With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round,
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

LXII

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

LXIII

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is wingéd from one point of heaven,
There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
Is musical -- a dying accent driven
Through the huge arch, which soars and sinks again.
Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonised by the old choral wall:

LXIV

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
(Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower;
The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
The fact: -- I've heard it -- once perhaps too much.

LXV

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint --
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint:
The spring gush'd through grim mouths of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

LXVI

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved: the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween:
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

LXVII

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur; but when combined,
Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts:
We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

LXVIII

Steel barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation;
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,

With fair long locks, had also kept their station;
And countesses mature in robes and pearls:
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

LXIX

Judges in very formidable ermine
Were there, with brows that did not much invite
The accused to think their lordships would determine
His cause by leaning much from might to right:
Bishops, who had not left a single sermon:
Attorneys-general, awful to the sight,
As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
Of the “Star Chamber” than of “Habeas Corpus.”

LXX

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the lead;
Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,
Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:
Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold:
Nimrods, whose canvass scarce contain'd the steed;
And here and there some stern high patriot stood,
Who could not get the place for which he sued.

LXXI

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,
Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's;
Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone
In Vernet's ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic anchorite: --
But, lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish
Or Dutch with thirst -- What, ho! a flask of Rhenish.

LXXIII

O reader! if that thou canst read, -- and know,
'T is not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader; there must go
Virtues of which both you and I have need; --
Firstly, begin with the beginning (though
That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed;
Thirdly, commence not with the end -- or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

LXXIV

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,
While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
Dan Phoebus takes me for an auctioneer.
That poets were so from their earliest date,
By Homer's "Catalogue of ships" is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate --
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

LXXV

The mellow autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket: -- lynx-like is his aim;
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.

Ah, nut-brown partridges! Ah, brilliant pheasants!
And ah, ye poachers! -- 'T is no sport for peasants.

LXXVI

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines
The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
Which makes the southern autumn's day appear
As if 't would to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,
Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine, --
The sea-coal fires the "earliest of the year;"
Without doors, too, she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gain'd in yellow.

LXXVIII

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura* --
Rife with more horns than hounds -- she hath the chase,
So animated that it might allure
Saint from his beads to join the jocund race;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,
And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of bores, who ought to be made game.

LXXIX

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,

Consisted of -- we give the sex the *pas* --
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess Crabby;
The Ladies Scilly, Busey; -- Miss Eclat,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabby,
And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw;
Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:

LXXX

With other Countesses of Blank -- but rank;
At once the "lie" and the "élite" of crowds;
Who pass like water filter'd in a tank,
All purged and pious from their native clouds;
Or paper turn'd to money by the Bank:
No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
The "*passée*" and the past; for good society
Is no less famed for tolerance than piety, --

LXXXI

That is, up to a certain point; which point
Forms the most difficult in punctuation.
Appearances appear to form the joint
On which it hinges in a higher station;
And so that no explosion cry "Aroint
Thee, witch!" or each Medea has her Jason;
Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
"*Omne tulit punctum, quæ miscuit utile dulci.*"

LXXXII

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.
I've seen a virtuous woman put down quite
By the mere combination of a coterie;
Also a so-so matron boldly fight
Her way back to the world by dint of plottery,
And shine the very *Siria* of the spheres,

Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII

I have seen more than I'll say: -- but we will see
How *our villeggiatura* will get on.
The party might consist of thirty-three
Of highest caste -- the Brahmins of the ton.
I have named a few, not foremost in degree,
But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.
By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst these,
There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV

There was Parolles, too, the legal bully,
Who limits all his battles to the bar
And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
He shows more appetite for words than war.
There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six weeks' star.
There was Lord Pyrrho, too, the great freethinker;
And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

LXXXV

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a -- duke,
"Ay, every inch a" duke; there were twelve peers
Like Charlemagne's -- and all such peers in look
And *intellect*, that neither eyes nor ears
For commoners had ever them mistook.
There were the six Miss Rawbolds -- pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

LXXXVI

There were four Honourable Misters, whose
Honour was more before their names than after;

There was the *preux Chevalier de la Ruse*,
Whom France and Fortune lately deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because -- such was his magic power to please --
The dice seem'd charm'd, too, with his repartees.

LXXXVII

There was Dick Dubious, the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the *soi-disant* mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII

There was Jack Jargon, the gigantic guardsman;
And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welsh Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,
In his grave office so completely skill'd,
That when a culprit came for condemnation,
He had his judge's joke for consolation.

LXXXIX

Good company's a chess-board -- there are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the world's a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings,
Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether without aim,
Alighting rarely: -- were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

XC

I had forgotten -- but must not forget --
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
With his *début*, which made a strong impression,
And rank'd with what is every day display'd --
"The best first speech that ever yet was made."

XCI

Proud of his "Hear him!" proud, too, of his vote
And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),
He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
"His country's pride," he came down to the country.

XCII

There also were two wits by acclamation,
Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;
But Strongbow's wit was of more polish'd breed:
Longbow was rich in an imagination
As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato, --
While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

XCIII

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord;
But Longbow wild as an Æolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
And make a music, whether flat or sharp.

Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word:
At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp:
Both wits -- one born so, and the other bred --
This by his heart, his rival by his head.

XCIV

If all these seem a heterogeneous mass
To be assembled at a country seat,
Yet think, a specimen of every class
Is better than a humdrum tete-a-tete.
The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
When Congreve's fool could vie with Molière's *bête*:
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress.

XCV

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground --
Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions, too, are no more to be found
Professional; and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit; for though your fools abound,
They're barren, and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored*.

XCVI

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
The scanty but right-well thresh'd ears of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I -- modest Ruth.
Farther I'd quote, but Scripture intervening
Forbids. A great impression in my youth
Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries,
"That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies."

XCVII

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.
I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist,
Who, in his common-place book, had a page
Prepared each morn for evenings. "List, oh, list!" --
"Alas, poor ghost!" -- What unexpected woes
Await those who have studied their *bons-mots*!

XCVIII

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor *bate* (abate) their hearers of an *inch*,
But take an ell -- and make a great sensation,
If possible; and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt's the best.

XCIX

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts;
The party we have touch'd on were the guests:
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.
I will not dwell upon *ragoûts* or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests
That happiness for man -- the hungry sinner! --
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

C

Witness the lands which "flow'd with milk and honey,"
Held out unto the hungry Israelites;
To this we have added since, the love of money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;

But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

CI

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
Or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport --
The first thing boys like after play and fruit;
The middle-aged to make the day more short;
For *ennui* is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language: -- we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

CII

The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or saunter'd through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot-house several strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII

But none were "*gêné*:" the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time -- or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.

CIV

The ladies -- some rouged, some a little pale --

Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or walk'd; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
Discuss'd the fashion which might next prevail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.
The earth has nothing like a she epistle,
And hardly heaven -- because it never ends.
I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon: -- you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI

Then there were billiards; cards, too, but no dice; --
Save in the clubs no man of honour plays; --
Boats when 't was water, skating when 't was ice,
And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days:
And angling, too, that solitary vice,
Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says;
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

CVII

With evening came the banquet and the wine;
The conversazione; the duet,
Attuned by voices more or less divine
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).
The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine;
But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp -- because to music's charms

They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

CVIII

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,
For then the gentlemen were rather tired)
Display'd some sylph-like figures in its maze;
Then there was small-talk ready when required;
Flirtation -- but decorous; the mere praise
Of charms that should or should not be admired.
The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,
And then retreated soberly -- at ten.

CIX

The politicians, in a nook apart,
Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres;
The wits watch'd every loophole for their art,
To introduce a *bon-mot* head and ears;
Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
A moment's good thing may have cost them years
Before they find an hour to introduce it;
And then, even then, some bore may make them lose it.

CX

But all was gentle and aristocratic
In this our party; polish'd, smooth, and cold,
As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
There now are no Squire Westerns as of old;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

CXI

They separated at an early hour;
That is, ere midnight -- which is London's noon:

But in the country ladies seek their bower
A little earlier than the waning moon.
Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower --
May the rose call back its true colour soon!
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
And lower the price of rouge -- at least some winters.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE FOURTEENTH

I

If from great nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss --
But then 't would spoil much good philosophy.
One system eats another up, and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;
For when his pious consort gave him stones
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.
Nothing more true than not to trust your senses;
And yet what are your other evidences?

III

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, condemn; and what know you,
Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

IV

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day

Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

V

'T is round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there's a courage which grows out of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to *know* it -- when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns -- you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI

'T is true, you don't -- but, pale and struck with terror,
Retire: but look into your past impression!
And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self-confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown*; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fear -- but where? You know not,
And that's the reason why you'd -- or do not.

VII

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is -- 't is my way;
Sometimes *with* and sometimes without occasion
I write what's uppermost, without delay:
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,

To build up common things with common places.

VIII

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
"Fling up a straw, 't will show the way the wind blows;"
And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX

The world is all before me -- or behind;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in mind; --
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to blame,
To the great pleasure of our friends, mankind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with fame;
For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

X

I have brought this world about my ears, and eke
The other; that's to say, the clergy, who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And *now* because I feel it growing dull.

XI

But "why then publish?" -- There are no rewards
Of fame or profit when the world grows weary.

I ask in turn -- Why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read -- To make some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink -- I have had at least my dream.

XII

I think that were I *certain* of success,
I hardly could compose another line:
So long I've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
This feeling 't is not easy to express,
And yet 't is not affected, I opine.
In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing --
The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and acts --
And that's one cause she meets with contradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts;
And were her object only what's call'd glory,
With more ease too she'd tell a different story.

XIV

Love, war, a tempest -- surely there's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye view, too, of that wild, Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.
If you have nought else, here's at least satiety
Both in performance and in preparation;
And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

XV

The portion of this world which I at present
Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
Is one of which there's no description recent.

The reason why is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

XVI

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their crimes;
Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimates
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who have got any.

XVII

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade,
They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade;
But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls -- at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and *ennui*.

XVIII

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;
Seen beauties brought to market by the score,

Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
There's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those *ci-devant jeunes hommes* who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

XIX

'T is said -- indeed a general complaint --
That no one has succeeded in describing
The *monde*, exactly as they ought to paint:
Some say, that authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
And that their books have but one style in common --
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

XX

But this can't well be true, just now; for writers
Are grown of the *beau monde* a part potential:
I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
Especially when young, for that's essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most consequential,
The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
'T is that, in fact, there's little to describe.

XXI

"*Haud ignara loquor*;" these are *Nugae*, "*quarum
Pars parva fui*," but still art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
"*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit* --"
Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

XXII

And therefore what I throw off is ideal --
Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of freemasons;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.
The grand *arcanum*'s not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII

Alas! worlds fall -- and woman, since she fell'd
The world (as, since that history less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held)
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor thing of usages! coerced, compell'd,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too entail'd upon their chins, --

XXIV

A daily plague, which in the aggregate
May average on the whole with parturition.
But as to women, who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she condition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more suspicion.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers, to breed a nation.

XXV

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That -- but ask any woman if she'd choose

(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?

XXVI

“Petticoat influence” is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are brought,
By various joltings of life’s hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat --
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser’s hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal --
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief -- for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

XXVIII

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river’s ripple’s flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing, --
‘T is pleasant, if then any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

XXIX

We left our heroes and our heroines

In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun* --
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX

An in-door life is less poetical;
And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,
With which I could not brew a pastoral.
But be it as it may, a bard must meet
All difficulties, whether great or small,
To spoil his undertaking or complete,
And work away like spirit upon matter,
Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

XXXI

Juan -- in this respect, at least, like saints --
Was all things unto people of all sorts,
And lived contentedly, without complaints,
In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts --
Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,
And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
He likewise could be most things to all women,
Without the coxcombry of certain *she* men.

XXXII

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
'T is also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range
The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,

Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII

And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never *craned*, and made but few "*faux pas*,"
And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 't is true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting -- for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several country gentlemen.

XXXIV

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
The boors cried "Dang it? who'd have thought it?" -- Sires,
The Nestors of the sporting generation,
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV

Such were his trophies -- not of spear and shield,
But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes' brushes;
Yet I must own -- although in this I yield
To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes, --
He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,
And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
Ask'd next day, "If men ever hunted *twice*?"

XXXVI

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,

Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race, --
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether saint or sinner, --
He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

XXXVII

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret -- cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer; --
In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII

And then he danced -- all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime -- he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense --
A thing in footing indispensable;
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

XXXIX

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchety critic's rigour.
Such classic *pas* -- *sans* flaw -- set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

XL

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The *tout ensemble* of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prozers, words are void of colour.

XLI

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.
Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved *tracasserie*,
Began to treat him with some small *agacerie*.

XLII

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, *grand monde*.
I'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground;
Besides there might be falsehood in what's stated:
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLIII

This noble personage began to look
A little black upon this new flirtation;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
Mere freedoms of the female corporation.

Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
'T will but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

XLIV

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd;
The Misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd;
Some would not deem such women could be found;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV

But what is odd, none ever named the duke,
Who, one might think, was something in the affair;
True, he was absent, and, 't was rumour'd, took
But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out.

XLVI

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Look'd grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

XLVII

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
'T is so becoming to the soul and face,
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with -- "Would you had thought twice!
Ah, if you had but follow'd my advice!"

XLVIII

O Job! you had two friends: one's quite enough,
Especially when we are ill at ease;
They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
When your affairs come round, one way or t' other,
Go to the coffee-house, and take another.

XLIX

But this is not my maxim: had it been,
Some heart-aches had been spared me: yet I care not --
I would not be a tortoise in his screen
Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not.
'T is better on the whole to have felt and seen
That which humanity may bear, or bear not:
'T will teach discernment to the sensitive,
And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

L

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so,"
Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the *past*,
Who, 'stead of saying what you *now* should do,
Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,

And solace your slight lapse 'gainst *bonos mores*,
With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend:
But Juan also shared in her austerity,
But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

LII

These forty days' advantage of her years --
And hers were those which can face calculation,
Boldly referring to the list of peers
And noble births, nor dread the enumeration --
Gave her a right to have maternal fears
For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII

This may be fix'd at somewhere before thirty --
Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
The strictest in chronology and virtue
Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe, so dirty
With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,

Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
'T was rather her experience made her sage,
For she had seen the world and stood its test,
As I have said in -- I forget what page;
My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time -- but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

LV

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,
She put all coronets into commotion:
At seventeen, too, the world was still enchanted
With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:
At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, call'd "The happiest of men."

LVI

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing winters,
Admired, adored; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
Without the apparel of being circumspect:
They could not even glean the slightest splinters
From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
To bear a son and heir -- and one miscarriage.

LVII

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her --
She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder;
But whatsoe'er she wish'd, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue dignify

A woman, so she's good, what *does* it signify?

LVIII

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle

Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
Leaving all-claretless the unmoisten'd throttle,

Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,

Who whirl the dust as simooms whirl the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,
A laureate's ode, or servile peer's "content."

LIX

'T is sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwined with the earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

LX

With the kind view of saving an *éclat*,
Both to the duchess and diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist
(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is); --

LXI

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might best impede

The farther progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the world, and doth not need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
His Grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons: but she dreaded first
The magic of her Grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seem'd to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

LXIII

Her Grace, too, pass'd for being an *intrigante*,
And somewhat *méchante* in her amorous sphere;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to *make* a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
And -- what is worst of all -- won't let you go:

LXIV

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,
Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend.
'T is best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
If that a *bonne fortune* be really *bonne*.

LXV

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
She call'd her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the siren's wile;
And answer'd, like a statesman or a prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

LXVI

Firstly, he said, "he never interfered
In any body's business but the king's:"
Next, that "he never judged from what appear'd,
Without strong reason, of those sort of things:"
Thirdly, that "Juan had more brain than beard,
And was not to be held in leading strings;"
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
"That good but rarely came from good advice."

LXVII

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth --
At least as far as *bienséance* allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of youth;
That young men rarely made monastic vows;
That opposition only more attaches --
But here a messenger brought in despatches:

LXVIII

And being of the council call'd "the Privy,"
Lord Henry walk'd into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's debt;

And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

LXIX

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coin'd in conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though not new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was in 't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired; and, as went out, calmly kiss'd her,
Less like a young wife than an agéd sister.

LXX

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birthdays, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a chamberlain --
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

LXXI

But there was something wanting on the whole --
I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell --
Which pretty women -- the sweet souls -- call *soul*.
Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

LXXII

Still there was something wanting, as I 've said --
That undefinable "*Je ne sçais quoi*,"
Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaüs: --
But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes;
Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects us,
The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back 't is better not to venture.

LXXIV

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the sex are always seeking:
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub -- and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'T is odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

LXXV

There is a flower call'd "Love in Idleness,"
For which see Shakspeare's everblooming garden; --
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British godship's humble pardon,
If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is warden; --

But though the flower is different, with the French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry "*Voilà la Pervenche!*"

LXXVI

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her supercargo.

LXXVII

"*Beatus ille procul!*" from "*negotiis,*"
Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong;
His other maxim, "*Noscitur a sociis,*"
Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
Unless good company be kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

LXXVIII

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
Eve made up millinery with fig leaves --
The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing,
As far as I know, that the church receives:
And since that time it need not cost much showing,
That many of the ills o'er which man grieves,
And still more women, spring from not employing
Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

LXXIX

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,

A rack of pleasures, where we must invent
A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.

Bards may sing what they please about *Content*;
Contented, when translated, means but cloy'd;

And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue devils, and blue-stockings, and romances
Reduced to practice, and perform'd like dances.

LXXX

I do declare, upon an affidavit,

Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;
Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,

Would some believe that such a tale had been:
But such intent I never had, nor have it;

Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
Especially when they would look like lies;
I therefore deal in generalities.

LXXXI

"An oyster may be cross'd in love" -- and why?

Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,

Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And *à-propos* of monks, their piety

With sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,

Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,

Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,

Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights;

You have freed the *blacks* -- now pray shut up the whites.

LXXXIII

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!

Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;

Teach them that “sauce for goose is sauce for gander,”

And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall?

Shut up each high heroic salamander,

Who eats fire gratis (since the pay’s but small);

Shut up -- no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,

Or else ‘t will cost us all another million.

LXXXIV

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out;

And you will be perhaps surprised to find

All things pursue exactly the same route,

As now with those of *soi-disant* sound mind.

This I could prove beyond a single doubt,

Were there a jot of sense among mankind;

But till that *point d’appui* is found, alas!

Like Archimedes, I leave earth as ‘t was.

LXXXV

Our gentle Adeline had one defect --

Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;

Her conduct had been perfectly correct,

As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.

A wavering spirit may be easier wreck’d,

Because ‘t is frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one;

But when the latter works its own undoing,

Its inner crash is like an earthquake’s ruin.

LXXXVI

She loved her lord, or thought so; but *that* love

Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,

The stone of Sisyphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,
No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble -- conjugal, but cold.

LXXXVII

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never clash'd:
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all bluely dash'd
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

LXXXVIII

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

LXXXIX

But when it was, she had that lurking demon
Of double nature, and thus doubly named --
Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and seamen,
That is, when they succeed; but greatly blamed
As *obstinacy*, both in men and women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is tamed: --
And 't will perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

XC

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,
It had been firmness; now 't is pertinacity:
Must the event decide between the two?
I leave it to your people of sagacity
To draw the line between the false and true,
If such can e'er be drawn by man's capacity:
My business is with Lady Adeline,
Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI

She knew not her own heart; then how should I?
I think not she was *then* in love with Juan:
If so, she would have had the strength to fly
The wild sensation, unto her a new one:
She merely felt a common sympathy
(I will not say it was a false or true one)
In him, because she thought he was in danger, --
Her husband's friend, her own, young, and a stranger,

XCII

She was, or thought she was, his friend -- and this
Without the farce of friendship, or romance
Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.
To thus much Adeline would not advance;
But of such friendship as man's may to man be
She was as capable as woman can be.

XCIII

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
An innocent predominance annex,
And tune the concord to a finer mood.

If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

XCIV

Love bears within its breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should "the *tender* passion" e'er be *tough*?

XCV

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a zany.
I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

XCVI

I've also seen some female *friends* ('t is odd,
But true -- as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
At home, far more than ever yet was Love --
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence, too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCVII

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense*;
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender, or their tenter, hooks.

XCVIII

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd "small,"
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

XCIX

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter:
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this epic satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 't will be their ruin.

C

But great things spring from little -- Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
As e'er brought man and woman to the brink
Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link
Of such a sentimental situation?

You'll never guess, I'll bet you millions, millions --
It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

C/

'T is strange -- but true; for truth is always strange;
Stranger than fiction; if it could be told,
How much would novels gain by the exchange!
How differently the world would men behold!
How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,
If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

C//

What "antres vast and deserts idle" then
Would be discover'd in the human soul!
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
With self-love in the centre as their pole!
What Anthropophagi are nine of ten
Of those who hold the kingdoms in control
Were things but only call'd by their right name,
Cæsar himself would be ashamed of fame.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE FIFTEENTH

I

Ah! -- What should follow slips from my reflection;
 Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
As *à-propos* of hope or retrospection,
 As though the lurking thought had follow'd free.
All present life is but an interjection,
 An "Oh!" or "Ah!" of joy or misery,
Or a "Ha! ha!" or "Bah!" -- a yawn, or "Pooh!"
Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

II

But, more or less, the whole's a syncopé
 Or a *singultus* -- emblems of emotion,
The grand antithesis to great *ennui*,
 Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean, --
That watery outline of eternity,
 Or miniature at least, as is my notion,
Which ministers unto the soul's delight,
In seeing matters which are out of sight.

III

But all are better than the sigh suppress,
 Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
Making the countenance a masque of rest,
 And turning human nature to an art.
Few men dare show their thoughts of worst or best;
 Dissimulation always sets apart
A corner for herself; and therefore fiction
Is that which passes with least contradiction.

IV

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who can not

Remember, without telling, passion's errors?
The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,
Hath got *blue devils* for his morning mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to float,
He cannot sink his tremors or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

V

And as for love -- O love! -- We will proceed.
The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

VI

The Lady Adeline, right honourable;
And honour'd, ran a risk of growing less so;
For few of the soft sex are very stable
In their resolves -- alas! that I should say so!
They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted; -- I presume to guess so,
But will not swear: yet both upon occasion,
Till old, may undergo adulteration.

VII

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmingled essence of the grape; and yet
Bright as a new napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set;
A page where Time should hesitate to print age,
And for which Nature might forego her debt --
Sole creditor whose process doth involve in 't

The luck of finding every body solvent.

VIII

O Death! thou dunnest of all duns! thou daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest tap,
Like a meek tradesman when, approaching palely,
Some splendid debtor he would take by sap:
But oft denied, as patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money, or "a draft on Ransom."

IX

Whate'er thou takest, spare a while poor Beauty!
She is so rare, and thou hast so much prey.
What though she now and then may slip from duty,
The more's the reason why you ought to stay.
Gaunt Gourmand! with whole nations for your booty,
You should be civil in a modest way:
Suppress, then, some slight feminine diseases,
And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

X

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous
Where she was interested (as was said),
Because she was not apt, like some of us,
To like too readily, or too high bred
To show it (points we need not now discuss) --
Would give up artlessly both heart and head
Unto such feelings as seem'd innocent,
For objects worthy of the sentiment.

XI

Some parts of Juan's history, which Rumour,
That live gazette, had scatter'd to disfigure,

She had heard; but women hear with more good humour
Such aberrations than we men of rigour:
Besides, his conduct, since in England, grew more
Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier vigour;
Because he had, like Alcibiades,
The art of living in all climes with ease.

XII

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest: no abuse
Of his attractions marr'd the fair perspective,
To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, "Resist us if you can" --
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man.

XIII

They are wrong -- that's not the way to set about it;
As, if they told the truth, could well be shown.
But, right or wrong, Don Juan was without it;
In fact, his manner was his own alone;
Sincere he was -- at least you could not doubt it,
In listening merely to his voice's tone.
The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

XIV

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion: though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem'd to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put *you* on your guard:
Perhaps 't was hardly quite assured enough,
But modesty's at times its own reward,
Like virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there's need to mention.

XV

Serene, accomplish'd, cheerful but not loud;
Insinuating without insinuation;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation;
Proud with the proud, yet courteously proud,
So as to make them feel he knew his station
And theirs: -- without a struggle for priority,
He neither brook'd nor claim'd superiority.

XVI

That is, with men: with women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for; and their
Imagination's quite enough for that:
So that the outline's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvas up -- and "*verbum sat*."
If once their phantasies be brought to bear
Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.

XVII

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own:
'T is thus the good will amiably err,
And eke the wise, as has been often shown.
Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well known:
And persecuted sages teach the schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

XVIII

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?

Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the nations.

XIX

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety:
With no great care for what is nicknamed glory,
But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With any body in a ride or walk.

XX

I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
But there's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a time.
Of this I'm sure at least, there's no servility
In mine irregularity of chime,
Which rings what's uppermost of new or hoary,
Just as I feel the *Improvvisatore*.

XXI

*"Omnia vult belle Matho dicere -- dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male."*
The first is rather more than mortal can do;
The second may be sadly done or gaily;
The third is still more difficult to stand to;
The fourth we hear, and see, and say too, daily.
The whole together is what I could wish
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

XXII

A modest hope -- but modesty's my forte,
And pride my feeble: -- let us ramble on.
I meant to make this poem very short,
But now I can't tell where it may not run.
No doubt, if I had wished to pay my court
To critics, or to hail the *setting* sun
Of tyranny of all kinds, my concision
Were more; -- but I was born for opposition.

XXIII

But then 't is mostly on the weaker side;
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown pride
Were shaken down, and "dogs had had their day,"
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other way,
And wax an ultra-royalist in loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic royalty.

XXIV

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

XXV

But *laissez aller* -- knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'T is a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite:
The difficulty lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)

With nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

XXVI

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the manners; manners now make men --
Pinn'd like a flock, and fleeced too in their fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place costume.

XXVII

We'll do our best to make the best on 't: -- March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.
We surely may find something worth research:
Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

XXVIII

When Adeline, in all her growing sense
Of Juan's merits and his situation,
Felt on the whole an interest intense, --
Partly perhaps because a fresh sensation,
Or that he had an air of innocence,
Which is for innocence a sad temptation, --
As women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

XXIX

She had a good opinion of advice,

Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,
For which small thanks are still the market price,
Even where the article at highest rate is:
She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,
And morally decided, the best state is
For morals, marriage; and this question carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

XXX

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;
But that, at present, with immediate reference
To his own circumstances, there might lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

XXXI

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or kin,
Arranging them like books on the same shelf,
There's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 't is no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

XXXII

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in her head
Some drama of the marriage unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and bed
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes

They turn out melodramas or pantomimes.

XXXIII

They generally have some only son,
Some heir to a large property, some friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom perhaps might end
A line, and leave posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and besides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of brides.

XXXIV

From these they will be careful to select,
For this an heiress, and for that a beauty;
For one a songstress who hath no defect,
For t' other one who promises much duty;
For this a lady no one can reject,
Whose sole accomplishments were quite a booty;
A second for her excellent connections;
A third, because there can be no objections.

XXXV

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage
In his harmonious settlement (which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which disparage
What Nature naturally most encourages) --
Why call'd he "Harmony" a state *sans* wedlock?
Now here I've got the preacher at a dead lock,

XXXVI

Because he either meant to sneer at harmony
Or marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.

But whether reverend Rapp learn'd this in Germany
Or no, 't is said his sect is rich and godly,
Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
Of ours, although they propagate more broadly.
My objection's to his title, not his ritual,
Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

XXXVII

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
Who favour, *malgré* Malthus, generation --
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
Of all the modest part of propagation;
Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
That half its produce tends to emigration,
That sad result of passions and potatoes --
Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

XXXVIII

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
I wish she had: his book's the eleventh commandment,
Which says, "Thou shalt not marry," unless *well*:
This he (as far as I can understand) meant.
'T is not my purpose on his views to dwell
Nor canvass what so "eminent a hand" meant;
But certes it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

XXXIX

But Adeline, who probably presumed
That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or *separate* maintenance, in case 't was doom'd --
As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly groom'd,
May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage (which might form a painter's fame,
Like Holbein's "Dance of Death" -- but 't is the same); --

XL

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
In her own mind, and that's enough for woman:
But then, with whom? There was the sage Miss Reading,
Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman, and Miss Knowman.
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
She deem'd his merits something more than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
And might go on, if well wound up, like watches.

XLI

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seem'd the cream of equanimity
Till skimm'd -- and then there was some milk and water,
With a slight shade of blue too, it might be,
Beneath the surface; but what did it matter?
Love's riotous, but marriage should have quiet,
And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

XLII

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
A dashing *demoiselle* of good estate,
Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string;
But whether English dukes grew rare of late,
Or that she had not harp'd upon the true string,
By which such sirens can attract our great,
She took up with some foreign younger brother,
A Russ or Turk -- the one's as good as t' other.

XLIII

And then there was -- but why should I go on,
Unless the ladies should go off? -- there was
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
Of the best class, and better than her class, --

Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass,
A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

XLIV

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
Child to the care of guardians good and kind;
But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
Blood is not water; and where shall we find
Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie
By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

XLV

Early in years, and yet more infantine
In figure, she had something of sublime
In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs' shine.
All youth -- but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave -- as pitying man's decline;
Mournful -- but mournful of another's crime,
She look'd as if she sat by Eden's door.
And grieved for those who could return no more.

XLVI

She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere,
As far as her own gentle heart allow'd,
And deem'd that fallen worship far more dear
Perhaps because 't was fallen: her sires were proud
Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the ear
Of nations, and had never bent or bow'd
To novel power; and as she was the last,
She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

XLVII

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength -- most strange in one so young!

XLVIII

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
Although her birth and wealth had given her vogue
Beyond the charmers we have already cited;
Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
Of single gentlemen who would be double.

XLIX

And this omission, like that of the bust
Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
This he express'd half smiling and half serious;
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd "what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?"

L

Juan rejoin'd -- "She was a Catholic,
And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
Since he was sure his mother would fall sick,
And the Pope thunder excommunication,
If-" But here Adeline, who seem'd to pique
Herself extremely on the inoculation

Of others with her own opinions, stated --
As usual -- the same reason which she late did.

LI

And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way's certainly to tease on,
And amplify: you lose much by concision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or -- what is just the same -- it wearies out.
So the end's gain'd, what signifies the route?

LII

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice --
For prejudice it was -- against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
With all the added charm of form and feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
But nature's nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

LIII

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
With which Aurora on those baubles look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier day:
For there are few things by mankind less brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
Like "Anthony's by Cæsar," by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

LIV

It was not envy -- Adeline had none;

Her place was far beyond it, and her mind.
It was not scorn -- which could not light on one
Whose greatest *fault* was leaving few to find.
It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the *ignes fatui* of mankind.
It was not -- but 't is easier far, alas!
To say what it was *not* than what it was.

LV

Little Aurora deem'd she was the theme
Of such discussion. She was there a guest;
A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than the rest,
Which flow'd on for a moment in the beam
Time sheds a moment o'er each sparkling crest.
Had she known this, she would have calmly smiled --
She had so much, or little, of the child.

LVI

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow-worm shine,
Then turn'd unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world's ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

LVII

His fame too, -- for he had that kind of fame
Which sometimes plays the deuce with womankind,
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind: --
These seals upon her wax made no impression,

Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

LVIII

Juan knew nought of such a character --

High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:

The island girl, bred up by the lone sea,
More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
Nor would be thus: -- the difference in them
Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

LIX

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,

Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, "I sound my warison;"

Scott, the superlative of my comparative --
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, lord, man, with such skill as none would share it, if
There had not been one Shakspeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

LX

I say, in my slight way I may proceed

To play upon the surface of humanity.

I write the world, nor care if the world read,

At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.

My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed

More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so -- now I know it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet.

LXI

The conference or congress (for it ended

As congresses of late do) of the Lady

Adeline and Don Juan rather blended

Some acids with the sweets -- for she was heady;
But, ere the matter could be marr'd or mended,
The silvery bell rang, not for "dinner ready,"
But for that hour, call'd *half-hour*, given to dress,
Though ladies' robes seem scant enough for less.

LXII

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer's able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks,
In soups or sauces, or a sole *ragoût*,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians, brew.

LXIII

There was a goodly "soupe à la *bonne femme*,"
Though God knows whence it came from; there was, too,
A turbot for relief of those who cram,
Relieved with "dindon à la Périgeux;"
There also was -- the sinner that I am!
How shall I get this gourmand stanza through? --
"Soupe à la Beauveau," whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

LXIV

But I must crowd all into one grand mess
Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
Than when some squeamish people deem her frail.
But though a *bonne vivante*, I must confess
Her stomach's not her peccant part; this tale
However doth require some slight refection,
Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

LXV

Fowls “à la Condé,” slices eke of salmon,
With “sauces Gênevoises,” and haunch of venison;
Wines too, which might again have slain young Ammon --
A man like whom I hope we shan’t see many soon;
They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,
Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;
And then there was champagne with foaming whirls,
As white as Cleopatra’s melted pearls.

LXVI

Then there was God knows what “à l’Allemande,”
”À l’Espagnole,” “timballe,” and “salpicon” --
With things I can’t withstand or understand,
Though swallow’d with much zest upon the whole;
And “*entremets*” to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
While great Lucullus’ *Robe triumphal* muffles
(*There’s fame*) -- young partridge fillets, deck’d with truffles.

LXVII

What are the *fillets* on the victor’s brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch
Which nodded to the nation’s spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots’ haughty march?
Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre e’en to partridges?

LXVIII

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
Follow’d by “*petits puits d’amour*” -- a dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
So every one may dress it to his wish,

According to the best of dictionaries,
Which encyclopedize both flesh and fish;
But even sans *confitures*, it no less true is,
There's pretty picking in those *petits puits*.

LXIX

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expanded on two courses;
And indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple ration,
That cookery could have call'd forth such resources,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of nature?

LXX

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
The diners of celebrity dined well;
The ladies with more moderation mingled
In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;
Also the younger men too: for a springald
Can't, like ripe age, in *gourmandise* excel,
But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
(When seated next him) of some pretty lisper.

LXXI

Alas! I must leave undescribed the *gibier*,
The *salmi*, the *consommé*, the *purée*,
All which I use to make my rhymes run glibber
Than could roast beef in our rough John Bull way:
I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
"Bubble and squeak" would spoil my liquid lay:
But I have dined, and must forego, Alas!
The chaste description even of a "bécasse;"

LXXII

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
From nature for the service of the *gout* --
Taste or the gout, -- pronounce it as inclines
Your stomach! Ere you dine, the French will do;
But after, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the two.
Hast ever *had* the *gout*? I have not had it --
But I may have, and you too, reader, dread it.

LXXIII

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite *plat* of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:
On them and bread 't was oft my luck to dine,
The grass my table-cloth, in open-air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

LXXIV

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats display'd:
Don Juan sat next "à l'Espagnole" --
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that 't was drest
Superbly, and contain'd a world of zest.

LXXV

By some odd chance too, he was placed between
Aurora and the Lady Adeline --
A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to dine.
Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to shine;

For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seem'd to look through him.

LXXVI

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears:
This much is sure, that, out of earshot, things
Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can't tell whence their knowledge springs.
Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one bears, so loudly though it rings,
'T is wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues -- which pass'd without a word!

LXXVII

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a *preux chevalier* -- as it ought:
Of all offences that's the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.
Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught;
Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

LXXVIII

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely look'd aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.
The devil was in the girl! Could it be pride?
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows? But Adeline's malicious eyes
Sparkled with her successful prophecies,

LXXIX

And look'd as much as if to say, "I said it;"

A kind of triumph I'll not recommend,
Because it sometimes, as I have seen or read it,
Both in the case of lover and of friend,
Will pique a gentleman, for his own credit,
To bring what was a jest to a serious end:
For all men prophesy what is or was,
And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

LXXX

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,
That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relax'd her thoughts from their sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

LXXXI

From answering she began to question; this
With her was rare: and Adeline, who as yet
Thought her predictions went not much amiss,
Began to dread she'd thaw to a coquette --
So very difficult, they say, it is
To keep extremes from meeting, when once set
In motion; but she here too much refined --
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

LXXXII

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact, too, temper'd him from grave to gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or free:
He had the art of drawing people out,

Without their seeing what he was about.

LXXXIII

Aurora, who in her indifference

 Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flatterers, though she deem'd he had more sense
 Than whispering foplings, or than witlings loud --
Commenced (from such slight things will great commence)
 To feel that flattery which attracts the proud
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

LXXXIV

And then he had good looks; -- that point was carried

 Nem. con. amongst the women, which I grieve
To say leads oft to *crim. con.* with the married --
 A case which to the juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have tarried.

 Now though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks
Make more impression than the best of books.

LXXXV

Aurora, who look'd more on books than faces,

 Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
 Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,
 Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Own'd to a *penchant*, though discreet, for beauty.

LXXXVI

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,

 But innocently so, as Socrates;

And really, if the sage sublime and Attic
At seventy years had phantasies like these,
Which Plato in his dialogues dramatic
Has shown, I know not why they should displease
In virgins -- always in a modest way,
Observe; for that with me's a "*sine quâ*."

LXXXVII

Also observe, that, like the great Lord Coke
(See Littleton), whene'er I have express'd
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third, too, in a nook,
Or none at all -- which seems a sorry jest:
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things existent?

LXXXVIII

If people contradict themselves, can I
Help contradicting them, and every body,
Even my veracious self? -- But that's a lie:
I never did so, never will -- how should I?
He who doubts all things nothing can deny:
Truth's fountains may be clear -- her streams are muddy,
And cut through such canals of contradiction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

LXXXIX

Apologue, fable, poesy, and parable,
Are false, but may be render'd also true,
By those who sow them in a land that's arable.
'T is wonderful what fable will not do!
'T is said it makes reality more bearable:
But what's reality? Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No: she too much rejects.
Religion? Yes; but which of all her sects?

XC

Some millions must be wrong, that's pretty clear;
Perhaps it may turn out that all were right.
God help us! Since we have need on our career
To keep our holy beacons always bright,
'T is time that some new prophet should appear,
Or *old* indulge man with a second sight.
Opinions wear out in some thousand years,
Without a small refreshment from the spheres.

XCI

But here again, why will I thus entangle
Myself with metaphysics? None can hate
So much as I do any kind of wrangle;
And yet, such is my folly, or my fate,
I always knock my head against some angle
About the present, past, or future state.
Yet I wish well to Trojan and to Tyrian,
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

XCII

But though I am a temperate theologian,
And also meek as a metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
As Eldon on a lunatic commission --
In politics my duty is to show John
Bull something of the lower world's condition.
It makes my blood boil like the springs of Hecla,
To see men let these scoundrel sovereigns break law.

XCIII

But politics, and policy, and piety,
Are topics which I sometimes introduce,
Not only for the sake of their variety,
But as subservient to a moral use;

Because my business is to *dress* society,
And stuff with *sage* that very verdant goose.
And now, that we may furnish with some matter all
Tastes, we are going to try the supernatural.

XCIV

And now I will give up all argument;
And positively henceforth no temptation
Shall “fool me to the top up of my bent:” --
Yes, I’ll begin a thorough reformation.
Indeed, I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse’s conversation
Was dangerous; -- I think she is as harmless
As some who labour more and yet may charm less.

XCV

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
No; but you have heard -- I understand -- be dumb!
And don’t regret the time you may have lost,
For you have got that pleasure still to come:
And do not think I mean to sneer at most
Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mysterious: --
For certain reasons my belief is serious.

XCVI

Serious? You laugh; -- you may: that will I not;
My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
Exists -- and where? That shall I not recall,
Because I’d rather it should be forgot,
”Shadows the soul of Richard” may appal.
In short, upon that subject I’ve some qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malmsbury.

XCVII

The night (I sing by night -- sometimes an owl,
And now and then a nightingale) is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me scowl --
I wish to heaven they would not look so grim;
The dying embers dwindle in the grate --
I think too that I have sate up too late:

XCVIII

And therefore, though 't is by no means my way
To rhyme at noon -- when I have other things
To think of, if I ever think -- I say
I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,
And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
Treating a topic which, alas! but brings
Shadows; -- but you must be in my condition
Before you learn to call this superstition.

XCIX

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.

DON JUAN: CANTO THE SIXTEENTH

I

The antique Persians taught three useful things,
To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.
This was the mode of Cyrus, best of kings --
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings;
Horses they ride without remorse or ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever,
But draw the long bow better now than ever.

II

The cause of this effect, or this defect, --
"For this effect defective comes by cause," --
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate'er may be her follies or her flaws
In some things, mine's beyond all contradiction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

III

And as she treats all things, and ne'er retreats
From any thing, this epic will contain
A wilderness of the most rare conceits,
Which you might elsewhere hope to find in vain.
'T is true there be some bitters with the sweets,
Yet mix'd so slightly, that you can't complain,
But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
"De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis."

IV

But of all truths which she has told, the most

True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost --
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?
'T is time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

V

Some people would impose now with authority,
Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's Chronicle;
Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 't is so. Who nibble, scribble, quibble, he
Quiets at once with "*quia impossibile.*"

VI

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe: -- if 't is improbable you *must*,
And if it is impossible, you *shall*:
'T is always best to take things upon trust.
I do not speak profanely, to recall
Those holier mysteries which the wise and just
Receive as gospel, and which grow more rooted,
As all truths must, the more they are disputed:

VII

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
That in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still

In its behalf, let those deny who will.

VIII

The dinner and the *soirée* too were done,
The supper too discuss'd, the dames admired,
The banqueteers had dropp'd off one by one --
The song was silent, and the dance expired:
The last thin petticoats were vanish'd, gone
Like fleecy Clouds into the sky retired,
And nothing brighter gleam'd through the saloon
Than dying tapers -- and the peeping moon.

IX

The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like the last glass of champagne, without
The foam which made its virgin bumper gay;
Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
Or like a soda bottle when its spray
Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
Or like a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;

X

Or like an opiate, which brings troubled rest,
Or none; or like -- like nothing that I know
Except itself; -- such is the human breast;
A thing, of which similitudes can show
No real likeness, -- like the old Tyrian vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
So perish every tyrant's robe piece-meal!

XI

But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
Undressing is a woe; our *robe de chambre*

May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than amber.
Titus exclaim'd, "I've lost a day!" Of all
The nights and days most people can remember
(I have had of both, some not to be disdain'd),
I wish they 'd state how many they have gain'd.

XII

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
Felt restless, and perplex'd, and compromised:
He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more bright
Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,
He probably would have philosophised:
A great resource to all, and ne'er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sigh'd.

XIII

He sigh'd; -- the next resource is the full moon,
Where all sighs are deposited; and now
It happen'd luckily, the chaste orb shone
As clear as such a climate will allow;
And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
To hail her with the apostrophe -- "O thou!"
Of amatory egotism the *Tuism*,
Which further to explain would be a truism.

XIV

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
Shepherd, or swain, whoever may behold,
Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her:
Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather err);
Deep secrets to her rolling light are told;
The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

XV

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
For contemplation rather than his pillow:
The Gothic chamber, where he was enclosed,
Let in the rippling sound of the lake's billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused;
Below his window waved (of course) a willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flash'd and after darken'd in the shade.

XVI

Upon his table or his toilet, -- *which*
Of these is not exactly ascertain'd
(I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
Of nicety, where a fact is to be gain'd), --
A lamp burn'd high, while he leant from a niche,
Where many a Gothic ornament remain'd,
In chisell'd stone and painted glass, and all
That time has left our fathers of their hall.

XVII

Then, as the night was clear though cold, he threw
His chamber door wide open -- and went forth
Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
Long, furnish'd with old pictures of great worth,
Of knights and dames heroic and chaste too,
As doubtless should be people of high birth.
But by dim lights the portraits of the dead
Have something ghastly, desolate, and dread.

XVIII

The forms of the grim knight and pictured saint
Look living in the moon; and as you turn
Backward and forward to the echoes faint
Of your own footsteps -- voices from the urn

Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
As if to ask how you can dare to keep
A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

XIX

And the pale smile of beauties in the grave,
The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
Glimmer on high; their buried locks still wave
Along the canvas; their eyes glance like dreams
On ours, or spars within some dusky cave,
But death is imaged in their shadowy beams.
A picture is the past; even ere its frame
Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

XX

As Juan mused on mutability,
Or on his mistress -- terms synonymous --
No sound except the echo of his sigh
Or step ran sadly through that antique house;
When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
A supernatural agent -- or a mouse,
Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
Most people as it plays along the arras.

XXI

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk, array'd
In cowl and beads and dusky garb, appear'd,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard;
His garments only a slight murmur made;
He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
But slowly; and as he pass'd Juan by,
Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

XXII

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, there was nothing in 't
Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,
Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.
And did he see this? or was it a vapour?

XXIII

Once, twice, thrice pass'd, repass'd -- the thing of air,
Or earth beneath, or heaven, or t' other place;
And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,
Yet could not speak or move; but, on its base
As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
He tax'd his tongue for words, which were not granted,
To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

XXIV

The third time, after a still longer pause,
The shadow pass'd away -- but where? the hall
Was long, and thus far there was no great cause
To think his vanishing unnatural:
Doors there were many, through which, by the laws
Of physics, bodies whether short or tall
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seem'd to evaporate.

XXV

He stood -- how long he knew not, but it seem'd
An age -- expectant, powerless, with his eyes
Strain'd on the spot where first the figure gleam'd;
Then by degrees recall'd his energies,
And would have pass'd the whole off as a dream,
But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,

Waking already, and return'd at length
Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength.

XXVI

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not *blue*, as modest tapers use,
Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
He rubb'd his eyes, and they did not refuse
Their office; he took up an old newspaper;
The paper was right easy to peruse;
He read an article the king attacking,
And a long eulogy of "patent blacking."

XXVII

This savour'd of this world; but his hand shook --
He shut his door, and after having read
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There, couch'd all snugly on his pillow's nook,
With what he had seen his phantasy he fed;
And though it was no opiate, slumber crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

XXVIII

He woke betimes; and, as may be supposed,
Ponder'd upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizz'd for superstition.
The more he thought, the more his mind was posed:
In the mean time, his valet, whose precision
Was great, because his master brook'd no less,
Knock'd to inform him it was time to dress.

XXIX

He dress'd; and like young people he was wont

To take some trouble with his toilet, but
This morning rather spent less time upon 't;
 Aside his very mirror soon was put;
His curls fell negligently o'er his front,
 His clothes were not curb'd to their usual cut,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

XXX

And when he walk'd down into the saloon,
 He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discover'd soon,
 Had it not happen'd scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his spoon;
 So much *distract* he was, that all could see
That something was the matter -- Adeline
The first -- but *what* she could not well divine.

XXXI

She look'd, and saw him pale, and turn'd as pale
 Herself; then hastily look'd down, and mutter'd
Something, but what's not stated in my tale.
 Lord Henry said his muffin was ill butter'd;
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke play'd with her veil,
 And look'd at Juan hard, but nothing utter'd.
Aurora Raby with her large dark eyes
Survey'd him with a kind of calm surprise.

XXXII

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
 And everybody wondering more or less,
Fair Adeline enquired, "If he were ill?"
 He started, and said, "Yes -- no -- rather -- yes."
The family physician had great skill,
 And being present, now began to express
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell

The cause, but Juan said, "He was quite well."

XXXIII

"Quite well; yes, -- no." -- These answers were mysterious,
And yet his looks appear'd to sanction both,
However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden growth
Weigh'd on his spirit, though by no means serious:
But for the rest, as he himself seem'd loth
To state the case, it might be ta'en for granted
It was not the physician that he wanted.

XXXIV

Lord Henry, who had now discuss'd his chocolate,
Also the muffin whereof he complain'd,
Said, Juan had not got his usual look elate,
At which he marvell'd, since it had not rain'd;
Then ask'd her Grace what news were of the duke of late?
Her Grace replied, *his* Grace was rather pain'd
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

XXXV

Then Henry turn'd to Juan, and address'd
A few words of condolence on his state:
"You look," quoth he, "as if you had had your rest
Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late."
"What friar?" said Juan; and he did his best
To put the question with an air sedate,
Or careless; but the effort was not valid
To hinder him from growing still more pallid.

XXXVI

"Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?
The spirit of these walls?" -- "In truth not I."

“Why Fame -- but Fame you know’s sometimes a liar --
Tells an odd story, of which by and by:
Whether with time the spectre has grown shyer,
Or that our sires had a more gifted eye
For such sights, though the tale is half believed,
The friar of late has not been oft perceived.

XXXVII

“The last time was -- “ -- “I pray,” said Adeline --
(Who watch’d the changes of Don Juan’s brow,
And from its context thought she could divine
Connexions stronger then he chose to avow
With this same legend) -- “if you but design
To jest, you’ll choose some other theme just now,
Because the present tale has oft been told,
And is not much improved by growing old.”

XXXVIII

“Jest!” quoth Milor; “why, Adeline, you know
That we ourselves -- ‘t was in the honey-moon --
“Saw --” -- “Well, no matter. t was so long ago;
But, come, I’ll set your story to a tune.”
Graceful as Dian, when she draws her bow,
She seized her harp, whose strings were kindled soon
As touch’d, and plaintively began to play
The air of “‘T was a Friar of Orders Gray.”

XXXIX

“But add the words,” cried Henry, “which you made;
For Adeline is half a poetess,”
Turning round to the rest, he smiling said.
Of course the others could not but express
In courtesy their wish to see display’d
By one *three* talents, for there were no less --
The voice, the words, the harper’s skill, at once
Could hardly be united by a dunce.

XL

After some fascinating hesitation, --

The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,
I can't tell why, to this dissimulation, --

Fair Adeline, with eyes fix'd on the ground
At first, then kindling into animation,

Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,
And sang with much simplicity, -- a merit
Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it.

1

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
Who sitteth by Norman stone,
For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,
And his mass of the days that are gone.
When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,
Made Norman Church his prey,
And expell'd the friars, one friar still
Would not be driven away.

2

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
To turn church lands to lay,
With sword in hand, and torch to light
Their walls, if they said nay;
A monk remain'd, unchased, unchain'd,
And he did not seem form'd of clay,
For he 's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church,
Though he is not seen by day.

3

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
It is not mine to say;
But still with the house of Amundeville
He abideth night and day.
By the marriage-bed of their lords, 't is said,
He flits on the bridal eve;
And 't is held as faith, to their bed of death

He comes -- but not to grieve.

4

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn,
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the "we moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.
His form you may trace, but not his face,
'T is shadow'd by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

5

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the church's heir
Whoever may be the lay.
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night;
Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

6

Say nought to him as he walks the hall,
And he'll say nought to you;
He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
As o'er the grass the dew.
Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him, fair or foul!
And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

XLI

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires
Died from the touch that kindled them to sound;
And the pause follow'd, which when song expires
Pervades a moment those who listen round;
And then of course the circle much admires,

Nor less applauds, as in politeness bound,
The tones, the feeling, and the execution,
To the performer's diffident confusion.

XLII

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then as 't were *without* display,
Yet *with* display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she *could*, if it were worth her while.

XLIII

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was -- pardon the pedantic illustration --
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion;
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoil'd carpet -- but the "Attic Bee"
Was much consoled by his own repartee.

XLIV

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade
(By doing easily, whene'er she chose,
What dilettanti do with vast parade)
Their sort of *half profession*; for it grows
To something like this when too oft display'd;
And that it is so everybody knows
Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T'other,
Show off -- to please their company or mother.

XLV

Oh! the long evenings of duets and trios!
The admirations and the speculations;
The “Mamma Mia’s!” and the “Amor Mio’s!”
The “Tanti palpiti’s” on such occasions:
The “Lasciami’s,” and quavering “Addio’s!”
Amongst our own most musical of nations;
With “Tu mi chamas’s” from Portingale,
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

XLVI

In Babylon’s *bravuras* -- as the home
Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Gray Highlands,
That bring Lochaber back to eyes that roam
O’er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures of music which o’ercome
All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,
No more to be beheld but in such visions --
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

XLVII

She also had a twilight tinge of “*Blue*,”
Could write rhymes, and compose more than she wrote,
Made epigrams occasionally too
Upon her friends, as everybody ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote;
Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to show it.

XLVIII

Aurora -- since we are touching upon taste,
Which now-a-days is the thermometer
By whose degrees all characters are class’d --
Was more Shakspearian, if I do not err.
The worlds beyond this world’s perplexing waste
Had more of her existence, for in her

There was a depth of feeling to embrace
Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

XLIX

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless Grace,
The full-grown Hebe of Fitz-Fulke, whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon, -- but that's not much; we find
Few females without some such gentle leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven.

L

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
Though once she was seen reading the *Bath Guide*,
And Hayley's *Triumphs*, which she deem'd pathetic,
Because she said *her temper* had been tried
So much, the bard had really been prophetic
Of what she had gone through with -- since a bride.
But of all verse, what most ensured her praise
Were sonnets to herself, or *bouts rimés*.

LI

'T were difficult to say what was the object
Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
To bear on what appear'd to her the subject
Of Juan's nervous feelings on that day.
Perhaps she merely had the simple project
To laugh him out of his supposed dismay;
Perhaps she might wish to confirm him in it,
Though why I cannot say -- at least this minute.

LII

But so far the immediate effect

Was to restore him to his self-propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
Who wish to take the tone of their society:
In which you cannot be too circumspect,
Whether the mode be persiflage or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

LIII

And therefore Juan now began to rally
His spirits, and without more explanation
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
Her Grace, too, also seized the same occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
But wish'd for a still more detail'd narration
Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,
About the present family's deaths and wooings.

LIV

Of these few could say more than has been said;
They pass'd as such things do, for superstition
With some, while others, who had more in dread
The theme, half credited the strange tradition;
And much was talk'd on all sides on that head:
But Juan, when cross-question'd on the vision,
Which some supposed (though he had not avow'd it)
Had stirr'd him, answer'd in a way to cloud it.

LV

And then, the mid-day having worn to one,
The company prepared to separate;
Some to their several pastimes, or to none,
Some wondering 't was so early, some so late.
There was a goodly match too, to be run
Between some greyhounds on my lord's estate,
And a young race-horse of old pedigree

Match'd for the spring, whom several went to see.

LVI

There was a picture-dealer who had brought
A special Titian, warranted original,
So precious that it was not to be bought,
Though princes the possessor were besieging all.
The king himself had cheapen'd it, but thought
The civil list he deigns to accept (obliging all
His subjects by his gracious acceptation)
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

LVII

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur, --
The friend of artists, if not arts, -- the owner,
With motives the most classical and pure,
So that he would have been the very donor,
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
So much he deem'd his patronage an honour,
Had brought the *capo d'opera*, not for sale,
But for his judgment -- never known to fail.

LVIII

There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic
Bricklayer of Babel, call'd an architect,
Brought to survey these grey walls, which though so thick,
Might have from time acquired some slight defect;
Who after rummaging the Abbey through thick
And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect
New buildings of correctest conformation,
And throw down old -- which he call'd *restoration*.

LIX

The cost would be a trifle -- an "old song,"
Set to some thousands ('t is the usual burden

Of that same tune, when people hum it long) --
The price would speedily repay its worth in
An edifice no less sublime than strong,
By which Lord Henry's good taste would go forth in
Its glory, through all ages shining sunny,
For Gothic daring shown in English money.

LX

There were two lawyers busy on a mortgage
Lord Henry wish'd to raise for a new purchase;
Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,
And one on tithes, which sure are Discord's torches,
Kindling Religion till she throws down *her* gage,
"Untying" squires "to fight against the churches;"
There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman,
For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

LXI

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap,
Ready for gaol, their place of convalescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to see, since --
Since -- since -- in youth, I had the sad mishap --
But luckily I have paid few parish fees since):
That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour,
Presents the problem of a double figure.

LXII

A reel within a bottle is a mystery,
One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;
Therefore the present piece of natural history
I leave to those who are fond of solving doubt;
And merely state, though not for the consistory,
Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
Had bagg'd this poacher upon Nature's manor.

LXIII

Now justices of peace must judge all pieces
Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game
And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a license for the same;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
Are puzzles to the most precautions benches.

LXIV

The present culprit was extremely pale,
Pale as if painted so; her cheek being red
By nature, as in higher dames less hale
'T is white, at least when they just rise from bed.
Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail,
Poor soul! for she was country born and bred,
And knew no better in her immorality
Than to wax white -- for blushes are for quality.

LXV

Her black, bright, downcast, yet *espiègle* eye,
Had gather'd a large tear into its corner,
Which the poor thing at times essay'd to dry,
For she was not a sentimental mourner
Parading all her sensibility,
Nor insolent enough to scorn the scorner,
But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
To be call'd up for her examination.

LXVI

Of course these groups were scatter'd here and there,
Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent.
The lawyers in the study; and in air
The prize pig, ploughman, poachers; the men sent

From town, viz., architect and dealer, were
Both busy (as a general in his tent
Writing despatches) in their several stations,
Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

LXVII

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
While Scout, the parish guardian of the frail,
Discuss'd (he hated beer yclept the "small")
A mighty mug of *moral* double ale.
She waited until justice could recall
Its kind attentions to their proper pale,
To name a thing in nomenclature rather
Perplexing for most virgins -- a child's father.

LXVIII

You see here was enough of occupation
For the Lord Henry, link'd with dogs and horses.
There was much bustle too, and preparation
Below stairs on the score of second courses;
Because, as suits their rank and situation,
Those who in counties have great land resources
Have "Public days," when all men may carouse,
Though not exactly what's call'd "open house."

LXIX

But once a week or fortnight, *uninvited*
(Thus we translate a *general invitation*),
All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted,
May drop in without cards, and take their station
At the full board, and sit alike delighted
With fashionable wines and conversation;
And, as the isthmus of the grand connection,
Talk o'er themselves the past and next election.

LXX

Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for boroughs like a rat or rabbit;
But county contests cost him rather dearer,
Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl of Giftgabbit
Had English influence in the self-same sphere here;
His son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbet,
Was member for the "other interest" (meaning
The same self-interest, with a different leaning).

LXXI

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
He was all things to all men, and dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all -- which last commenced
To gather to a somewhat large amount, he
Not calculating how much they condensed;
But what with keeping some, and breaking others,
His word had the same value as another's.

LXXII

A friend to freedom and freeholders -- yet
No less a friend to government -- he held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism -- albeit compell'd,
Such was his sovereign's pleasure (though unfit,
He added modestly, when rebels rail'd),
To hold some sinecures he wish'd abolish'd,
But that with them all law would be demolish'd.

LXXIII

He was "free to confess" (whence comes this phrase?
Is 't English? No -- 't is only parliamentary)
That innovation's spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the last century.
He would not tread a factious path to praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to venture high;

As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

LXXIV

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life
Had ever been his sole and whole ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of strife,
Which threaten'd the whole country with perdition?
When demagogues would with a butcher's knife
Cut through and through (oh! damnable incision!)
The Gordian or the Geordi-an knot, whose strings
Have tied together commons, lords, and kings.

LXXV

Sooner "come Place into the civil list
And champion him to the utmost" -- he would keep it,
Till duly disappointed or dismiss'd:
Profit he care not for, let others reap it;
But should the day come when place ceased to exist,
The country would have far more cause to weep it:
For how could it go on? Explain who can!
He gloried in the name of Englishman.

LXXVI

He was as independent -- ay, much more --
Than those who were not paid for independence,
As common soldiers, or a common -- shore,
Have in their several arts or parts ascendance
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,
Who do not give professional attendance.
Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager
To prove their pride, as footmen to a beggar.

LXXVII

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,

And thought. I say no more -- I've said too much;
For all of us have either heard or read --
Off -- or *upon* the hustings -- some slight such
Hints from the independent heart or head
Of the official candidate. I'll touch
No more on this -- the dinner-bell hath rung,
And grace is said; the *grace* I should have *sung* --

LXXVIII

But I'm too late, and therefore must make play.
'T was a great banquet, such as Albion old
Was wont to boast -- as if a glutton's tray
Were something very glorious to behold.
But 't was a public feast and public day, --
Quite full, right dull, guests hot, and dishes cold,
Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And every body out of their own sphere.

LXXIX

The squires familiarly formal, and
My lords and ladies proudly condescending;
The very servants puzzling how to hand
Their plates -- without it might be too much bending
From their high places by the sideboard's stand --
Yet, like their masters, fearful of offending.
For any deviation from the graces
Might cost both man and master too -- their *places*.

LXXX

There were some hunters bold, and coursers keen,
Whose hounds ne'er err'd, nor greyhounds deign'd to lurch;
Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers, seen
Earliest to rise, and last to quit the search
Of the poor partridge through his stubble screen.
There were some massy members of the church,
Takers of tithes, and makers of good matches,

And several who sung fewer psalms than catches.

LXXXI

There were some country wags too -- and, alas!

Some exiles from the town, who had been driven
To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,

And rise at nine in lieu of long eleven.

And lo! upon that day it came to pass,

I sate next that o'erwhelming son of heaven,
The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,
The loudest wit I e'er was deafen'd with.

LXXXII

I knew him in his livelier London days,

A brilliant diner out, though but a curate;

And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,

Until preferment, coming at a sure rate
(O Providence! how wondrous are thy ways!

Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?),
Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

LXXXIII

His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes;

But both were thrown away amongst the fens;

For wit hath no great friend in aguish folks.

No longer ready ears and short-hand pens
Imbided the gay *bon-mot*, or happy hoax:

The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a horse laugh from the thick throng.

LXXXIV

There is a difference, says the song, "between

A beggar and a queen," or *was* (of late

The latter worse used of the two we've seen --
But we'll say nothing of affairs of state);
A difference "'twixt a bishop and a dean,"
A difference between crockery ware and plate,
As between English beef and Spartan broth --
And yet great heroes have been bred by both.

LXXXV

But of all nature's discrepancies, none
Upon the whole is greater than the difference
Beheld between the country and the town,
Of which the latter merits every preference
From those who have few resources of their own,
And only think, or act, or feel, with reference
To some small plan of interest or ambition --
Both which are limited to no condition.

LXXXVI

But *en avant!* The light loves languish o'er
Long banquets and too many guests, although
A slight repast makes people love much more,
Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know
Even from our grammar upwards, friends of yore
With vivifying Venus, who doth owe
To these the invention of champagne and truffles:
Temperance delights her, but long fasting ruffles.

LXXXVII

Dully past o'er the dinner of the day;
And Juan took his place, he knew not where,
Confused, in the confusion, and *distrain*,
And sitting as if nail'd upon his chair:
Though knives and forks clank'd round as in a fray,
He seem'd unconscious of all passing there,
Till some one, with a groan, exprest a wish
(Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

LXXXVIII

On which, at the *third* asking of the bans,
He started; and perceiving smiles around
Broadening to grins, he colour'd more than once,
And hastily -- as nothing can confound
A wise man more than laughter from a dunce --
Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound,
And with such hurry, that ere he could curb it
He had paid his neighbour's prayer with half a turbot.

LXXXIX

This was no bad mistake, as it occur'd,
The supPLICator being an amateur;
But others, who were left with scarce a third,
Were angry -- as they well might, to be sure.
They wonder'd how a young man so absurd
Lord Henry at his table should endure;
And this, and his not knowing how much oats
Had fallen last market, cost his host three votes.

XC

They little knew, or might have sympathised,
That he the night before had seen a ghost,
A prologue which but slightly harmonised
With the substantial company engross'd
By matter, and so much materialised,
That one scarce knew at what to marvel most
Of two things -- *how* (the question rather odd is)
Such bodies could have souls, or souls such bodies.

XCI

But what confused him more than smile or stare
From all the 'squires and 'squiresses around,
Who wonder'd at the abstraction of his air,
Especially as he had been renown'd

For some vivacity among the fair,
Even in the country circle's narrow bound
(For little things upon my lord's estate
Were good small talk for others still less great) --

XCII

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her cheek.
Now this he really rather took amiss:
In those who rarely smile, their smiles bespeak
A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to pique
Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies' smiles.

XCIII

'T was a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
Indicative of some surprise and pity;
And Juan grew carnation with vexation,
Which was not very wise, and still less witty,
Since he had gain'd at least her observation,
A most important outwork of the city --
As Juan should have known, had not his senses
By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.

XCIV

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,
Nor seem embarrass'd -- quite the contrary;
Her aspect was as usual, still -- *not* stern --
And she withdrew, but cast not down, her eye,
Yet grew a little pale -- with what? concern?
I know not; but her colour ne'er was high --
Though sometimes faintly flush'd -- and always clear,
As deep seas in a sunny atmosphere.

XCV

But Adeline was occupied by fame
This day; and watching, witching, condescending
To the consumers of fish, fowl, and game,
And dignity with courtesy so blending,
As all must blend whose part it is to aim
(Especially as the sixth year is ending)
At their lord's, son's, or similar connection's
Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections.

XCVI

Though this was most expedient on the whole,
And usual -- Juan, when he cast a glance
On Adeline while playing her grand *rôle*,
Which she went through as though it were a dance,
Betraying only now and then her soul
By a look scarce perceptibly askance
(Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
Some doubt how much of Adeline was *real*;

XCVII

So well she acted all and every part
By turns -- with that vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err -- 't is merely what is call'd mobility,
A thing of temperament and not of art,
Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false -- though true; for surely they're sincerest
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.

XCVIII

This makes your actors, artists, and romancers,
Heroes sometimes, though seldom -- sages never;
But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers,
Little that's great, but much of what is clever;
Most orators, but very few financiers,
Though all Exchequer chancellors endeavour,

Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,
And grow quite figurative with their figures.

XCIX

The poets of arithmetic are they
Who, though they prove not two and two to be
Five, as they might do in a modest way,
Have plainly made it out that four are three,
Judging by what they take, and what they pay.
The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

C

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,
The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much at ease;
Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,
Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize
The ridicules of people in all places --
That honey of your fashionable bees --
And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;
And this at present was her kind employment.

CI

However, the day closed, as days must close;
The evening also waned -- and coffee came.
Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose,
And curtsying off, as curtsies country dame,
Retired: with most unfashionable bows
Their docile esquires also did the same,
Delighted with their dinner and their host,
But with the Lady Adeline the most.

CII

Some praised her beauty; others her great grace;

The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity
Was obvious in each feature of her face,
Whose traits were radiant with the rays of verity.
Yes; she was truly worthy *her* high place!
No one could envy her deserved prosperity.
And then her dress -- what beautiful simplicity
Draped her form with curious felicity!

CIII

Meanwhile Sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
By an impartial indemnification
For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
In a most edifying conversation,
Which turn'd upon their late guests' miens and faces,
And families, even to the last relation;
Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
And truculent distortion of their tresses.

CIV

True, *she* said little -- 't was the rest that broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 't was to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's "faint praise," so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrame.
How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
I ask but this of mine, to -- *not* defend.

CV

There were but two exceptions to this keen
Skirmish of wits o'er the departed; one
Aurora, with her pure and placid mien;
And Juan, too, in general behind none
In gay remark on what he had heard or seen,
Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone:
In vain he heard the others rail or rally,

He would not join them in a single sally.

CVI

'T is true he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence; she perhaps mistook
Its motive for that charity we owe
But seldom pay the absent, nor would look
Farther -- it might or might not be so.
But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,
Observing little in his reverie,
Yet saw this much, which he was glad to see.

CVII

The ghost at least had done him this much good,
In making him as silent as a ghost,
If in the circumstances which ensued
He gain'd esteem where it was worth the most.
And certainly Aurora had renew'd
In him some feelings he had lately lost,
Or harden'd; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine, that I must deem them real: --

CVIII

The love of higher things and better days;
The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance
Of what is call'd the world, and the world's ways;
The moments when we gather from a glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
Which kindle manhood, but can ne'er entrance
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

CIX

Who would not sigh *Ai ai Tan Kytherheian*
That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?

Alas! *her* star must fade like that of Dian:

Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart.
Anacreon only had the soul to tie an

Unwithering myrtle round the unblunted dart
Of Eros: but though thou hast play'd us many tricks,
Still we respect thee, "*Alma Venus Genetrix!*"

CX

And full of sentiments, sublime as billows

Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows

Arrived, retired to his; but to despond
Rather than rest. Instead of poppies, willows

Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond
Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,
And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

CXI

The night was as before: he was undrest,

Saving his night-gown, which is an undress;
Completely *sans culotte*, and without vest;

In short, he hardly could be clothed with less:
But apprehensive of his spectral guest,

He sate with feelings awkward to express
(By those who have not had such visitations),
Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

CXII

And not in vain he listen'd; -- Hush! what's that?

I see -- I see -- Ah, no! -- 't is not -- yet 't is --
Ye powers! it is the -- the -- the -- Pooh! the cat!

The devil may take that stealthy pace of his!
So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,

Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,
Gliding the first time to a *rendezvous*,
And dreading the chaste echoes of her shoe.

CXIII

Again -- what is 't? The wind? No, no -- this time
It is the sable friar as before,
With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,
Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more.
Again through shadows of the night sublime,
When deep sleep fell on men, and the world wore
The starry darkness round her like a girdle
Spangled with gems -- the monk made his blood curdle.

CXIV

A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass,
Which sets the teeth on edge; and a slight clatter,
Like showers which on the midnight gusts will pass,
Sounding like very supernatural water,
Came over Juan's ear, which throbbed, alas!
For immaterialism's a serious matter;
So that even those whose faith is the most great
In souls immortal, shun them *tête-à-tête*.

CXV

Were his eyes open? -- Yes! and his mouth too.
Surprise has this effect -- to make one dumb,
Yet leave the gate which eloquence slips through
As wide as if a long speech were to come.
Nigh and more nigh the awful echoes drew,
Tremendous to a mortal tympanum:
His eyes were open, and (as was before
Stated) his mouth. What open'd next? -- the door.

CXVI

It open'd with a most infernal creak,
Like that of hell. "Lasciate ogni speranza
Voi che entrate!" The hinge seem'd to speak,
Dreadful as Dante's *rima*, or this stanza;

Or -- but all words upon such themes are weak:
A single shade's sufficient to entrance
Hero -- for what is substance to a spirit?
Or how is 't *matter* trembles to come near it?

CXVII

The door flew wide, -- not swiftly, but, as fly
The sea-gulls, with a steady, sober flight, --
And then swung back; nor close -- but stood awry,
Half letting in long shadows on the light,
Which still in Juan's candlesticks burn'd high,
For he had two, both tolerably bright,
And in the door-way, darkening darkness, stood
The sable friar in his solemn hood.

CXVIII

Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
The night before; but being sick of shaking,
He first inclined to think he had been mistaken;
And then to be ashamed of such mistaking;
His own internal ghost began to awaken
Within him, and to quell his corporal quaking --
Hinting that soul and body on the whole
Were odds against a disembodied soul.

CXIX

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce,
And he arose, advanced -- the shade retreated;
But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
Follow'd, his veins no longer cold, but heated,
Resolved to thrust the mystery *carte* and *tierce*,
At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
The ghost stopp'd, menaced, then retired, until
He reach'd the ancient wall, then stood stone still.

CXX

Juan put forth one arm -- Eternal powers!
It touched no soul, nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers,
Chequer'd with all the tracery of the hall;
He shudder'd, as no doubt the bravest cowers
When he can't tell what 't is that doth appal.
How odd, a single hobgoblin's non-entity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.

CXXI

But still the shade remain'd: the blue eyes glared,
And rather variably for stony death:
Yet one thing rather good the grave had spared,
The ghost had a remarkably sweet breath.
A straggling curl show'd he had been fair-hair'd;
A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,
Gleam'd forth, as through the casement's ivy shroud
The moon peep'd, just escaped from a grey cloud.

CXXII

And Juan, puzzled, but still curious, thrust
His other arm forth -- Wonder upon wonder!
It press'd upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm heart under.
He found, as people on most trials must,
That he had made at first a silly blunder,
And that in his confusion he had caught
Only the wall, instead of what he sought.

CXXIII

The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet soul
As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood:
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole
Forth into something much like flesh and blood;
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,
And they reveal'd -- alas! that e'er they should!

In full, voluptuous, but *not o'ergrown* bulk,
The phantom of her frolic Grace -- Fitz-Fulke!

DON JUAN: CANTO THE SEVENTEENTH

I

The world is full of orphans: firstly, those
Who are so in the strict sense of the phrase
(But many a lonely tree the loftier grows
Than others crowded in the forest's maze);
The next are such as are not doomed to lose
Their tender parents in their budding days,
But merely their parental tenderness,
Which leaves them orphans of the heart no less.

II

The next are 'only children', as they are styled,
Who grow up children only, since the old saw
Pronounces that an 'only' 's a spoilt child.
But not to go too far, I hold it law
That where their education, harsh or mild,
'Transgresses the great bounds of love or awe,
The sufferers, be't in heart or intellect,
Whate'er the cause are orphans in effect.

III

But to return unto the stricter rule
(As far as words make rules), our common notion
Of orphans paints at once a parish school,
A half-starved babe, a wreck upon life's ocean,
A human (what the Italians nickname) 'mule',
A theme for pity or some worse emotion;
Yet, if examined, it might be admitted
The wealthiest orphans are to be more pitied.

IV

Too soon they are parents to themselves; for what
Are tutors, guardians, and so forth, compared

Are tutors, guardians, and so forth, compared
With Nature's genial genitors, so that
A child of Chancery, that Star Chamber ward
(I'll take the likeness I can first come at),
Is like a duckling by Dame Partlett reared
And frights, especially if 'tis a daughter,
The old hen by running headlong to the water.

V

There is a commonplace book argument,
Which glibly glides from every vulgar tongue
When any dare a new light to present:
'If you are right, then everybody's wrong.'
Suppose the converse of this precedent
So often urged, so loudly and so long:
'If you are wrong, then everybody's right.'
Was ever everybody yet so quite?

VI

Therefore I would solicit free discussion
Upon all points, no matter what or whose,
Because as ages upon ages push on,
The last is apt the former to accuse
Of pillowing its head on a pincushion,
Heedless of pricks because it was obtuse.
What was a paradox becomes a truth or
A something like it, as bear witness Luther.

VII

The sacraments have been reduced to two
And witches unto none, though somewhat late
Since burning aged women (save a few,
Not witches, only bitches, who create
Mischiefs in families, as some know or knew,
Should still be singed, but slightly let me state)
Has been declared an act of inurbanity,
Malgré Sir Matthew Hale's great humanity.

VIII

Great Galileo was debarred the sun,
Because he fixed it, and to stop his talking
How earth could round the solar orbit run,
Found his own legs embargoed from mere walking.
The man was well nigh dead, ere men begun
To think his skull had not some need of caulking,
But now it seems he's right, his notion just,
No doubt a consolation to his dust.

IX

Pythagoras, Locke, Socrates - but pages
Might be filled up, as vainly as before,
With the sad usage of all sorts of sages,
Who in his lifetime each was deemed a bore.
The loftiest minds outrun their tardy ages;
This they must bear with and perhaps much more.
The wise man's sure when he no more can share it, he
Will have a firm post~obit on posterity.

X

If such doom waits each intellectual giant,
We little people in our lesser way
To life's small rubs should surely be more pliant,
And so for one will I, as well I may.
Would that I were less bilious - but oh fie on't!
Just as I make my mind up everyday
To be a totus teres stoic, sage,
The wind shifts and I fly into a rage.

XI

Temperate I am, yet never had a temper;
Modest I am, yet with some slight assurance;
Changeable too, yet somehow idem semper;

Patient, but not enamoured or endurance;
Cheerful, but sometimes rather apt to whimper;
Mild, but at times a sort of Hercules furens;
So that I almost think that the same skin
For one without has two or three within.

XII

Our hero was in canto the sixteenth
Left in a tender moonlight situation,
Such as enables man to show his strength
Moral or physical On this occasion
Whether his virtue triumphed, or at length
His vice - for he was of a kindling nation -
Is more than I shall venture to describe,
Unless some beauty with a kiss should bribe.

XIII

I leave the thing a problem, like all things.
The morning came, and breakfast, tea and toast,
Of which most men partake, but no one sings.
The company, whose birth, wealth, worth have cost
My trembling lyre already several strings,
Assembled with our hostess and mine host.
The guests dropped in, the last but one, Her Grace,
The latest, Juan with his virgin face.

XIV

Which best is to encounter, ghost or none,
'Twere difficult to say, but Juan looked
As if he had combated with more than one,
Being wan and worn, with eyes that hardly brooked
The light that through the Gothic windows shone.
Her Grace too had a sort of air rebuked,
Seemed pale and shivered, as if she had kept
A vigil or dreamt rather more than slept.

MINOR POEMS



The following 18 poems were published for the first time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, after they were discovered in letters, journals and various other unpublished manuscripts.

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A VERSION OF OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN.

FROM THE POEM "CARTHON."

O thou! who rollest in yon azure field,
Round as the orb of my forefather's shield,
Whence are thy beams? From what eternal store
Dost thou, O Sun! thy vast effulgence pour?
In awful grandeur, when thou movest on high,
The stars start back and hide them in the sky;
The pale Moon sickens in thy brightening blaze,
And in the western wave avoids thy gaze.
Alone thou shinest forth — for who can rise
Companion of thy splendour in the skies!
The mountain oaks are seen to fall away —
Mountains themselves by length of years decay —
With ebbs and flows is the rough Ocean tost;
In heaven the Moon is for a season lost,
But thou, amidst the fullness of thy joy,
The same art ever, blazing in the sky!
When tempests wrap the world from pole to pole,
When vivid lightnings flash and thunders roll,
Thou far above their utmost fury borne,
Look'st forth in beauty, laughing them to scorn.
But vainly now on me thy beauties blaze —
Ossian no longer can enraptured gaze!
Whether at morn, in lucid lustre gay,
On eastern clouds thy yellow tresses play,
Or else at eve, in radiant glory drest,
Thou tremblest at the portals of the west,
I see no more! But thou mayest fail at length,
Like Ossian lose thy beauty and thy strength,
Like him — but for a season — in thy sphere
To shine with splendour, then to disappear!
Thy years shall have an end, and thou no more
Bright through the world enlivening radiance pour,
But sleep within thy clouds, and fail to rise,
Heedless when Morning calls thee to the skies!

Men now exult, O Sun! and gaily shine,
While Youth and Strength and Beauty all are thine.
For Age is dark, unlovely, as the light
Shed by the Moon when clouds deform the night,
Glimmering uncertain as they hurry past.
Loud o'er the plain is heard the northern blast,
Mists shroud the hills, and 'neath the growing gloom,
The weary traveller shrinks and sighs for home.

1806.

First published, Atlantic Monthly, December, 1898

FAREWELL PETITION TO R. C. H., ESQ.

O thou yclep'd by vulgar sons of Men
Cam Hobhouse! but by wags Byzantian Ben!
Twin sacred titles, which combined appear
To grace thy volume's front, and gild its rear,
Since now thou put'st thyself and work to Sea
And leav'st all Greece to *Fletcher* and to me,
Oh, hear my single muse our sorrows tell,
One song for *self* and Fletcher quite as well —

First to the *Castle* of that man of woes
Dispatch the letter which *I must* enclose,
And when his lone Penelope shall say
Why, where, and wherefore doth my William stay?
Spare not to move her pity, or her pride —
By all that Hero suffered, or defied;
The *chicken's toughness*, and the *lack of ale*
The *stoney mountain* and the *miry vale*
The *Garlick* steams, which *half* his meals enrich,
The *impending vermin*, and the threatened *Itch*,
That *ever breaking* Bed, beyond repair!
The hat too *old*, the coat too *cold* to wear,
The Hunger, which *repulsed from Sally's door*
Pursues her grumbling half from shore to shore,
Be these the themes to greet his faithful Rib
So may thy pen be smooth, thy tongue be glib!

This duty done, let me in turn demand
Some friendly office in my native land,
Yet let me ponder well, before I ask,
And set thee swearing at the tedious task.

First the Miscellany! — to Southwell town
Per coach for Mrs. *Pigot* frank it down,
So may'st them prosper in the paths of Sale,
And Longman smirk and critics cease to rail.

All hail to Matthews! wash his reverend feet,
And in my name the man of Method greet, —
Tell him, my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend,
Who cannot love me, and who will not mend,
Tell him, that not in vain I shall assay
To tread and trace our “old Horatian way,”
And be (with prose supply my dearth of rhymes)
What better men have been in better times.

Here let me cease, for why should I prolong
My notes, and vex a *Singer* with a *Song*?
Oh thou with pen perpetual in thy fist!
Dubbed for thy sins a stark Miscellanist,
So pleased the printer’s orders to perform
For Messrs. *Longman, Hurst and Rees and Orme*.
Go — Get thee hence to Paternoster Row,
Thy patrons wave a duodecimo!
(Best form for *letters* from a distant land,
It fits the pocket, nor fatigues the hand.)
Then go, once more the joyous work commence
With stores of anecdote, and grains of sense,
Oh may Mammas relent, and Sires forgive!
And scribbling Sons grow dutiful and live!

Constantinople, June 7th, 1810.

First published, Murray’s Magazine, 1887, vol. i. pp. 290, 291.

TO THE HONBLE MRS GEORGE LAMB.

1.

The sacred song that on mine ear
Yet vibrates from that voice of thine,
I heard, before, from one so dear —
‘T is strange it still appears divine.

2.

But, oh! so sweet that *look* and *tone*
To her and thee alike is given;
It seemed as if for me alone
That *both* had been recalled from Heaven!

3.

And though I never can redeem
The vision thus endeared to me;
I scarcely can regret my dream,
When realised again by thee.

1812.

First published in The Two Duchesses, by Vere Foster, 1898, p. 374.

ON A ROYAL VISIT TO THE VAULTS.

OR CÆSAR'S DISCOVERY OF C. I. AND H. 8. IN YE SAME VAULT.

Famed for their civil and domestic quarrels
See heartless Henry lies by headless Charles;
Between them stands another sceptred thing,
It lives, it reigns — “aye, every inch a king.”
Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and Death have mixed their dust in vain.
The royal Vampires join and rise again.
What now can tombs avail, since these disgorge
The blood and dirt of both to mould a George!

ICH DIEN.

From this emblem what variance your motto evinces,
For the *Man* is his country's — the Arms are the Prince's!

c. 1814.

From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. A. H. Hallam Murray, first printed in 1904.

ANSWER TO — S PROFESSIONS OF AFFECTION.

In hearts like thine ne'er may I hold a place
Till I renounce all sense, all shame, all grace —
That seat, — like seats, the bane of Freedom's realm,
But dear to those presiding at the helm —
Is basely purchased, not with gold alone;
Add Conscience, too, this bargain is your own —
'T is thine to offer with corrupting art
The *rotten borough* of the human heart.

?1814.

From an autograph MS., first printed in 1904.

QUEM DEUS VULT PERDERE PRIUS DEMENTAT.

God maddens him whom't is his will to lose,
And gives the choice of death or phrenzy — choose.

First published, Letters, 1900, iv. 93.

E NIHILO NIHIL

OR
AN EPIGRAM BEWITCHED.]

Of rhymes I printed seven volumes —
The list concludes John Murray's columns:
Of these there have been few translations
For Gallic or Italian nations;
And one or two perhaps in German —
But in this last I can't determine.
But then I only sung of passions
That do not suit with modern fashions;
Of Incest and such like diversions
Permitted only to the Persians,
Or Greeks to bring upon their stages —
But that was in the earlier ages
Besides my style is the romantic,
Which some call fine, and some call frantic;
While others are or would seem *as sick*
Of repetitions nicknamed Classic.
For my part all men must allow
Whatever I was, I'm classic now.
I saw and left my fault in time,
And chose a topic all sublime —
Wondrous as antient war or hero —
Then played and sung away like Nero,
Who sang of Rome, and I of Rizzo:
The subject has improved my wit so,
The first four lines the poet sees
Start forth in fourteen languages!
Though of seven volumes none before
Could ever reach the fame of four,
Henceforth I sacrifice all Glory
To the Rinaldo of my Story:
I've sung his health and appetite
(The last word's not translated right —
He's turned it, God knows how, to vigour)

I'll sing them in a book that's bigger.
Oh! Muse prepare for thy Ascension!
And generous Rizzo! thou my pension.

February, 1818.

From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, first printed in 1904.

BALLAD TO THE TUNE OF “SALLEY IN OUR ALLEY.”

1.

Of all the twice ten thousand bards
That ever penned a canto,
Whom Pudding or whom Praise rewards
For lining a portmanteau;
Of all the poets ever known,
From Grub-street to Fop's Alley,
The Muse may boast — the World must own
There's none like pretty Gally!

2.

He writes as well as any Miss,
Has published many a poem;
The shame is yours, the gain is his,
In case you should not know 'em:
He has ten thousand pounds a year —
I do not mean to vally —
His songs at sixpence would be dear,
So give them gratis, Gaily!

3.

And if this statement should seem queer,
Or set down in a hurry,
Go, ask (if he will be sincere)
His bookseller — John Murray.
Come, say, how many have been sold,
And don't stand shilly-shally,
Of bound and lettered, red and gold,
Well printed works of Gally.

4.

For Astley's circus Upton writes,

And also for the Surry; (*sic*)
Fitzgerald weekly still recites,
Though grinning Critics worry:
Miss Holford's Peg, and Sotheby's Saul,
In fame exactly tally;
From Stationer's Hall to Grocer's Stall
They go — and so does Gally.

5.

He rode upon a Camel's hump
Through Araby the sandy,
Which surely must have hurt the rump
Of this poetic dandy.
His rhymes are of the costive kind,
And barren as each valley
In deserts which he left behind
Has been the Muse of Gally.

6.

He has a Seat in Parliament,
Is fat and passing wealthy;
And surely he should be content
With these and being healthy:
But Great Ambition will misrule
Men at all risks to sally, —
Now makes a poet — now a fool,
And *we* know *which* — of Gally.

7.

Some in the playhouse like to row,
Some with the Watch to battle,
Exchanging many a midnight blow
To Music of the Rattle.
Some folks like rowing on the Thames,

Some rowing in an Alley,
But all the Row my fancy claims
Is *rowing* — of my *Gally*.

April 11, 1818.

ANOTHER SIMPLE BALLAT.

1.

Mrs. Wilmot sate scribbling a play,
Mr. Sotheby sate sweating behind her;
But what are all these to the Lay
Of Gally i.o. the Grinder?
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

2.

I bought me some books tother day,
And sent them down stairs to the binder;
But the Pastry Cook carried away
My Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

3.

I wanted to kindle my taper,
And called to the Maid to remind her;
And what should she bring me for paper
But Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

4.

Among my researches for Ease
I went where one's certain to find her:
The first thing by her throne that one sees
Is Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

5.

Away with old Homer the blind —

I'll show you a poet that's blinder:
You may see him whene'er you've a mind
In Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

6.

Blindfold he runs groping for fame,
And hardly knows where he will find her:
She don't seem to take to the name
Of Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

7.

Yet the Critics have been very kind,
And Mamma and his friends have been kinder;
But the greatest of Glory's behind
For Gally i.o. the Grinder.
Gally i.o. i.o., *etc.*

April 11, 1818.

*From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray,
first printed in 1904.*

EPILOGUE.

1.

There's something in a stupid ass,
And something in a heavy dunce;
But never since I went to school
I heard or saw so damned a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once.

2.

And now I've seen so great a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once;
I really wish that Peter Bell
And he who wrote it were in hell,
For writing nonsense for the nonce.

3.

It saw the "light in ninety-eight,"
Sweet babe of one and twenty years!
And then he gives it to the nation
And deems himself of Shakespeare's peers!

4.

He gives the perfect work to light!
Will Wordsworth, if I might advise,
Content you with the praise you get
From Sir George Beaumont, Baronet,
And with your place in the Excise!

1819.

First published, Philadelphia Record, December 28, 1891.

MY BOY HOBBIE O.

New Song to the tune of:

*“Whare hae ye been a’ day,
My boy Tammy O!
Courting o’ a young thing
Just come frae her Mammie O.”*

1.

How came you in Hob’s pound to cool,
My boy Hobbie O?
Because I bade the people pull
The House into the Lobby O.

2.

What did the House upon this call,
My boy Hobbie O?
They voted me to Newgate all,
Which is an awkward Jobby O.

3.

Who are now the people’s men,
My boy Hobbie O?
There’s I and Burdett — Gentlemen
And blackguard Hunt and Cobby O.

4.

You hate the house — *why* canvass, then?
My boy Hobbie O?
Because I would reform the den
As member for the Mobby O.

5

5.

Wherefore do you hate the Whigs,
My boy Hobbie O?
Because they want to run their rigs,
As under Walpole Bobby O.

6.

But when we at Cambridge were
My boy Hobbie O,
If my memory don't err
You founded a Whig Clubbie O.

7.

When to the mob you make a speech,
My boy Hobbie O,
How do you keep without their reach
The watch within your fobby O?

8.

But never mind such petty things,
My boy Hobbie O;
God save the people — damn all Kings,
So let us Crown the Mobby O!
Yours truly,

(Signed) *Infidus Scurra* March 23d, 1820.

First published Murray's Magazine, March, 1887, vol. i. pp. 292, 293.

A VOLUME OF NONSENSE.

Dear Murray, —

You ask for a “*Volume of Nonsense*,”

Have all of your authors exhausted their store?

I thought you had published a good deal not long since.

And doubtless the Squadron are ready with more.

But on looking again, I perceive that the Species

Of “Nonsense” you want must be purely “*facetious*;”

And, as that is the case, you had best put to press

Mr. Sotheby’s tragedies now in M.S.,

Some Syrian Sally

From common-place Gally,

Or, if you prefer the bookmaking of women,

Take a spick and span “Sketch” of your feminine *He-Man*.

Sept. 28, 1820.

First published, Letters, 1900, v. 83.

LUCIETTA. A FRAGMENT.

Lucietta, my deary,
That fairest of faces!
Is made up of kisses;
But, in love, oft the case is
Even stranger than this is —
There's another, that's slyer,
Who touches me nigher, —
A Witch, an intriguer,
Whose manner and figure
Now piques me, excites me,
Torments and delights me —
Cætera desunt.

From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, first printed in 1904.

JOURNAL IN CEPHALONIA.

The dead have been awakened — shall I sleep?
The World's at war with tyrants — shall I crouch?
The harvest's ripe — and shall I pause to reap?
I slumber not; the thorn is in my Couch;
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
Its echo in my heart — —

June 19, 1823.

First published, Letters, 1901, vi. 238.

SONG TO THE SULIOTES.

1.

Up to battle! Sons of Suli
Up, and do your duty duly!
There the wall — and there the Moat is:
Bouwah! Bouwah! Suliotes!
There is booty — there is Beauty,
Up my boys and do your duty.

2.

By the sally and the rally
Which defied the arms of Ali;
By your own dear native Highlands,
By your children in the islands,
Up and charge, my Stratiotes,
Bouwah! — Bouwah! — Suliotes!

3.

As our ploughshare is the Sabre:
Here's the harvest of our labour;
For behind those battered breaches
Are our foes with all their riches:
There is Glory — there is plunder —
Then away despite of thunder!

From an autograph MS. in the possession of Mr. Murray, first printed in 1904.

LOVE AND DEATH.

1.

I watched thee when the foe was at our side,
Ready to strike at him — or thee and me.
Were safety hopeless — rather than divide
Aught with one loved save love and liberty.

2.

I watched thee on the breakers, when the rock
Received our prow and all was storm and fear,
And bade thee cling to me through every shock;
This arm would be thy bark, or breast thy bier.

3.

I watched thee when the fever glazed thine eyes,
Yielding my couch and stretched me on the ground,
When overworn with watching, ne'er to rise
From thence if thou an early grave hadst found.

4.

The earthquake came, and rocked the quivering wall,
And men and nature reeled as if with wine.
Whom did I seek around the tottering hall?
For thee. Whose safety first provide for? Thine.

5.

And when convulsive throes denied my breath
The faintest utterance to my fading thought,
To thee — to thee — e'en in the gasp of death
My spirit turned, oh! oftener than it ought.

6.

Thus much and more; and yet thou lov'st me not,
And never wilt! Love dwells not in our will.
Nor can I blame thee, though it be my lot
To strongly, wrongly, vainly love thee still.

First published, Murray's Magazine, February, 1887, vol. i. pp. 145, 146.

LAST WORDS ON GREECE.

What are to me those honours or renown
Past or to come, a new-born people's cry?
Albeit for such I could despise a crown
Of aught save laurel, or for such could die.
I am a fool of passion, and a frown
Of thine to me is as an adder's eye.
To the poor bird whose pinion fluttering down
Wafts unto death the breast it bore so high;
Such is this maddening fascination grown,
So strong thy magic or so weak am I.

First published, Murray's Magazine, February, 1887, vol. i. p. 146.

The Poems



Burgage Manor in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, where Byron lived with his mother in his early years

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PARENTHETICAL ADDRESS

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REMEMBER HIM, WHOM PASSION'S POWER

REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!

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THE WALTZ
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THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A COLLEGE EXAMINATION
THY DAYS ARE DONE.
TO A BEAUTIFUL QUAKER
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TO LESBIA
TO LORD THURLOW
TO M—
TO M. S. G.
TO M.S.G.
TO MARION
TO MARY
TO MR. MURRAY
TO MR. MURRAY (FOR OXFORD AND FOR WALDEGRAVE)
TO MR. MURRAY (STRAHAN, TONSON LINTOT OF THE TIMES)

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TO THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON
TO THE DUKE OF DORSET
TO THE EARL OF CLARE
TO THE HONBLE MRS GEORGE LAMB.
TO THE SIGHING STREPHON
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TO THOMAS MOORE
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TO THYRZA
TO TIME
TO WOMAN
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TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS
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TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC LOVE SONG
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VISION OF BELSHAZZAR.
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WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE.
WERNER
WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY.
WHEN I ROVED A YOUNG HIGHLANDER
WHEN WE TWO PARTED
WINDSOR POETICS
WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

The Short Story



Aberdeen Grammar School, attended by Byron in his youth



The statue of Byron presented at the front of the school

FRAGMENT OF A NOVEL



This horror story is also known as *The Burial* and it is one of the first recorded narratives in English to feature a vampire theme. Byron was inspired when visiting Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1816, after a ‘ghost writing’ contest was proposed, which also led to the creation of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The fragment first appeared in the 1819 collection *Mazeppa: A Poem*, published by John Murray in London, without the approval of Byron.

The story is written in a letter format, with the narrator recounting a journey to the East with an elderly man, Augustus Darvell. During the journey, Darvell becomes physically weaker, when they arrive at a Turkish cemetery near the columns of Diana in Ephesus, leading on to frightening revelations.

MAZEPPA,

A POEM.

BY LORD BYRON.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1819.



The title page of the first edition printing of the fragment



Percy Bysshe Shelley, a friend and fellow poet

FRAGMENT OF A NOVEL

“June 17, 1816.

“In the year 17 — , having for some time determined on a journey through countries not hitherto much frequented by travellers, I set out, accompanied by a friend, whom I shall designate by the name of Augustus Darvell. He was a few years my elder, and a man of considerable fortune and ancient family, advantages which an extensive capacity prevented him alike from undervaluing and overrating. Some peculiar circumstances in his private history had rendered him to me an object of attention, of interest, and even of regard, which neither the reserve of his manners, nor occasional indication of an inquietude at times approaching to alienation of mind, could extinguish.

“I was yet young in life, which I had begun early; but my intimacy with him was of a recent date: we had been educated at the same schools and university; but his progress through these had preceded mine, and he had been deeply initiated into what is called the world, while I was yet in my novitiate. While thus engaged, I heard much both of his past and present life; and, although in these accounts there were many and irreconcilable contradictions, I could still gather from the whole that he was a being of no common order, and one who, whatever pains he might take to avoid remark, would still be remarkable. I had cultivated his acquaintance subsequently, and endeavoured to obtain his friendship, but this last appeared to be unattainable: whatever affections he might have possessed seemed now, some to have been extinguished, and others to be concentrated: that his feelings were acute, I had sufficient opportunities of observing; for, although he could control, he could not altogether disguise them; still he had a power of giving to one passion the appearance of another, in such a manner that it was difficult to define the nature of what was working within him; and the expressions of his features would vary so rapidly, though slightly, that it was useless to trace them to their sources. It was evident that he was a prey to some cureless disquiet; but whether it arose from ambition, love, remorse, grief, from one or all of these, or merely from a morbid temperament akin to disease, I could not discover: there were circumstances alleged which might have justified the application to each of these causes; but, as I have before said, these were so contradictory and contradicted, that none could be fixed upon with accuracy. Where there is mystery, it is generally supposed that there must also be evil: I know not how this may be, but in him there certainly was the one, though I could not ascertain the extent of the other — and felt loth, as far as regarded himself, to believe in its existence. My advances were received with sufficient coldness: but I was young, and not easily discouraged, and at length succeeded in obtaining, to

a certain degree, that common-place intercourse and moderate confidence of common and every-day concerns, created and cemented by similarity of pursuit and frequency of meeting, which is called intimacy, or friendship, according to the ideas of him who uses those words to express them.

“Darvell had already travelled extensively; and to him I had applied for information with regard to the conduct of my intended journey. It was my secret wish that he might be prevailed on to accompany me; it was also a probable hope, founded upon the shadowy restlessness which I observed in him, and to which the animation which he appeared to feel on such subjects, and his apparent indifference to all by which he was more immediately surrounded, gave fresh strength. This wish I first hinted, and then expressed: his answer, though I had partly expected it, gave me all the pleasure of surprise — he consented; and, after the requisite arrangement, we commenced our voyages. After journeying through various countries of the south of Europe, our attention was turned towards the East, according to our original destination; and it was in my progress through these regions that the incident occurred upon which will turn what I may have to relate.

“The constitution of Darvell, which must from his appearance have been in early life more than usually robust, had been for some time gradually giving away, without the intervention of any apparent disease: he had neither cough nor hectic, yet he became daily more enfeebled; his habits were temperate, and he neither declined nor complained of fatigue; yet he was evidently wasting away: he became more and more silent and sleepless, and at length so seriously altered, that my alarm grew proportionate to what I conceived to be his danger.

“We had determined, on our arrival at Smyrna, on an excursion to the ruins of Ephesus and Sardis, from which I endeavoured to dissuade him in his present state of indisposition — but in vain: there appeared to be an oppression on his mind, and a solemnity in his manner, which ill corresponded with his eagerness to proceed on what I regarded as a mere party of pleasure little suited to a valetudinarian; but I opposed him no longer — and in a few days we set off together, accompanied only by a serrugee and a single janizary.

“We had passed halfway towards the remains of Ephesus, leaving behind us the more fertile environs of Smyrna, and were entering upon that wild and tenantless tract through the marshes and defiles which lead to the few huts yet lingering over the broken columns of Diana — the roofless walls of expelled Christianity, and the still more recent but complete desolation of abandoned mosques — when the sudden and rapid illness of my companion obliged us to halt at a Turkish cemetery, the turbaned tombstones of which were the sole indication that human life had ever been a sojourner in this wilderness. The only

caravansera we had seen was left some hours behind us, not a vestige of a town or even cottage was within sight or hope, and this 'city of the dead' appeared to be the sole refuge of my unfortunate friend, who seemed on the verge of becoming the last of its inhabitants.

"In this situation, I looked round for a place where he might most conveniently repose: contrary to the usual aspect of Mahometan burial-grounds, the cypresses were in this few in number, and these thinly scattered over its extent; the tombstones were mostly fallen, and worn with age: upon one of the most considerable of these, and beneath one of the most spreading trees, Darvell supported himself, in a half-reclining posture, with great difficulty. He asked for water. I had some doubts of our being able to find any, and prepared to go in search of it with hesitating despondency: but he desired me to remain; and turning to Suleiman, our janizary, who stood by us smoking with great tranquility, he said, 'Suleiman, verbana su,' (i.e. 'bring some water,') and went on describing the spot where it was to be found with great minuteness, at a small well for camels, a few hundred yards to the right: the janizary obeyed. I said to Darvell, 'How did you know this?' He replied, 'From our situation; you must perceive that this place was once inhabited, and could not have been so without springs: I have also been here before.'

"'You have been here before! How came you never to mention this to me? and what could you be doing in a place where no one would remain a moment longer than they could help it?'

"To this question I received no answer. In the mean time Suleiman returned with the water, leaving the serrugee and the horses at the fountain. The quenching of his thirst had the appearance of reviving him for a moment; and I conceived hopes of his being able to proceed, or at least to return, and I urged the attempt. He was silent — and appeared to be collecting his spirits for an effort to speak. He began —

"'This is the end of my journey, and of my life; I came here to die; but I have a request to make, a command — for such my last words must be. — You will observe it?'

"'Most certainly; but I have better hopes.'

"'I have no hopes, nor wishes, but this — conceal my death from every human being.'

"'I hope there will be no occasion; that you will recover, and — '

"'Peace! it must be so: promise this.'

"'I do.'

"'Swear it, by all that — ' He here dictated an oath of great solemnity.

"'There is no occasion for this. I will observe your request; and to doubt me is

— ,

“‘It cannot be helped, you must swear.’

“I took the oath, it appeared to relieve him. He removed a seal ring from his finger, on which were some Arabic characters, and presented it to me. He proceeded —

“‘On the ninth day of the month, at noon precisely (what month you please, but this must be the day), you must fling this ring into the salt springs which run into the Bay of Eleusis; the day after, at the same hour, you must repair to the ruins of the temple of Ceres, and wait one hour.’

“‘Why?’

“‘You will see.’

“‘The ninth day of the month, you say?’

“‘The ninth.’

“As I observed that the present was the ninth day of the month, his countenance changed, and he paused. As he sat, evidently becoming more feeble, a stork, with a snake in her beak, perched upon a tombstone near us; and, without devouring her prey, appeared to be steadfastly regarding us. I know not what impelled me to drive it away, but the attempt was useless; she made a few circles in the air, and returned exactly to the same spot. Darvell pointed to it, and smiled — he spoke — I know not whether to himself or to me — but the words were only, ‘Tis well!’

“‘What is well? What do you mean?’

“‘No matter; you must bury me here this evening, and exactly where that bird is now perched. You know the rest of my injunctions.’

“He then proceeded to give me several directions as to the manner in which his death might be best concealed. After these were finished, he exclaimed, ‘You perceive that bird?’

“‘Certainly.’

“‘And the serpent writhing in her beak?’

“‘Doubtless: there is nothing uncommon in it; it is her natural prey. But it is odd that she does not devour it.’

“He smiled in a ghastly manner, and said faintly. ‘It is not yet time!’ As he spoke, the stork flew away. My eyes followed it for a moment — it could hardly be longer than ten might be counted. I felt Darvell’s weight, as it were, increase upon my shoulder, and, turning to look upon his face, perceived that he was dead!

“I was shocked with the sudden certainty which could not be mistaken — his countenance in a few minutes became nearly black. I should have attributed so rapid a change to poison, had I not been aware that he had no opportunity of

receiving it unperceived. The day was declining, the body was rapidly altering, and nothing remained but to fulfil his request. With the aid of Suleiman's ataghan and my own sabre, we scooped a shallow grave upon the spot which Darvell had indicated: the earth easily gave way, having already received some Mahometan tenant. We dug as deeply as the time permitted us, and throwing the dry earth upon all that remained of the singular being so lately departed, we cut a few sods of greener turf from the less withered soil around us, and laid them upon his sepulchre.

“Between astonishment and grief, I was tearless.”

The Letters



Newstead Abbey, the ancestral home of the Byrons, 1880



Newstead Abbey, present day

THE LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF LORD BYRON



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VOLUME I.

PREFACE

Two great collections of Byron's letters have been already printed. In Moore's 'Life', which appeared in 1830, 561 were given. These, in FitzGreene Halleck's American edition of Byron's 'Works', published in 1847, were increased to 635. The first volume of a third collection, edited by Mr. W. E. Henley, appeared early in 1897. A comparison of the number of letters contained in these three collections down to August 22, 1811, shows that Moore prints 61, Halleck 78, and Mr. Henley 88. In other words, the edition of 1897, which was the most complete so far as it goes, added 27 letters to that of 1830, and 10 to that of 1847. But it should be remembered that by far the greater part of the material added by Halleck and Mr. Henley was seen and rejected by Moore.

The present edition, down to August 22, 1811, prints 168 letters, or an addition of 107 to Moore, 90 to Halleck, and 80 to Mr. Henley. Of this additional matter considerably more than two-thirds was inaccessible to Moore in 1830.

In preparing this volume for the press, use has been also made of a mass of material, bearing more or less directly on Byron's life, which was accumulated by the grandfather and father of Mr. Murray. The notes thus contain, it is believed, many details of biographical interest, which are now for the first time published.

It is necessary to make these comparisons, in order to define the position which this edition claims to hold with regard to its predecessors. On the other hand, no one can regret more sincerely than myself — no one has more cause to regret — the circumstances which placed this wealth of new material in my hands rather than in those of the true poet and brilliant critic, who, to enthusiasm for Byron, and wide acquaintance with the literature and social life of the day, adds the rarer gift of giving life and significance to bygone events or trivial details by unconsciously interesting his readers in his own living personality.

Byron's letters appeal on three special grounds to all lovers of English literature. They offer the most suggestive commentary on his poetry; they give the truest portrait of the man; they possess, at their best, in their ease, freshness, and racy vigour, a very high literary value.

The present volume, which covers the period from 1798 to August, 1811, includes the letters written Lord Byron from his eleventh to his twenty-third year. They therefore illustrate the composition of his youthful poetry, of 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', and of the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold'. They carry his history down to the eve of that morning in March, 1812, when he

awoke and found himself famous — in a degree and to an extent which to the present generation seem almost incomprehensible.

If the letters were selected for their literary value alone, it is probable that very few of those contained in the present volume would find a place in a collection formed on this principle. But biographical interest also demands consideration, and, in the case of Byron, this claim is peculiarly strong. He has for years suffered much from the suppression of the material on which a just estimate of his life may be formed. It is difficult not to regret the destruction of the 'Memoirs', in which he himself intended his history to be told. Their loss cannot be replaced; but their best substitute is found in his letters. Through them a truer conception of Byron can be formed than any impression which is derived from Dallas, Leigh Hunt, Medwin, or even Moore. It therefore seems only fair to Byron, that they should be allowed, as far as possible, to interpret his career. For other reasons also it appears to me too late, or too soon, to publish only those letters which possess a high literary value. The real motive of such a selection would probably be misread, and thus further misconceptions of Byron's character would be encouraged.

With one exception, therefore, the whole of the available material has been published. The exception consists of some of the business letters written by Byron to his solicitor. Enough of these have been printed to indicate the pecuniary difficulties which undoubtedly influenced his life and character; but it was not considered necessary to publish the whole series. Men of genius ask money from their lawyers in the same language, and with the same arguments, as the most ordinary persons.

The picture which the letters give of Byron, is, it is believed, unique in its completeness, while the portrait has the additional value of being painted by his own hand. Byron's career lends itself only too easily to that method of treatment, which dashes off a likeness by vigorous strokes with a full brush, seizing with false emphasis on some salient feature, and revelling in striking contrasts of light and shade. But the style here adopted by the unconscious artist is rather that in which Richardson the novelist painted his pathetic picture of Clarissa Harlowe. With slow, laborious touches, with delicate gradations of colour, sometimes with almost tedious minuteness and iteration, the gradual growth of a strangely composite character is presented, surrounded by the influences which controlled or moulded its development, and traced through all the varieties of its rapidly changing moods. Written, as Byron wrote, with habitual exaggeration, and on the impulse of the moment, his letters correct one another, and, from this point of view, every letter contained in the volume adds something to the truth and completeness of the portrait.

Round the central figure of Byron are grouped his relations and friends, and two of the most interesting features in the volume are the strength of his family affections, and the width, if not the depth, of his capacity for friendship. His father died when the child was only three years old. But a bundle of his letters, written from Valenciennes to his sister, Mrs. Leigh, in 1790-91, still exists, to attest, with startling plainness of speech, the strength of the tendencies which John Byron transmitted to his son. The following extract contains the father's only allusion to the boy: —

“Valenciennes, Feb. 16, 1791.

Have you never received any letters from me by way of Bologne? I have sent two. For God's sake send me some, as I have a great deal to pay. With regard to Mrs. Byron, I am glad she writes to you. She is very amiable at a distance; but I defy you and all the Apostles to live with her two months, for, if any body could live with her, it was me. ‘Mais jeu de Mains, jeu de Vilains’. For my son, I am happy to hear he is well; but for his walking, ‘tis impossible, as he is club-footed.”

Between his mother and himself, in spite of frequent and violent collisions, there existed a real affection, while the warmth of his love for his half-sister Augusta, who had much of her brother's power of winning affection, lost nothing in its permanence from the rarity of their personal intercourse. Outside the family circle, the volume introduces the only two men among his contemporaries who remained his lifelong friends. In his affection for Lord Clare, whom he very rarely saw after leaving school, there was a tinge of romance, and in him Byron seems to have personified the best memories of an idealized Harrow. In Hobhouse he found at once the truest and the most intimate of his friends, a man whom he both liked and respected, and to whose opinion and judgment he repeatedly deferred. On Hobhouse's side, the sentiment which induced him, eminently sensible and practical as he was, to treasure the nosegay which Byron had given him, long after it was withered, shows how attractive must have been the personality of the donor.

Without the ‘Dictionary of National Biography’, the labour of preparing the letters for the press would be trebled. Both in the facts which it supplies, and in the sources of information which it suggests, it is an invaluable aid.

In conclusion, I desire to express my special obligations to Lord Lovelace and Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, who have read the greater part of the proofs, and to both of whom I am indebted for several useful suggestions.

R. E. PROTHERO.

March, 1898.

CHAPTER I. 1788-1805.

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL.

Catherine Gordon of Gight (1765-1811), afterwards Mrs. Byron, and mother of the poet, was descended on the paternal side from Sir William Gordon of Gight, the third son, by Annabella Stewart, daughter of James I of Scotland, of George, second Earl of Huntly, Chancellor of Scotland (1498-1502), and Lord-Lieutenant of the North from 1491 to his death in 1507. The owners of Gight, now a ruin, once a feudal stronghold, were a hot-headed, hasty-handed race, sufficiently notable to be commemorated by Thomas the Rhymer, and to leave their mark in the traditions of Aberdeenshire. In the seventh generation from Sir William Gordon, the property passed to an heiress, Mary Gordon. By her marriage with Alexander Davidson of Newton, who assumed the name of Gordon, she had a son Alexander, Mrs. Byron's grandfather, who married Margaret Duff of Craigston, a cousin of the first Earl of Fife. Their eldest son, George, the fifth of the Gordons of Gight who bore that name, married Catherine Innes of Rosieburn, and by her became the father of Catherine Gordon, born in 1765, afterwards Mrs. Byron. Both her parents dying early, Catherine Gordon was brought up at Banff by her grandmother, commonly called Lady Gight, a penurious, illiterate woman, who, however, was careful that her granddaughter was better educated than herself. Thus, for the second time, Gight, which, with other property, was worth between £23,000 and £24,000, passed to an heiress.

Miss Catherine Gordon had her full share of feminine vanity. At the age of thirty-five she was a stout, dumpy, coarse-looking woman, awkward in her movements, provincial in her accent and manner. But as her son was vain of his personal appearance, and especially of his hands, neck, and ears, so she, when other charms had vanished, clung to her pride in her arms and hands. She exhausted the patience of Stewartson the artist, who in 1806, after forty sittings, painted her portrait, by her anxiety to have a particular turn in her elbow exhibited in the most pleasing light. Of her ancestry she was, to use her son's expression, as "proud as Lucifer," looked down upon the Byron family, and regarded the Duke of Gordon as an inferior member of her clan. In later life, at any rate, her temper was ungovernable; her language, when excited, unrestrained; her love of gossip insatiable. Capricious in her moods, she flew from one extreme to the other, passing, for the slightest cause, from passionate affection to equally passionate resentment. How far these defects were produced, as they certainly were aggravated, by her husband's ill treatment and her hard

struggle with poverty, it is impossible to say. She had many good qualities. She bore her ruin, as her letters show, with good sense, dignity, and composure. She lived on a miserable pittance without running into debt; she pinched herself in order to give her son a liberal supply of money; she was warm-hearted and generous to those in distress. She adored her scamp of a husband, and, in her own way, was a devoted mother. In politics she affected democratic opinions, took in the 'Morning Chronicle', and paid for it, as is shown by a bill sent in after her death, at the rate of £4 17s. 6d. for the half-year — no small deduction from her narrow income. She was fond of books, subscribed to the Southwell Book Club, copied passages which struck her in the course of her reading, collected all the criticisms on her son's poetry, made shrewd remarks upon them herself (Moore's 'Journal and Correspondence', vol. v. p. 295), and corresponded with her friends on literary subjects.

In 1785 Miss Catherine Gordon was at Bath, where, it may be mentioned, her father had, some years before, committed suicide. There she met, and there, on May 13, 1785, in the parish church of St. Michael, as the register shows, she married Captain John Byron.

Captain John Byron (1755-91), born at Plymouth, was the eldest son of Admiral the Hon. John Byron (1723-86) — known in the Royal Navy as "Hardy Byron" or "Foul-weather Jack" — by his marriage (1748) with Sophia Trevanion of Carhais, in Cornwall. The admiral, next brother to William, fifth Lord Byron, was a distinguished naval officer, whose 'Narrative' of his shipwreck in the 'Wager' was published in 1768, and whose 'Voyage round the World' in the 'Dolphin' was described by "an officer in the said ship" in 1767. His eldest son, John Byron, educated at Westminster and a French Military Academy, entered the Guards and served in America. A gambler, a spendthrift, a profligate scamp, disowned by his father, he in 1778 ran away with, and in 1779 married, Lady Carmarthen, wife of Francis, afterwards fifth Duke of Leeds, née Lady Amelia d'Arcy, only child and heiress of the last Earl of Holderness, and Baroness Conyers in her own right.

Captain Byron and his wife lived in Paris, where were born to them a son and a daughter, both of whom died in infancy, and Augusta, born 1783, the poet's half-sister, who subsequently married her first cousin, Colonel George Leigh. In 1784 Lady Conyers died, and Captain Byron returned to England, a widower, over head and ears in debt, and in search of an heiress.

It was a rhyme in Aberdeenshire —

"When the heron leaves the tree,
The laird of Gight shall landless be."

Tradition has it that, at the marriage of Catherine Gordon with “mad Jack Byron,” the heronry at Gight passed over to Kelly or Haddo, the property of the Earl of Aberdeen. “The land itself will not be long in following,” said his lordship, and so it proved. For a few months Mrs. Byron Gordon — for her husband assumed the name, and by this title her Scottish friends always addressed her — lived at Gight. But the ready money, the outlying lands, the rights of fishery, the timber, failed to liquidate Captain Byron’s debts, and in 1786 Gight itself was sold to Lord Aberdeen for £17,850. Mrs. Byron Gordon found herself, at the end of eighteen months, stripped of her property, and reduced to the income derived from £4200, subject to an annuity payable to her grandmother. She bore the reverse with a composure which shows her to have been a woman of no ordinary courage. Her letters on the subject are sensible, not ill-expressed, and, considering the circumstances in which they were written, give a favourable impression of her character.

The wreck of their fortunes compelled Mrs. Byron Gordon and her husband to retire to France. At the beginning of 1788 she had returned to London, and on January 22, 1788, at 16, Holles Street (since numbered 24, and now destroyed), in the back drawing-room of the first floor, gave birth to her only child, George Gordon, afterwards sixth Lord Byron. Hanson gives the names of the nurse, Mrs. Mills, the man-midwife, Mr. Combe, the doctor, Dr. Denman, who attended Mrs. Byron at her confinement. Dallas was, therefore, mistaken in his supposition that the poet was born at Dover. The child was baptized in London on February 29, 1788, as is proved by the register of the parish of Marylebone.

Shortly after the birth of her son, Mrs. Byron settled in Aberdeen, where she lived for upwards of eight years. During her stay there, in the summer of 1791, her husband died at Valenciennes. In the year 1794, by the death of his cousin William John Byron (1772-94) from a wound received at the siege of Calvi, in Corsica, her son became the heir to his great-uncle, the “wicked Lord Byron” (William, fifth Lord Byron, 1722-98), and a solicitor named Hanson was appointed to protect the boy’s interests. From Aberdeen Mrs. Byron kept up a correspondence with her sister-in-law, Frances Leigh (‘née’ Byron), wife of General Charles Leigh, to whom, in a letter, dated March 27, 1791, she speaks of her son as “very well, and really a charming boy.” Writing again to Mrs. Leigh, December 8, 1794, she says,

“I think myself much obliged to you for being so interested for George; you may be sure I would do anything I could for my son, but I really don’t see what can be done for him in that case. You say you are afraid Lord B. will dispose of the estates that are left, if he can; if he has it in his power, nobody can prevent him from selling them; if he has not, no one will buy them from him. You know

Lord Byron. Do you think he will do anything for George, or be at any expense to give him a proper education; or, if he wish to do it, is his present fortune such a one that he could spare anything out of it? You know how poor I am, not that I mean to ask him to do anything for him, that is to say, to be of any expense on his account.”

If any application was made to the boy’s great-uncle, it was unsuccessful. On May 19, 1798, Lord Byron died, and Hanson informed Mrs. Byron that her son had succeeded to the title and estates. At the end of the summer of that year, the little Lord Byron, with his mother and the nurse May Gray, reached Newstead, and, within a few weeks from their arrival, his first letter was written. His letters to his mother, it may be observed, are always addressed to “the Honourable Mrs. Byron,” a title to which she had no claim.

1. — To Mrs. Parker.

Newstead Abbey, Nov. 8th, 1798.

Dear Madam, — My Mamma being unable to write herself desires I will let you know that the potatoes are now ready and you are welcome to them whenever you please.

She begs you will ask Mrs. Parkyns if she would wish the poney to go round by Nottingham or to go home the nearest way as it is now quite well but too small to carry me.

I have sent a young Rabbit which I beg Miss Frances will accept off and which I promised to send before. My Mamma desires her best compliments to you all in which I join.

I am, Dear Aunt, yours sincerely,

BYRON.

I hope you will excuse all blunders as it is the first letter I ever wrote.

[Footnote 1: This letter, the first that Byron wrote, was written when he was ten years and ten months old. It is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a facsimile is given by Elze, in his ‘Life of Lord Byron’.

It is apparently addressed to his aunt, Mrs. Parker. Charlotte Augusta Byron, daughter of Admiral the Hon. John Byron, married Christopher Parker (1761-

1804), Vice-Admiral 1804, the son of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Peter Parker, Bart. (1721-1811). Her son, who, on the death of his grandfather, succeeded to the baronetcy as Sir Peter Parker, second Bart. (1786-1814), commanded H.M.S. 'Menelaus', and was killed in an attack on a body of American militia encamped near Baltimore. (See Byron's "Elegy on the Death of Sir Peter Parker," and his letter to Moore, October 7, 1814.) Her daughter Margaret, one of Byron's early loves, inspired, as he says, his "first dash into poetry" (see 'Poems', vol. i, p. 5, note 1).]

2. — To his Mother.

Nottingham, 13 March, 1799.

Dear Mama, — I am very glad to hear you are well. I am so myself, thank God; upon my word I did not expect so long a Letter from you; however I will answer it as well as I can. Mrs. Parkyns and the rest are well and are much obliged to you for the present. Mr. Rogers could attend me every night at a separate hour from the Miss Parkynses, and I am astonished you do not acquiesce in this Scheme which would keep me in Mind of what I have almost entirely forgot. I recommend this to you because, if some plan of this kind is not adopted, I shall be called, or rather branded with the name of a dunce, which you know I could never bear. I beg you will consider this plan seriously and I will lend it all the assistance in my power. I shall be very glad to see the Letter you talk of, and I have time just to say I hope every body is well at Newstead,

And remain, your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

P.S. — Pray let me know when you are to send in the Horses to go to Newstead. May desires her Duty and I also expect an answer by the miller.

[Footnote 1: Dummer Rogers, "Teacher of French, English, Latin, and Mathematicks", was, according to 'Notes and Queries' (4th series, vol. iii. p. 561), an American loyalist, pensioned by the English Government. He lived at Hen Cross, Nottingham, when Byron was staying in that city, partly with Mrs. Parkyns, partly at Mr. Gill's, in St. James's Lane, to be attended by a man named Lavender, "trussmaker to the general hospital", who had some local reputation for the treatment of misshapen limbs. Lavender, in 1814 ('Nottingham Directory' for 1814), appears as a "surgeon". Rogers, who read parts of Virgil and Cicero with Byron, represents him as, for his age, a fair scholar. He was often, during his lessons, in violent pain, from the position in which his foot was kept; and Rogers one day said to him, "It makes me uncomfortable, my Lord, to see you sitting there in such pain as I know you must be suffering". "Never mind, Mr. Rogers," answered the boy; "you shall not see any signs of it in *me*." Many years after, when in the neighbourhood of Nottingham, Byron sent a kind

message to his old instructor, bidding the bearer tell him that he could still recite twenty verses of Virgil which he had read with Rogers when suffering torture all the time.

[Footnote 2: Byron's nurse, who had accompanied him from Aberdeen (see p. 10, note 1).]

3. — To John Hanson.

SIR, — I am not a little disappointed at your Stay, for this last week I expected you every hour; but, however, I beg it as a favour that you will come up soon from Newstead as the Holidays commence in three weeks Time. I congratulate you on Capt. Hanson's being appointed commander of The 'Brazen' Sloop of War, and I congratulate myself on Lord Portsmouth's Marriage, hoping his Lady, when he and I meet next, will keep him in a little better order. The manner I knew that Capt. Hanson was appointed Commander of the Ship before mentioned was this. I saw it in the public Paper, and now, since you are going to Newstead, I beg if you meet Gray send her a packing as fast as possible, and give my Compliments to Mrs. Hanson and to all my comrades of the Battalions in and out upon different Stations,

And remain, your little friend,

BYRON.

I forgot to tell you how I was. I am at present very well and my foot goes but indifferently; I cannot perceive any alteration.

[Footnote 1: John Hanson, of 6, Chancery Lane, a well-known London solicitor, was introduced to the Byron family by an Aberdeenshire friend of Mrs. Byron, Mr. Farquhar, a member of Parliament, and a civilian practising in Doctors' Commons. The acquaintance began in January, 1788, with Byron's birth, for the midwife and the nurse were recommended by Mrs. Hanson. Six years later, Hanson was employed by Mrs. Byron to watch the interests of her son, who in 1794 had become heir-presumptive to his great-uncle. It was Hanson who, in the summer of 1798, communicated the news of the death of Lord Byron to Mrs. Byron, and with his wife received her and her son at Newstead. From that time till the close of the minority, Hanson was intimately associated with Byron, both as a man of business and a friend. He selected Dr. Glennie's school for the boy, persuaded Lord Carlisle to become his guardian, introduced the ward to Lord Carlisle, and entered him at Harrow. It was at his house in Earl's Court that Byron, for five years, spent a considerable part of his successive holidays. There he made acquaintance with Hanson's children — his sons Charles, Hargreaves (his contemporary at Harrow), and Newton, and his daughter, Mary Anne, who subsequently (March 7, 1814) married the Earl of

Portsmouth, Byron giving her away. This letter was written by Byron a few weeks after he had gone to school at Dr. Glennie's, in Lordship Lane, Dulwich. He remained there from August, 1799, to April, 1801.

In a letter to Mrs. Byron, dated September 1, 1799, Hanson describes Dr. Glennie's "Academy," where he had shortly before left the boy: —

"I left my entertaining companion with Mr. Glennie last Thursday week, and I have since learnt from him that he is very comfortable and likes the situation. His schoolfellows are very fine youths, and their deportment does very great credit to their Preceptor. I succeeded in getting Lord Byron a separate room, and I am persuaded the greatest attention will be paid to him. Mr. Glennie is a Scotchman, has travelled a great deal, and seems every way qualified for his present situation."

[Footnote 2: Captain James Hanson, R.N., was the brother of John Hanson to whom the letter is written. Byron was born with a caul, prized by sailors as a preservative from drowning. The caul was sold by Mrs. Mills, the nurse who attended Mrs. Byron in January, 1788, to Captain Hanson. In January, 1800, Captain Hanson, in command of H.M.S. 'Brazen', had captured a French vessel, which he sent to Portsmouth with a prize crew. On the 26th of the month, while shorthanded, he was caught in a storm off Newhaven. The 'Brazen' foundered, and Captain Hanson with all his men, except one, were drowned.]

[Footnote 3: In the late autumn of 1799 Lord Portsmouth was staying with the Hansons before his marriage (November 23, 1799) with Miss Norton, sister of Lord Grantley. In rough play he pinched Byron's ear; the boy picked up a conch shell which was lying on the ground, and hurled it at Lord Portsmouth's head, missing it by a hair's breadth, and smashing the glass behind. In vain Mrs. Hanson tried to make the peace by saying that Byron did not mean the missile for Lord Portsmouth. "But I 'did' mean it!" he reiterated; "I will teach a fool of an earl to pinch another noble's ear."]

[Footnote: 4. The following extract from a letter written by Hanson to Mrs. Byron (September 1, 1799) places the character of Byron's nurse in a different light to that which is given in Moore's 'Life': —

"I assure you, Madam, I should not have taken the liberty to have interfered in your domestic Arrangements, had I not thought it absolutely necessary to apprise you of the proceedings of your Servant, Mrs. Gray; her conduct towards your son while at Nottingham was shocking, and I was persuaded you needed but a hint of it to dismiss her. Mrs. Parkyns, when I saw her, said something to me about her; but when I found from dispassionate persons at Nottingham, it

was the general Topic of conversation, it would have ill become me to have remained silent.

My honourable little companion, tho' disposed to retain his feelings, could not refrain, from the harsh usage he had received at her hands, from complaining to me, and such is his dread of the Woman that I really believe he would forego the satisfaction of seeing you if he thought he was to meet her again. He told me that she was perpetually beating him, and that his bones sometimes ached from it; that she brought all sorts of Company of the very lowest Description into his apartments; that she was out late at nights, and he was frequently left to put himself to bed; that she would take the Chaise-boys into the Chaise with her, and stopped at every little Ale-house to drink with them. But, Madam, this is not all; she has even — — traduced yourself.

I entertain a very great affection for Lord Byron, and I trust I shall not be considered solely in my professional character, but as his Friend. I introduced him to my Friends, Lord Grantley and his Brother General Norton, who were vastly taken with him, as indeed are every one. And I should be mortified in the highest degree to see the honourable feelings of my little fellow exposed to insult by the inordinate Indiscretions of any Servant. He has Ability and a quickness of Conception, and a correct Discrimination that is seldom seen in a youth, and he is a fit associate of men, and choice indeed must be the Company that is selected for him.”]

4. — To his Mother.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, Sunday, May 1st, 1803.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I received your Letter the other day. And am happy to hear you are well. I hope you will find Newstead in as favorable a state as you can wish. I wish you would write to Sheldrake to tell him to make haste with my shoes.

I am sorry to say that Mr. Henry Drury has behaved himself to me in a manner I neither ‘can’ nor ‘will bear’. He has seized now an opportunity of showing his resentment towards me. To day in church I was talking to a Boy who was sitting next me; ‘that’ perhaps was not right, but hear what followed. After Church he spoke not a word to me, but he took this Boy to his pupil room, where he abused me in a most violent manner, called me ‘blackguard’, said he ‘would’ and ‘could’ have me expelled from the School, and bade me thank his ‘Charity’ that ‘prevented’ him; this was the Message he sent me, to which I shall return no answer, but submit my case to ‘you’ and those you may think ‘fit’ to ‘consult’. Is this fit usage for any body? had I ‘stole’ or behaved in the most ‘abominable’ way to him, his language could not have been more outrageous. What must the boys think of me to hear such a Message ordered to be delivered

to me by a 'Master'? Better let him take away my life than ruin my 'Character'. My Conscience acquits me of ever 'meriting' expulsion at this School; I have been 'idle' and I certainly ought not to talk in church, but I have never done a mean action at this School to him or 'any one'. If I had done anything so 'heinous', why should he allow me to stay at the School? Why should he himself be so 'criminal' as to overlook faults which merit the 'appellation' of a 'blackguard'? If he had had it in his power to have me expelled, he would long ago have 'done' it; as it is, he has done 'worse'. If I am treated in this Manner, I will not stay at this School. I write you that I will not as yet appeal to Dr. Drury; his Son's influence is more than mine and 'justice' would be 'refused' me. Remember I told you, when I 'left' you at 'Bath', that he would seize every means and opportunity of revenge, not for leaving him so much as the mortification he suffered, because I begged you to let me leave him. If I had been the Blackguard he talks of, why did he not of his own accord refuse to keep me as his 'pupil'? You know Dr. Drury's first letter, in it were these Words: "My son and Lord Byron have had some Disagreements; but I hope that his future behaviour will render a change of Tutors unnecessary." Last Term I was here but a short time, and though he endeavoured, he could find nothing to abuse me in. Among other things I forgot to tell you he said he had a great mind to expel the Boy for speaking to me, and that if he ever again spoke to me he would expel him. Let him explain his meaning; he abused me, but he neither did nor can mention anything bad of me, further than what every boy else in the School has done. I fear him not; but let him explain his meaning; 'tis all I ask. I beg you will write to Dr. Drury to let him know what I have said. He has behaved to me, as also Mr. Evans, very kindly. If you do not take notice of this, I will leave the School myself; but I am sure 'you' will not see me 'ill treated'; better that I should suffer anything than this. I believe you will be tired by this time of reading my letter, but, if you love me, you will now show it. Pray write me immediately. I shall ever remain, Your affectionate Son, BYRON.

P.S. — Hargreaves Hanson desires his love to you and hopes you are very well. I am not in want of any Money so will not ask you for any. God bless, bless you.

[Footnote 1: Byron appears to have suffered from what would now be described as infantile paralysis, which affected the inner muscles of the right leg and foot, and rendered him permanently lame. Before leaving London for Aberdeen, Mrs. Byron consulted John Hunter, who, in correspondence with Dr. Livingstone of Aberdeen, advised her as to the treatment of her son. Writing, May 31, 1791, to Mrs. Leigh, she says, "George's foot turns inward, and it is the right foot; he walks quite on the side of his foot." In 1798 the child was placed

under the care of Lavender (see p. 7, note 1) at Nottingham, doubtless on the recommendation of his aunt. In July, 1799, he was taken to London, in order to consult Dr. Baillie. From July, 1799, till the end of 1802, he was attended by Baillie in consultation with Dr. Laurie of 2, Bartholomew's Close. Special appliances were made for the boy, under their superintendence, by a scientific bootmaker named Sheldrake, in the Strand. In 'The Lancet' for 1827-8 (vol. ii. p. 779) Mr. T. Sheldrake describes "Lord Byron's case," giving an illustration of the foot. His account does not tally, in some respects, with that taken from contemporary letters, and his sketch represents the left not the right leg. But the nature and extent of Byron's lameness have been the subject of a curious variety of opinion. Lady Blessington, Moore, Gait, the Contessa Albrizzi, never knew which foot was deformed. Jackson, the boxer, thought it was the 'left' foot. Trelawney says that it proceeded from a contraction of the back sinews, and that the 'right' foot was most distorted. The lasts from which his shoes were made by Swift, the Southwell bootmaker, are preserved in the Nottingham Museum, and in both the foot is perfect in shape. The last pair of shoes modelled on them were made May 7, 1807. Mrs. Leigh Hunt says that the 'left' foot was shrunken, but was not a club-foot. Stendhal says the 'right' foot. Thorwaldsen indicates the 'left' foot. Dr. James Millingen, who inspected the feet after the poet's death, says that there was a malformation of the 'left' foot and leg, and that he was born club-footed. Two surgical boots are in the possession of Mr. Murray, made for Byron as a child; both are for the 'right' foot, ankle, and leg, and, assuming that they were made to fit the foot, they are too long and thin for a club-foot. Both at Dulwich and at Harrow, Byron was frequently seen by Laurie, whom Mrs. Byron paid, as she once complained in a letter to Laurie, "at the rate of £150 a year." It is difficult to see what more could have been done for the boy, and the explanation of the failure to effect a cure is probably to be found in the following extracts from two of Laurie's letters to Mrs. Byron. The first is dated December 7, 1801: —

"Agreeable to your desire, I waited on Lord Byron at Harrow, and I think it proper to inform you that I found his foot in a much worse state than when I last saw it, — the shoe entirely wet through and the brace round his ankle quite loose. I much fear his extreme inattention will counteract every exertion on my part to make him better. I have only to add that with proper care and bandaging, his foot may still be greatly recovered; but any delay further than the present vacation would render it folly to undertake it."

The second letter is dated October 2, 1802. In it Laurie complains that the boy had spent several days in London without seeing him, and adds —

"I cannot help lamenting he has so little sense of the Benefit he has already received as to be so apparently neglectful."]

[Footnote 2: For Henry Drury (afterwards an intimate friend of Byron) and his father, the Head-master of Harrow, see p. 41, note 2.

When Byron went to Harrow, in April, 1801, he was placed in Henry Drury's house. But in January, 1803, he refused to go back to school unless he was removed from Drury's care. He was in consequence placed at Evans's house. Dr. Drury, writing to explain the new arrangement, says, in a letter to Hanson, dated February 4, 1803 —

"The reason why Lord Byron wishes for this change arises from the repeated complaints of Mr. Henry Drury respecting his Inattention to Business, and his propensity to make others laugh and disregard their Employments as much as himself. On this subject I have had many very serious conversations with him, and though Mr. H. D. had repeatedly requested me to withdraw him from his Tuition, yet, relying on my own remonstrances and arguments to rectify his Error, and on his own reflection to confirm him in what is right, I was unwilling to accede to my son's wishes. Lord Byron has now made the request himself; I am glad it has been made, as he thereby imposes on himself an additional responsibility, and encourages me to hope that by this change he intends to lay aside all that negligence and those Childish Practices which were the cause of former complaints."

Fresh troubles soon arose, as Byron's letter indicates. Hanson forwarded the boy's complaint to Dr. Drury, from whom he received the following answer, dated May 15, 1803: —

"The Perusal of the inclosed has allowed me to inquire into the whole Matter, and to relieve your young friend's Mind from any uneasy impression it might have sustained from a hasty word I fairly confess. I am sorry it was ever uttered; but certainly it was never intended to make so deep a wound as his letter intimates.

"I may truly say, without any parade of words, that I am deeply interested in Lord Byron's welfare. He possesses, as his letter proves, a mind that feels, and that can discriminate reasonably on points in which it conceives itself injured. When I look forward to the Possibility of the exercise of his Talents hereafter, and his supplying the Deficiencies of fortune by the exertion of his abilities and by application, I feel particularly hurt to see him idle, and negligent, and apparently indifferent to the great object to be pursued. This event, and the conversations which have passed between us relative to it, will probably awaken in his mind a greater degree of emulation, and make him studious of acquiring

Distinction among his Schoolfellows, as well as of securing to himself the affectionate regard of his Instructors.”]

5. — To his Mother.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, June 23rd, 6th, 8th, 30th, 1803.

My dear Mother, — I am much obliged to you for the Money you sent me. I have already wrote to you several times about writing to Sheldrake: I wish you would write to him, or Mr. Hanson to call on him, to tell him to make an Instrument for my leg immediately, as I want one, rather. I have been placed in a higher form in this School to day, and Dr. Drury and I go on very well; write soon, my Dear Mother.

I remain, your affectionate Son,
BYRON.

6. — To his Mother.

Southwell, [Sept. 1803].

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have sent Mealey to day to you, before William came, but now I shall write myself. I *promise* you, upon my *honour*, I will come over tomorrow in the *Afternoon*. I was not wishing to resist your *Commands*, and really seriously intended coming over tomorrow, ever since I received your last Letter; you know as well as I do that it is not your Company I dislike, but the place you reside in. I know it is time to go to Harrow. It will make me *unhappy*; but I will *obey*. I only desire, entreat, this one day, and on my *honour* I will be over tomorrow in the evening or afternoon. I am sorry you disapprove my Companions, who, however, are the first this County affords, and my equals in most respects; but I will be permitted to chuse for myself. I shall never interfere in your's and I desire you will not molest me in mine. If you grant me this favour, and allow me this one day unmolested, you will eternally oblige your

Unhappy Son,
BYRON.

I shall attempt to offer no excuse as you do not desire one. I only entreat you as a Governor, not as a Mother, to allow me this one day. Those that I most love live in this County; therefore in the name of Mercy I entreat this one day to take leave, and then I will join you again at Southwell to prepare to go to a place where — I will write no more; it would only incense you. Adieu. Tomorrow I come.

[Footnote 1: This letter is endorsed by Hanson, “Lord Byron to his mother, “1803”. In September, 1803, at the end of the summer holidays, Byron did not

return to Harrow. Dr. Drury asked the reason, received no reply, and, on October 4, applied to Hanson for an explanation. Hanson's inquiry drew from Mrs. Byron, on October 30, the following answer, with which was enclosed the above letter from Byron: —

“You may well be surprized, and so may Dr. Drury, that Byron is not returned to Harrow. But the Truth is, I cannot get him to return to school, though I have done all in my power for six weeks past. He has no indisposition that I know of, but love, desperate love, the ‘worst’ of all ‘maladies’ in my opinion. In short, the Boy is distractedly in love with Miss Chaworth, and he has not been with me three weeks all the time he has been in this county, but spent all his time at Annesley.

If my son was of a proper age and the lady ‘disengaged’, it is the last of all connexions that I would wish to take place; it has given me much uneasiness. To prevent all trouble in future, I am determined he shall not come here again till Easter; therefore I beg you will find some proper situation for him at the next Holydays. I don't care what I pay. I wish Dr. Drury would keep him.

I shall go over to Newstead tomorrow and make a ‘last effort’ to get him to Town.”

The effort, if made, failed. On November 7, 1803, Mrs. Byron wrote again:

—
“Byron is really so unhappy that I have agreed, much against my inclination, to let him remain in this County till after the next Holydays.”

It was not till January, 1804, that Byron returned to Harrow.

Miss Mary Anne Chaworth, the object of Byron's passion, was then living with her mother, Mrs. Clarke, at Annesley, near Newstead (see ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 189, and note 1). The grand-niece of the Mr. Chaworth who was killed in a duel by William, fifth Lord Byron, on January 26, 1765 (‘Annual Register’, 1765, pp. 208-212; and ‘State Trials’, vol. xix. pp. 1178-1236), and the heiress of Annesley, she married, in August, 1805, John Musters, by whom she had a daughter, born in 1806. (See “Well! thou art happy!” ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 277; see also, for other allusions to Mrs. Chaworth Musters, ‘ibid’.., pp. 210, 239, 282, 285; and “The Dream” of July, 1816.) In Byron's memorandum-book, he describes a visit which he paid to Matlock with Miss Chaworth's mother, her stepfather Mr. Clarke, some friends, “and ‘my’ M. A. C. Alas! why do I say MY? Our union would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers, — it would have joined lands broad and rich, it would have joined at least ‘one’ heart, and two persons not ill matched in years (she is two years my

elder) and — and — and — 'what' has been the result?" ('Life', p. 27).

Mrs. Musters, after an unhappy married life, died in February, 1832, at Wiverton Hall, near Nottingham.

The connection between the families of Chaworth and Byron came through the marriage of William, third Lord Byron (died 1695), with Elizabeth Chaworth (died 1683), daughter of George Chaworth, created (1627) Viscount Chaworth of Armagh (Thoroton's 'Nottinghamshire', vol. i. p. 198).]

[Footnote 2: Owen Mealey, the steward at Newstead.]

7. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[At 63, Portland Place, London.]

Burgage Manor, [Thursday], March 22d, 1804.

Although, My ever Dear Augusta, I have hitherto appeared remiss in replying to your kind and affectionate letters; yet I hope you will not attribute my neglect to a want of affection, but rather to a shyness naturally inherent in my Disposition. I will now endeavour as amply as lies in my power to repay your kindness, and for the Future I hope you will consider me not only as *a Brother* but as your warmest and most affectionate *Friend*, and if ever Circumstances should require it your *protector*. Recollect, My Dearest Sister, that you are *the nearest relation* I have in *the world both by the ties of Blood and affection*. If there is anything in which I can serve you, you have only to mention it; Trust to your Brother, and be assured he will never betray your confidence. When You see my Cousin and future Brother George Leigh, tell him that I already consider him as my Friend, for whoever is beloved by you, my amiable Sister, will always be equally Dear to me.

I arrived here today at 2 o'clock after a fatiguing Journey, I found my Mother perfectly well. She desires to be kindly remembered to you; as she is just now Gone out to an assembly, I have taken the first opportunity to write to you, I hope she will not return immediately; for if she was to take it into her head to peruse my epistle, there is one part of it which would produce from her a panegyric on *a friend of yours*, not at all agreeable to me, and I fancy, *not particularly delightful to you*. If you see Lord Sidney Osborne I beg you will remember me to him; I fancy he has almost forgot me by this time, for it is rather more than a year Since I had the pleasure of Seeing him. — Also remember me to poor old Murray; tell him we will see that something is to be done for him, for *while I live he shall never be abandoned In his old Age*. Write to me Soon, my Dear Augusta, And do not forget to love me, In the meantime, I remain, more than words can express, your ever sincere, affectionate

Brother and Friend,
BYRON.

P.S. Do not forget to knit the purse you promised me, Adieu my beloved
Sister.

[Footnote: 1. The Hon. Augusta Byron, Byron's half-sister (January, 1783-November, 1851), was the daughter of Captain John Byron by his first wife, Amelia d'Arcy (died 1784), only child of the last Earl of Holderness, Baroness Conyers in her own right, the divorced wife of Francis, Marquis of Carmarthen, subsequently fifth Duke of Leeds. After the return of Captain and Mrs. Byron to London early in 1788, she was brought up by her grandmother, the Countess of Holderness. When the latter died, Augusta Byron divided her time between her half-sister, Lady Mary Osborne, who married, July 16, 1801, Lord Pelham, subsequently (1805) Earl of Chichester; her half-brother George, who succeeded his father as sixth Duke of Leeds in 1799; her cousin, the Earl of Carlisle; and General and Mrs. Harcourt. From their houses her letters during the period 1803-7 are written. In 1807 she married her first cousin, Colonel George Leigh of the Tenth Dragoons, the son of General Charles Leigh, by Frances, daughter of Admiral the Hon. John Byron. By her husband, who was a friend of the Prince Regent and well known in society, she was the mother of seven children. Their home was at Newmarket, till, in April, 1818, they were granted apartments in Flag Court, St. James's Palace, where she died in November, 1851.

Augusta Byron seems scarcely to have seen her brother between his infancy and 1802. Lady Holderness and Mrs. Byron were not on friendly terms, and it was not till the former's death that any intimacy was renewed between the brother and sister. Writing on October 18, 1801, to Augusta Byron, Mrs. Byron says, in allusion to the death of Lady Holderness,

"As I wish to bury what is past in *oblivion*, I shall avoid all reflections on a person now no more; my opinion of yourself I have suspended for some years; the time is now arrived when I shall form a very *decided* one. I take up my pen now, however, to condole with you on the melancholy event that has happened, to offer you every consolation in my power, to assure you of the inalterable regard and friendship of myself and son. We will be extremely happy if ever we can be of any service to you, now or at any future period. I take it upon me to answer for him; although he knows so little of you, he often mentions you to me in the most affectionate manner, indeed the goodness of his heart and amiable disposition is such that your being his sister, had he never seen you, would be a

sufficient claim upon him and ensure you every attention in his power to bestow.

Ah, Augusta, need I assure you that you will ever be dear to me as the Daughter of the man I tenderly loved, as the sister of my beloved, my darling Boy, and I take God to witness you *once* was dear to me on your own account, and may be so *again*. I still recollect with a degree of horror the many *sleepless* nights, and days of *agony*, I have passed by your bedside drowned in tears, while you lay insensible and at the gates of death. Your recovery certainly was wonderful, and thank God I did my duty. These days you cannot remember, but I never will forget them ... Your brother is at Harrow School, and, if you wish to see him, I have now no desire to keep you asunder.”

From 1802 till Byron’s death, Augusta took in him the interest of an elder sister. Writing to Hanson (June 17, 1804), she says —

“Pray write me a line and mention all you hear of my dear Brother: he was a most delightful correspondent while he remained in Nottinghamshire: but I can’t obtain a single line from Harrow. I was much struck with his *general improvement*; it was beyond the expectations raised by what you had told me, and his letters gave me the most excellent opinion of both his *Head* and *Heart*.”

In this tone the letters are continued (see extracts p. 39; p. 45, note 1; and p. 97 [Letter 48], [Foot]note 1 [further down]).

From the end of 1805, with some interruptions, and less regularity, the correspondence between brother and sister was maintained to the end of Byron’s life. To Augusta, then Mrs. Leigh, Byron sent a presentation copy of ‘Childe Harold’, with the inscription:

“To Augusta, my dearest sister, and my best friend, who has ever loved me much better than I deserved, this volume is presented by her father’s son and most affectionate brother.”

She was the god-mother of Byron’s daughter Augusta Ada, born December 10, 1815. In January, 1816, when Lady Byron was still with her husband, she writes of and to Mrs. Leigh:

“In this at least, I *am* ‘truth itself,’ when I say that, whatever the situation may be, there is no one whose society is dearer to me, or can contribute more to my happiness.”

Lady Byron left Byron on January 15, 1816. Writing to Mrs. Leigh from Kirby Mallory, she speaks of her as her “best comforter,” notices her absolute unselfishness, and says that Augusta’s presence in Byron’s house in Piccadilly is her “great comfort” (Lady Byron’s letters to Mrs. Leigh, January 16 and January 23, 1816, quoted in the ‘Quarterly Review’ for October, 1869, p. 414). Through Mrs. Leigh passed many communications between Byron and Lady Byron after

the separation. To her, Byron, in 1816 and 1817, wrote the two sets of “Stanzas to Augusta,” the “Epistle to Augusta,” and the Journal of his journey through the Alps, “which contains all the germs of ‘Manfred’ (letter to Murray, August, 1817). She was in his thoughts on the Rhine, and in the third canto of ‘Childe Harold’: —

”But one thing want these banks of Rhine,
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine.”

To her he was writing a letter at Missolonghi (February 23, 1824), which he did not live to finish, “My dearest Augusta, I received a few days ago your and Lady Byron’s report of Ada’s health.” He carried with him everywhere the pocket Bible which she had given him. “I have a Bible,” he told Dr. Kennedy (‘Conversations’), “which my sister gave me, who is an excellent woman, and I read it very often.” His last articulate words were “My sister — my child.”

Several volumes of Mrs. Leigh’s commonplace books are in existence, filled with extracts mostly on religious topics. She was, wrote the late Earl Stanhope, in a letter quoted in the ‘Quarterly Review’ (October, 1869, p. 421), “very fond” of talking about Byron.

“She was,” he continues, “extremely unprepossessing in her person and appearance — more like a nun than anything, and never can have had the least pretension to beauty. I thought her shy and sensitive to a fault in her mind and character.”

Frances, Lady Shelley, who died in January, 1873, and was intimately acquainted with Byron and his contemporaries, speaks of her as a “Dowdy-Goody.”

“I have seen,” she writes

(see ‘Quarterly Review’, October, 1869, p. 421, quoting from a letter signed E. M. U., which appeared in the ‘Times’ for September II, 1869),

“a great deal of Mrs. Leigh (Augusta), having passed some days with her and Colonel Leigh, for my husband’s shooting near Newmarket, when Lord Byron was in the house, and, as she told me, was writing ‘The Corsair’, to my great astonishment, for it was a wretched small house, full of her ill-trained children, who were always running up and down stairs, and going into ‘uncle’s’ bedroom, where he remained all the morning.”]

[Footnote 2: See preceding note.]

[Footnote 3: Francis, fifth Duke of Leeds, married, October 14, 1788, as his second wife, Miss Catherine Anguish, by whom he had two children: the eldest, a son, Sydney Godolphin Osborne, was born December 16, 1789.]

[Footnote 4: Joe Murray had been for many years in the employment of William, fifth Lord Byron. At his master's death, in 1798, he was taken into the service of the Duke of Leeds.

"I saw poor Joseph Murray the other night," writes Augusta Byron to Hanson (June 17, 1804), "who wishes me particularly to apply to Col. Leigh, to get him into some City Charity which the Prince of Wales is at the head of.

I cannot understand what he means, nor can any body else, and therefore, as he said he was advised by you, I think it better to apply to you on the subject. I'm sure Col. Leigh would be happy to oblige him; but in general he dislikes *asking favours* of the *Prince*, and this present moment is a bad one to chuse for the purpose, as H.R.H. is so much taken up with *public affairs*. I am very anxious about poor Joseph, and would almost do anything to serve him. I fear he is too old and infirm to go to service again."

Three years later (March 19, 1807), Augusta Byron writes again to Hanson:

"I have just had a pitiful note from poor old Murray, telling me of his dismissal from the Duchess of Leeds; but he says he does not leave her till June. I therefore hope something may in the mean time be done for him. He requests me to write word of it to my Brother. I shall certainly comply with his wishes, and send *two lines* on that subject to Southwell, where I conclude he is."

Byron made Murray an allowance of £20 a year (see Letter 83), took him, as soon as he could, into his service, and was careful, as he promises, to provide that he should not be "abandoned in his old age." His affection for Murray is marked by the postscript to the letter to Mrs. Byron of June 22, 1809 (see also 'Life', pp. 74, 121); as also by his draft will of 1811, in which he leaves Murray £50 a year for life.

8. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[63, Portland Place, London.]

Southwell, March 26th, 1804.

I received your affectionate letter, my ever Dear Sister, yesterday and I now hasten to comply with your injunction by answering it as soon as possible. Not, my Dear Girl, that it can be in the least irksome to me to write to you, on the Contrary it will always prove my Greatest pleasure, but I am sorry that I am afraid my correspondence will not prove the most entertaining, for I have nothing that I can relate to you, except my affection for you, which I can never sufficiently express, therefore I should tire you, before I had half satisfied

myself. Ah, How unhappy I have hitherto been in being so long separated from so amiable a Sister! but fortune has now sufficiently atoned by discovering to me a relation whom I love, a Friend in whom I can confide. In both these lights, my Dear Augusta, I shall ever look upon you, and I hope you will never find your Brother unworthy of your affection and Friendship.

I am as you may imagine a little dull here; not being on terms of intimacy with Lord Grey I avoid Newstead, and my resources of amusement are Books, and writing to my Augusta, which, wherever I am, will always constitute my Greatest pleasure. I am not reconciled to Lord Grey, *and I never will*. He was once my *Greatest Friend*, my reasons for ceasing that Friendship are such as I cannot explain, not even to you, my Dear Sister, (although were they to be made known to any body, you would be the first,) but they will ever remain hidden in my own breast.

They are Good ones, however, for although I am *violent* I am not *capricious* in my *attachments*. My mother disapproves of my quarrelling with him, but if she knew the cause (which she never will know,) She would reproach me no more. He Has forfeited all *title to my esteem*, but I hold him in too much *contempt* ever to *hate him*. My mother desires to be kindly remembered to you. I shall soon be in town to resume my studies at Harrow; I will certainly call upon you in my way up. Present my respects to Mrs. Harcourt; I am Glad to hear that I am in her Good Graces for I shall always esteem her on account of her behaviour to you, my Dear Girl. Pray tell me If you see Lord S. Osborne, and how he is; what little I know of him I like very much and If we were better acquainted I doubt not I should like him still better. Do not forget to tell me how Murray is. As to your Future prospects, my Dear Girl, *may they be happy!* I am sure you deserve Happiness and if *you* do not meet with it I shall begin to think it is "a bad world we live in." Write to me soon. I am impatient to hear from you. God bless you, My amiable Augusta, I remain,

Your ever affectionate Brother and Friend,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Henry, third Earl of Sussex, died in 1799, when the earldom lapsed. He was, however, succeeded in the ancient barony of Grey de Ruthyn by his daughter's son, Henry Edward, twentieth Baron Grey de Ruthyn (1780-1810), to whom Newstead was let.

"I am glad," writes Mrs. Byron to Hanson, March 10, 1803, "that Newstead is well let. I cannot find Lord Grey de Ruthin's Title in the

Peerage of England, Ireland, or Scotland. I suppose he is a *new* Peer.”

Lord Grey de Ruthyn married, in 1809, Anna Maria, daughter of William Kelham, of Ryton-upon-Dunsmore, Warwick. (See postscript to Byron’s Letter to his mother, August 11, 1809.) The lease of Newstead terminated in April, 1808.]

[Footnote 2: Probably the wife of General the Hon. William Harcourt (1742-1830), who distinguished himself in the War of American Independence, succeeded his only brother in 1809 as third (and last) Earl Harcourt, was created a field-marshal in 1821, and died in 1830. He married, in 1778, Mary, daughter of the Rev. William Danby, and widow of Thomas Lockhart. She died in 1833.]

9. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[At General Harcourt’s, St. Leonard’s Hill, Windsor, Berkshire.]

Burgage Manor, April 2d, 1804.

I received your present, my beloved Augusta, which was very acceptable, not that it will be of any use as a token of remembrance, No, my affection for you will never permit me to forget you.

I am afraid, my Dear Girl, that you will be absent when I am in town. I cannot exactly say when I return to Harrow, but however it will be in a very short time. I hope you were entertained by Sir Wm. Fawcet’s funeral on Saturday. Though I should imagine such spectacles rather calculated to excite Gloomy ideas. But I believe *your motive was not quite of so mournful a cast*.

You tell me that you are tired of London. I am rather surprised to hear that, for I thought the Gaieties of the Metropolis were particularly pleasing to *young ladies*. For my part I detest it; the smoke and the noise feel particularly unpleasant; but however it is preferable to this horrid place, where I am oppressed with *ennui*, and have no amusement of any kind, except the conversation of my mother, which is sometimes very *edifying*, but not always very *agreeable*. There are very few books of any kind that are either instructive or amusing, no society but old parsons and old Maids; — I shoot a Good deal; but, thank God, I have not so far lost my reason as to make shooting my only amusement. There are indeed some of my neighbours whose only pleasures consist in field sports, but in other respects they are only one degree removed from the brute creation.

These however I endeavour not to imitate, but I sincerely wish for the company of a few friends about my own age to soften the austerity of the scene. I am an absolute Hermit; in a short time my Gravity which is increased by my

solitude will qualify me for an Archbishoprick; I really begin to think that I should become a mitre amazingly well. You tell me to write to you when I have nothing better to do; I am sure writing to you, my Dear Sister, must ever form my Greatest pleasure, but especially so, at this time. Your letters and those of one of my Harrow friends form my only resources for driving away *dull care*. For Godsake write me a letter as long as may fill *twenty sheets* of paper, recollect it is my only pleasure, if you won't Give me twenty sheets, at least send me as long an epistle as you can and as soon as possible; there will be time for me to receive one more Letter at Southwell, and as soon as I Get to Harrow I will write to you. Excuse my not writing more, my Dear Augusta, for I am sure you will be sufficiently tired of reading this complaining narrative. God bless you, my beloved Sister. Adieu.

I remain your sincere and affectionate
Friend and Brother,
BYRON.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Harcourt.

[Footnote 1: General the Right Hon. Sir William Fawcett, K.B. (1728-1804), Colonel of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, Adjutant-General (1778-1797), and Governor of Chelsea Hospital (1796-1804), died at his house in Great George Street, Westminster, March 22, 1804. He had served during the rebellion of 1745, and distinguished himself during the Seven Years' War, where he was aide-de-camp first to General Elliot, and afterwards to the Marquis of Granby. An excellent linguist, he translated from the French, 'Reveries: or Memoirs upon the Art of War, by Field-Marshal Count Saxe' (1757); and from the German, 'Regulations for the Prussian Cavalry' (1757), 'Regulations for the Prussian Infantry', and 'The Prussian Tacticks' (1759). His military and diplomatic services were commemorated by a magnificent funeral on Saturday, March 31, 1804. The body was carried through the streets from Westminster to the chapel of Chelsea Hospital, the Prince Regent, the Duke of Clarence, and the Duke of Kent following the hearse, and eight general officers acting as pall-bearers.]

10. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[At General Harcourt's, St. Leonard's Hill, Windsor, Berkshire.]

Burgage Manor, April 9th, 1804.

A thousand thanks, my dear and Beloved Augusta, for your affectionate Letter, and so ready compliance with the request of a peevish and fretful Brother; it acted as a cordial on my drooping spirits and for a while dispelled the Gloom which envelopes me in this uncomfortable place. You see what power your letters have over me, so I hope you will be liberal in your epistolary

consolation.

You will address your next letter to Harrow as I set out from Southwell on Wednesday, and am sorry that I cannot contrive to be with you, as I must resume my studies at Harrow directly. If I speak in public at all, it will not be till the latter end of June or the beginning of July. You are right in your conjecture for I feel not a little nervous in the anticipation of *my Debut as an orator*. By the bye, I do not dislike Harrow. I find *ways and means* to amuse *myself very pleasantly* there; the friend, whose correspondence I find so amusing, is an old sporting companion of mine, whose recitals of Shooting and Hunting expeditions are amusing to me as having often been his companion in them, and I hope to be so still oftener.

My mother Gives a *party* to night at which the principal *Southwell Belles* will be present, with one of which, although I don't as yet know whom I shall so far *honour, having never seen them*, I intend to *fall violently* in love; it will serve as an amusement *pour passer le temps* and it will at least have the charm of novelty to recommend it, then you know in the course of a few weeks I shall be quite *au désespoir*, shoot myself and Go out of the world with *éclat*, and my History will furnish materials for a pretty little Romance which shall be entitled and denominated the loves of Lord B. and the cruel and Inconstant Sigismunda Cunegunda Bridgetina, etc., etc., Princess of Terra Incognita.

Don't you think that I have a very good Knack for *novel writing*? I have Just this minute been called away from writing to you by two Gentlemen who have given me an invitation to go over to Screveton, a village a few miles off, and spend a few days; but however I shall not accept it, so you will continue to address your letters to Harrow as usual. Write to me as soon as possible and give me a long letter. Remember me to Mrs. Harcourt and all who enquire after me. Continue to love me and believe me,

Your truly affectionate Brother and Friend,
BYRON.

P.S. — My Mother's love to you, Adieu.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Byron, writing to Hanson, July 24, 1804, says,

"I was informed by a Gentleman yesterday that he had been at Harrow and heard him speaking, and that he acquitted himself uncommonly well."

Byron's name occurs in three of the Harrow speech-bills — July 5, 1804; June 6, 1805; and July 4, 1805. The three bills are printed below: —

HARROW SCHOOL PUBLIC SPEECHES.

1. JULY 5, 1804.

Erskine, Maj. Cæsar } Ex Sallustio.
Sinclair Cato }
Long C. Canuleius ad Pleb. Ex Livio.
Molloy, Sr. The Country Box Lloyd.
Lord Byron Latinus }
Leeke Drances } Ex Virgilio.
Peel, Sr. Turnus }
Chaplin Henry the Fifth to his Shakespear.
Soldiers
Clayton Micispa ad Jugurtham Ex Sallustio.
Rowley Germanicus moriens Ex Tacito.
Grenside, Sr. General Wolfe to his Enfield.
Soldiers
Morant, Sr. Dido Ex Virgilio.
Mr. Calthorpe, Sr. In Catilinam Ex Cicerone.
Lloyd, Sr. The Ghost Shakespear.
Mr. Powys Tiresias Ex Horatio.
Sir Thomas Acland The Boil'd Pig Wesley.
Leveson Gower Ad Antonium Ex Cicerone.
Drury, Max. Earl of Strafford Hume.

2. JUNE 6, 1805.

There were no Speeches for May, 1805. Dr. Butler came to Harrow this year, after the Easter Holiday. — G.B.

Doveton Canulcius Ex Livio.
Farrer, Sr. Medea Ex Ovidio.
Long Caractacus Mason.
Rogers Manlius Ex Sallustio.
Molloy Micipsa Ex Sallustio.
Lord Byron Zanga Young.
Drury, Sr. Memmius Ex Sallustio.
Hoare Ajax } Ex Ovidio.
East Ulysses }
Leeke The Passions: an Ode Collins.
Calvert, Sr. Galgacus Ex Tacito.
Bazett Catilina ad Censor Ex Sallustio.

Bazett Camilla ad Conspr. Ex Sallustio.
Franks, Sr. Antony Shakespeare.
Wildman, Majr. Sat. ix., Lib. i. Ex Horatio.
Lloyd, Sr. The Bard: an Ode Gray.

3. JULY 4, 1805.

Lyon Piso ad Milites Ex Tacito.
East Cato Addison.
Saumarez Drances } Ex Virgilio, *Æn.* xi
Annesley Turnus }
Calvert Lord Strafford's Hume.
Defence
Erskine, Sr. Achilles Ex Homero, *Il.* xvi
Bazett York Shakespeare.
Harrington Camillus Ex Livio.
Leeke Ode to the Passions Collins.
Sneyd Electra Ex Sophocle.
Long Satan's Soliloquy Milton, *P.L.*, b. iv
Gibson Brutus } Ex Lucano.
Drury, Sr. Cato }
Lord Byron Lear Shakespeare.
Hoare Otho ad Milites Ex Livio.
Wildman Caractacus Mason.
Franks Wolsey Shakespeare.

Of Byron's oratorical powers, Dr. Drury, Head-master of Harrow, formed a high opinion.

"The upper part of the school," he writes (see 'Life', p. 20), composed declamations, which, after a revision by the tutors, were submitted to the master. To him the authors repeated them, that they might be improved in manner and action, before their public delivery. I certainly was much pleased with Lord Byron's attitude, gesture, and delivery, as well as with his composition. All who spoke on that day adhered, as usual, to the letter of their composition, as, in the earlier part of his delivery, did Lord Byron; but, to my surprise, he suddenly diverged from the written composition, with a boldness and rapidity sufficient to alarm me, lest he should fail in memory as to the conclusion. There was no failure; he came round to the close of his composition without discovering any impediment and irregularity on the whole. I questioned him why he had altered

his declamation. He declared he had made no alteration, and did not know, in speaking, that he had deviated from it one letter. I believed him; and, from a knowledge of his temperament, am convinced that, fully impressed with the sense and substance of the subject, he was hurried on to expressions and colourings more striking than what his pen had expressed.”

“My qualities,” says Byron, in one of his note-books (quoted by Moore, ‘Life’, p. 20), “were much more oratorical and martial than poetical; and Dr. Drury, my grand patron (our head-master), had a great notion that I should turn out an orator, from my fluency, my turbulence, my voice, my copiousness of declamation, and my action. I remember that my first declamation astonished him into some unwonted (for he was economical of such) and sudden compliments before the declaimers at our first rehearsal.”

For his subjects Byron chose passages expressive of vehement passion, such as Lear’s address to the storm, or the speech of Zanga over the body of Alonzo, from Young’s tragedy ‘The Revenge’. Zanga’s character and speech are famous in history from their application to Benjamin Franklin, in Wedderburn’s speech before the Privy Council (January, 1774) on the Whately Letters (Stanhope’s ‘History of England’, vol. v. p. 327, ed. 1853): —

”I forg’d the letter, and dispos’d the picture,
I hated, I despis’d, and I destroy.”]

[Sub-Footnote A: Note, in Dr. G. Butler’s writing, in the bound volume of Speech-Bills presented by him to the Harrow School Library.]

11. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Burgage Manor, August 18th, 1804.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA, — I seize this interval of my *amiable* mother’s absence this afternoon, again to inform you, or rather to desire to be informed by you, of what is going on. For my own part I can send nothing to amuse you, excepting a repetition of my complaints against my tormentor, whose *diabolical* disposition (pardon me for staining my paper with so harsh a word) seems to increase with age, and to acquire new force with Time. The more I see of her the more my dislike augments; nor can I so entirely conquer the appearance of it, as to prevent her from perceiving my opinion; this, so far from calming the Gale, blows it into a *hurricane*, which threatens to destroy everything, till exhausted by its own violence, it is lulled into a sullen torpor, which, after a short period, is again roused into fresh and revived phrenzy, to me most terrible, and to every other Spectator astonishing. She then declares that she plainly sees I hate her,

that I am leagued with her bitter enemies, viz. Yourself, L'd C[arlisle] and Mr. H[anson], and, as I never Dissemble or contradict her, we are all *honoured* with a multiplicity of epithets, too *numerous*, and some of them too *gross*, to be repeated. In this society, and in this amusing and instructive manner, have I dragged out a weary fortnight, and am condemned to pass another or three weeks as happily as the former. No captive Negro, or Prisoner of war, ever looked forward to their emancipation, and return to Liberty with more Joy, and with more lingering expectation, than I do to my escape from this maternal bondage, and this accursed place, which is the region of dullness itself, and more stupid than the banks of Lethe, though it possesses contrary qualities to the river of oblivion, as the detested scenes I now witness, make me regret the happier ones already passed, and wish their restoration.

Such Augusta is the happy life I now lead, such my *amusements*. I wander about hating everything I behold, and if I remained here a few months longer, I should become, what with *envy, spleen and all uncharitableness*, a complete *misanthrope*, but notwithstanding this,

Believe me, Dearest Augusta, ever yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

12. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Burgage Manor, August 29, 1804.

I received the arms, my dear Miss Pigot, and am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. It is impossible I should have any fault to find with them. The sight of the drawings gives me great pleasure for a double reason, — in the first place, they will ornament my books, in the next, they convince me that *you* have not entirely *forgot* me. I am, however, sorry you do not return sooner — you have already been gone an *age*. I perhaps may have taken my departure for London before you come back; but, however, I will hope not. Do not overlook my watch-riband and purse, as I wish to carry them with me. Your note was given me by Harry, at the play, whither I attended Miss Leacroft, and Dr. S — — ; and now I have sat down to answer it before I go to bed. If I am at Southwell when you return, — and I sincerely hope you will soon, for I very much regret your absence, — I shall be happy to hear you sing my favourite, “The Maid of Lodi.” My mother, together with myself, desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Pigot, and, believe me, my dear Miss Pigot, I remain, your affectionate friend,

BYRON.

P.S. — If you think proper to send me any answer to this, I shall be extremely happy to receive it. Adieu.

P.S.2d. — As you say you are a novice in the art of knitting, I hope it don't give you too much trouble. Go on *slowly*, but surely. Once more, adieu.

[Footnote 1: Elizabeth Bridget Pigot lived with her mother and two brothers on Southwell Green, in a house opposite Burgage Manor. Miss Pigot thus describes her first meeting with Byron ('Life', p. 32): —

"The first time I was introduced to him was at a party at his mother's, when he was so shy that she was forced to send for him three times before she could persuade him to come into the drawing-room, to play with the young people at a round game. He was then a fat, bashful boy, with his hair combed straight over his forehead, and extremely like a miniature picture that his mother had painted by M. de Chambruland. The next morning Mrs. Byron brought him to call at our house, when he still continued shy and formal in his manner. The conversation turned upon Cheltenham, where we had been staying, the amusements there, the plays, etc.; and I mentioned that I had seen the character of Gabriel Lackbrain very well performed. His mother getting up to go, he accompanied her, making a formal bow, and I, in allusion to the play, said, 'Good-by, Gaby.' His countenance lighted up, his handsome mouth displayed a broad grin, all his shyness vanished, never to return, and, upon his mother's saying, 'Come, Byron, are you ready?' — no, she might go by herself, he would stay and talk a little longer; and from that moment he used to come in and go out at all hours, as it pleased him, and in our house considered himself perfectly at home."

The character of "Gabriel Lackbrain," mentioned above, occurs in 'Life', a comedy by F. Reynolds. It was at Byron's suggestion that Moore, when preparing the 'Life', applied to Miss Pigot for letters. On January 22, 1828, he was taken to call on her and her mother by the Rev. John Becher.

"Their reception of me most cordial and flattering; made me sit in the chair which Byron used to sit in, and remarked, as a singularity, that this was the poor fellow's birthday; he would to-day have been forty. On parting with Mrs. Pigot, a fine, intelligent old lady, who has been bedridden for years, she kissed my hand most affectionately, and said that, much as she had always admired me as a poet, it was as the friend of Byron she valued and loved me ... Her affection, indeed, to his memory is unbounded, and she seems unwilling to allow that he had a single fault ... Miss Pigot in the evening, with his letters, which interested me exceedingly; some written when he was quite a boy, and the bad spelling and scrambling handwriting delightful; spelling, indeed, was a very late accomplishment with him"

('Diary of Thomas Moore', vol. v. p. 249). (See "To Eliza," 'Poems', vol. i.

pp.47-49; see also the lines “To M. S. G.,” ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 79, 80; see for the lines which Byron wrote in her copy of Burns, ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 233, 234.)

Miss Pigot died at Southwell in 1866, her brother John (see letter of August 9, 1806, p. 100, note 3) in 1871. Her brother Henry, whom Byron used to call his grandson, died October 28, 1830, a captain in the 23rd Native Infantry in the service of the East India Company.

The following undated note (1810) from Mrs. Pigot to Mrs. Byron illustrates the enthusiastic interest with which the Pigots followed Byron’s career: —

“Indeed, my dear Mrs. Byron, you have given me a very ‘great treat’ in sending me ‘English Bards’ to look at; you know how very highly I thought of the ‘first’ edition, and this is certainly much improved; indeed, I do not think anybody but Lord Byron could (in these our days) have produced such a work, for it has all the fire of ancient genius. I have always been accustomed to tell you my thoughts most sincerely, and I cannot say that I like that addition to the part where ‘Bowles’ is mentioned; it wants that ‘brilliant spirit’ which almost invariably accompanies Lord B.’s writings. Maurice, too, and his granite weight of leaves, is in truth a heavy comparison. But I turn with pleasure from these specks in the sun to notice ‘Vice and folly, Greville and Argyle;’ it is ‘most admirable’: the ‘same pen’ may ‘equal’, but I think it is not in the power of human abilities to ‘exceed’ it. As to Lord Carlisle, I think he well deserves the Note Lord B. has put in; I am ‘very much’ pleased with it, and the little word ‘Amen’ at the end, gives a point ‘indescribably good’. The whole of the conclusion is excellent, and the Postscript I think must entertain everybody except ‘Jeffrey’. I hope the poor Bear is well; I wish you could make him understand that he is ‘immortalized’, for, if ‘four-leg’d Bears’ have any vanity, it would certainly delight him. Walter Scott, too (I really do not mean to call him a Bear), will be highly gratified: the compliment to him is very elegant: in short, I look upon it as a most ‘highly finished’ work, and Lord Byron has certainly taken the Palm from ‘all our’ Poets.... A good account of yourself I assure you will always give the most sincere pleasure to my dear Mrs. Byron’s very affectionate friend, Margt. Pigot. Elizabeth begs her compts.”]

[Footnote 2: Henry Pigot. (See p. 33, note 1.)]

[Footnote 3: Miss Julia Leacroft, daughter of a neighbour, Mr. John Leacroft. (See lines “To Lesbia,” ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 41-43.) The private theatricals in September, 1806 (see p. 117 [Letter 81], [Foot]note 3), were held at Mr. Leacroft’s house. Later, Captain Leacroft expostulated with Byron on his attentions to his sister, and, according to Moore, threatened to call him out.

Byron was ready to meet him; but afterwards, on consulting Becher, resolved never to go near the house again. — 'Prose and Verse of Thomas Moore', edited by Richard Herne Shepherd (London, 1878), p. 420. (But see Letters 62, 63, 64.)]

[Footnote 4: By Dibdin, set to music by Shield. (See Moore's 'Life', p. 33.) Byron's love for simple ballad music lasted throughout his life. As a boy at Harrow, he was famous for the vigour with which he sang "This Bottle's the Sun of our Table" at Mother Barnard's. He liked the Welsh air "Mary Anne," sung by Miss Chaworth; the songs in 'The Duenna'; "When Time who steals our Years away," which he sang with Miss Pigot; or "Robin Adair," in which he was accompanied by Miss Hanson on her harp.

"It is very odd," he said to Miss Pigot, "I sing much better to your playing than to any one else's."

"That is," she answered, "because I play to your singing."

Moore ('Journal and Correspondence', vol. v. pp. 295, 296), speaking of "Byron's chanting method of repeating poetry," says that "it is the men who have the worst ears for music that 'sing' out poetry in this manner, having no nice perception of the difference there ought to be between animated reading and 'chant'." Rogers ('Table-Talk, etc.', pp. 224, 225) expresses the same opinion, when he says, "I can discover from a poet's versification whether or not he has an ear for music. To instance poets of the present day: — from Bowles's and Moore's, I should know that they had fine ears for music; from Southey's, Wordsworth's, and Byron's, that they had no ears for it."]

13.-To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, Malton, Yorkshire.]

Harrow-on-the-Hill, October 25th, 1804.

My dear Augusta, — In compliance with your wishes, as well as gratitude for your affectionate letter, I proceed as soon as possible to answer it; I am glad to hear that *any body* gives a good account of me; but from the quarter you mention, I should imagine it was exaggerated. That you are unhappy, my dear Sister, makes me so also; were it in my power to relieve your sorrows you would soon recover your spirits; as it is, I sympathize better than you yourself expect. But really, after all (pardon me my dear Sister), I feel a little inclined to laugh at you, for love, in my humble opinion, is utter nonsense, a mere jargon of compliments, romance, and deceit; now, for my part, had I fifty mistresses, I should in the course of a fortnight, forget them all, and, if by any chance I ever recollected one, should laugh at it as a dream, and bless my stars, for delivering me from the hands of the little mischievous Blind God. Can't you drive this Cousin of ours out of your pretty little head (for as to *hearts* I think they are out

of the question), or if you are so far gone, why don't you give old L'Harpagon (I mean the General) the slip, and take a trip to Scotland, you are now pretty near the Borders. Be sure to Remember me to my formal Guardy Lord Carlisle, whose magisterial presence I have not been into for some years, nor have I any ambition to attain so great an honour. As to your favourite Lady Gertrude, I don't remember her; pray, is she handsome? I dare say she is, for although they are a *disagreeable, formal, stiff* Generation, yet they have by no means plain persons, I remember Lady Cawdor was a sweet, pretty woman; pray, does your sentimental Gertrude resemble her? I have heard that the duchess of Rutland was handsome also, but we will say nothing about her temper, as I hate Scandal.

Adieu, my pretty Sister, forgive my levity, write soon, and God bless you.

I remain, your very affectionate Brother,

BYRON.

P.S. — I left my mother at Southwell, some time since, in a monstrous pet with you for not writing. I am sorry to say the old lady and myself don't agree like lambs in a meadow, but I believe it is all my own fault, I am rather too fidgety, which my precise mama objects to, we differ, then argue, and to my shame be it spoken fall out a *little*, however after a storm comes a calm; what's become of our aunt the amiable antiquated Sophia? is she yet in the land of the living, or does she sing psalms with the *Blessed* in the other world. Adieu. I am happy enough and Comfortable here. My friends are not numerous, but select; among them I rank as the principal Lord Delawarr, who is very amiable and my particular friend; do you know the family at all? Lady Delawarr is frequently in town, perhaps you may have seen her; if she resembles her son she is the most amiable woman in Europe. I have plenty of acquaintances, but I reckon them as mere Blanks. Adieu, my dear Augusta.

[Footnote 1: Colonel George Leigh.]

[Footnote 2: General Leigh, father of the colonel. Both Harpagon and Cléante ('L'Avare') wish to marry Mariane; but the miser prefers his casket to the lady, who therefore marries Cléante.]

[Footnote 3: Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle (1748-1825), was, on his mother's side, connected with the Byron family. The Hon. Isabella Byron (1721-1795), daughter of the fourth Lord Byron, married, in 1742, Henry, fourth Earl of Carlisle. She subsequently, after the death of Lord Carlisle (1758), married, as her second husband, Sir William Musgrave. She was a woman of considerable ability, and apparently, in later life, of eccentric habits — a "recluse in pride and rags." She was the reputed writer of some published poetry, and of 'Maxims

addressed to Young Ladies'. Some of these maxims might have been of use to her grand-nephew: "Habituate yourself to that way of life most agreeable to the person to whom you are united; be content in retirement, or with society, in town, or country." Her 'Answer' to Mrs. Greville's ode on 'Indifference' has more of the neck-or-nothing temper of the Byrons: —

"Is that your wish, to lose all sense
In dull lethargic ease,
And wrapt in cold indifference,
But half be pleased or please?

...

It never shall be my desire
To bear a heart unmov'd,
To feel by halves the gen'rous fire,
Or be but half belov'd.

Let me drink deep the dang'rous cup,
In hopes the prize to gain,
Nor tamely give the pleasure up
For fear to share the pain.

Give me, whatever I possess,
To know and feel it all;
When youth and love no more can bless,
Let death obey my call."

Lady Carlisle's son, Frederick, who was educated at Eton and Cambridge, succeeded his father as fifth Earl of Carlisle, in 1758, when he was ten years old. After leaving Cambridge, he started on a continental tour with two Eton friends — Lord FitzWilliam and Charles James Fox. A lively letter-writer, his correspondence with his friend George Selwyn, while in Italy, shows him to have been a young man of wit, feeling, and taste. It is curious to notice that, at Rome, he singles out, like his cousin in 'Childe Harold' or 'Manfred', as the most striking objects, the general aspect of the "marbled wilderness", the moonlight view of the amphitheatre, the Laocoon, the Belvedere Apollo, and the group of Niobe and her daughters. One other taste he shared with Byron — he was a lover of dogs, and "Rover" was his constant companion abroad.

Lord Carlisle returned to England in 1769. Like Fox, he was a prodigious dandy. They "once travelled from Paris to Lyons for the express purpose of

buying waistcoats; and during the whole journey they talked of nothing else” (‘Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers’, pp. 73, 74). Already well known in London society, Carlisle was a close friend of George Selwyn, a familiar figure at White’s and Brookes’s, an inveterate gambler, an adorer of Lady Sarah Bunbury, who, as Lady Sarah Lennox, had won the heart of George III. The flirtation provoked from Lord Holland an adaptation of ‘Lydia, dic per omnes’: —

”Sally, Sally, don’t deny,
But, for God’s sake, tell me why
You have flirted so, to spoil
That once lively youth, Carlisle?
He used to mount while it was dark;
Now he lies in bed till noon,
And, you not meeting in the park,
Thinks that he gets up too soon,” *etc.*

In 1770 Lord Carlisle married Lady Margaret Leveson Gower, a beautiful and charming woman. “Everybody,” writes Lord Holland to George Selwyn (May 2, 1770), “says it is impossible not to admire Lady Carlisle.” But matrimony did not at once steady his character. For the next few years — though in 1773 he published a volume of ‘Poems’ — his pursuits were mainly those of a young man of fashion, and he impoverished himself at the gaming-table. From 1777 onwards, however, his life took a more serious turn. In that year he became Treasurer of the Household, and was sworn a member of the Privy Council. In 1778 he was the chief of the three commissioners sent out by Lord North to negotiate with the United States. There he declined a challenge from Lafayette, provoked by reflections on the French court and nation, which he had issued with his fellow-commissioners in their political capacity. In 1779 he was nominated Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire, and First Lord of Trade and Plantations. He was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland from 1780 to 1782, and held the post of Lord Privy Seal in the Duke of Portland’s administration of 1783. Till the outbreak of the French Revolutionary wars, he was an opponent of Pitt; but after 1792 he consistently supported the Government.

Carlisle was a collector of pictures, statuary, and works of art. He was also a writer of verse, tragedies, and pamphlets; but, in literature, his admirable letters are his best claim to be remembered. One of his two tragedies, ‘The Father’s Revenge’ (1783), was praised by Walpole, and received the guarded approval of Dr. Johnson. His published poetry consisted of an ode on the death of Gray, verses on that of Lord Nelson, “Lines for the Monument of a favourite Spaniel,”

an address to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and translations from Dante. The first two poems provoked Richard Tickell to write the 'Wreath of Fashion' (1780). "The following lines," says Tickell, in his "Advertisement," were "occasioned by the Author's having lately studied, with infinite attention, several fashionable productions in the 'Sentimental' stile.... For example, A Noble Author has lately published his works, which consist of 'three' compositions: 'one' an Ode upon the death of Mr. Gray; the two others upon the death of his Lordship's 'Spaniel'."

"Here, placid 'Carlisle' breathes his gentle line,
Or haply, gen'rous 'Hare', re-echoes thine.
Soft flows the lay: as when, with tears, He paid
The last sad honours to his — — — Spaniel's shade!
And lo! he grasps the badge of wit, a wand;
He waves it thrice and 'Storer' is at hand."

His contemporaries seem to have thought that his poetry, weak though it was, was indebted to his Eton friends, "the Hare with many friends," and Antony Storer. The latter's name is linked with that of Carlisle in another satire, 'Pandolfo Attonito': —

"Fall'n though I am, I ne'er shall mourn,
Like the dark Peer on Storer's urn,"

where a note refers to "Antony Storer, formerly Member for Morpeth ('as some persons' near Carlisle and Castle Howard 'may possibly recollect'), a gentleman well known in the circles of fashion and polite literature." Carlisle's name occurs in many of the satires of the day on literary subjects. 'The Shade of Pope' (ii. 191, 192) says —

"Carlisle is lost with Gillies in surprize,
As Lysias charms soft Jersey's classic eyes;"

and in the 'Pursuits of Literature' (Dialogue ii. line 234), a note to the line —
"While lyric Carlisle purrs o'er love transformed,"
again associates his name with that of Lady Jersey.

In 1799 Lord Carlisle was persuaded by Hanson to become Byron's guardian, in order to facilitate legal proceedings for the recovery of the Rochdale property, illegally sold by William, fifth Lord Byron. He was introduced to his ward by

Hanson, who took the boy to Grosvenor Place, to see his guardian and consult Dr. Baillie in July, 1799. He seemed anxious to befriend the boy; but Byron was eager, as Hanson notes, to leave the house. When Mrs. Byron, in 1800, was anxious to remove her son from Dr. Glennie's care, Carlisle exercised his authority, and forbade the schoolmaster to give him up to his mother. He probably, on this occasion, experienced Mrs. Byron's temper, for Augusta Byron, writing to Hanson (November 18, 1804), says that he dreaded "having any concern whatever with Mrs. Byron." Byron does not seem to have met his guardian again till January, 1805, when Augusta Byron writes to Hanson:

"I hear from Lady Gertrude Howard that Lord Carlisle was 'very much' pleased with my brother, and I am sure, from what he said to me at Castle Howard, is disposed to show him all the kindness and attention in his power. I know you are so partial to Byron and so much interested in all that concerns him, that you will rejoice almost as much as I do that his acquaintance with Lord C. is renewed. In the mean time it is a great comfort for me to think that he has spent his Holydays so comfortably and so much to his wishes. You will easily believe that he is a 'very great favourite of mine', and I may add the more I see and hear of him, the more I 'must' love and esteem him."

It may be doubted whether Carlisle ever saw the dedication of 'Hours of Idleness'. Augusta Byron, in a letter to Hanson of February 7, 1807, says,

"I return you my Brother's poems with many Thanks. Mrs. B. has had the attention to send me 2 copies. I like some of them very much: but you will laugh when I tell you I have never had courage to shew them to Lord Carlisle for fear of his disapproving others."

The years 1806-7, spent at Southwell, as his sister says, "in idleness and ill humour with the whole World," were not the most creditable of Byron's life, and Carlisle's efforts to make him return to Cambridge failed. It is, moreover, certain that in 1809 Carlisle was ill; it is also probable that at a time when the scandal of Mary Anne Clarke and the Duke of York threatened to come before the House of Lords, he was unwilling to connect himself in public with a cousin of whom he knew no good, and of whose political views he was ignorant. These causes may have combined to produce the coldly formal letter, in which he told Byron the course of procedure to be adopted in taking his seat in the House of Lords, and ignored the young man's wish that his cousin and guardian should introduce him. (For Byron's attack upon Carlisle, and his subsequent admission of having done him "some wrong," see 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', lines 723-740; and 'Childe Harold', Canto III. stanzas xxix., xxx.)

It is possible that the "paralytic puling" may have been suggested by the "placid purring" of previous satirists. In March, 1814, his sister Augusta was

trying hard to persuade Byron, as he notes in his Diary,

“to make it up with Carlisle. I have refused ‘every’ body else, but I can’t deny her anything, though I had as leif ‘drink up Eisel — eat a crocodile.’“

Lord Carlisle had three daughters: the eldest, Lady Caroline Isabella Howard, married, in 1789, John, first Lord Cawdor, and died in 1848; the second, Lady Elizabeth, married, in 1799, John Henry, fifth Duke of Rutland, and died in 1825; the third, Lady Gertrude, married, in 1806, William Sloane Stanley, of Paultons, Hants, and died in 1870.]

[Footnote 4: No “Aunt Sophia” appears in the pedigree; but his grandmother was Sophia Trevanion, who married, in 1748, the Hon. John Byron, afterwards Admiral Byron. Mrs. Byron knew Dr. Johnson well, and she and Miss Burney were the only two friends who, as Mrs. Piozzi (then Mrs. Thrale) thought, might regret her departure from Streatham in 1782 (‘Life and Writings of Mrs. Piozzi’, vol. i. p. 171). “Mrs. Byron, who really loves me,” says Mrs. Piozzi (‘ibid.’, p. 125), “was disgusted at Miss Burney’s carriage to me.” In August, 1820, Mrs. Piozzi writes to a Miss Willoughby, to tell her

“what wonders Lord Byron is come home to do, for I see his arrival in the paper. His grandmother was my intimate friend, a Cornish lady, Sophia Trevanion, wife to the Admiral, ‘pour ses péchés’, and we called her Mrs. Biron always, after the French fashion”

(‘Life and Writings, etc.’, vol. ii. pp. 456, 457)’ Mrs. Byron died at Bath in 1790.]

[Footnote 5: Lady Delawarr, widow of John Richard, fourth Earl Delawarr, whom she married in 1783, died in 1826. Her only son, George John, fifth earl, succeeded his father in 1795. He went from Harrow to Brasenose College, Oxford; married, in 1813, Lady Elizabeth Sackville; was Lord Chamberlain 1858-9; and died in 1869. He was the “Euryalus” of “Childish Recollections” (see ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 100; and lines “To George, Earl of Delawarr,” ‘ibid.’, p. 126).]

14. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Friday, November 2d, 1804.

This morning, my dear Augusta, I received your affectionate letter, and it reached me at a time when I wanted consolation, not however of your kind for I am not yet old enough or Goose enough to be in love; no, my sorrows are of a different nature, though more calculated to provoke risibility than excite compassion. You must know, Sister of mine, that I am the most unlucky wight in Harrow, perhaps in Christendom, and am no sooner out of one scrape than into

another. And to day, this very morning, I had a thundering Jobation from our Good Doctor, which deranged my *nervous system*, for at least five minutes. But notwithstanding He and I now and then disagree, yet upon the whole we are very good friends, for there is so much of the Gentleman, so much mildness, and nothing of pedantry in his character, that I cannot help liking him, and will remember his instructions with gratitude as long as I live. He leaves Harrow soon, *apropos*, so do I. This quitting will be a considerable loss to the school. He is the best master we ever had, and at the same time respected and feared; greatly will he be regretted by all who know him. You tell me you don't know my friend L'd Delawarr; he is considerably younger than me, but the most good tempered, amiable, clever fellow in the universe. To all which he adds the quality (a good one in the eyes of women) of being remarkably handsome, almost too much so for a boy. He is at present very low in the school, not owing to his want of ability, but to his years. I am nearly at the top of it; by the rules of our Seminary he is under my power, but he is too goodnatured ever to offend me, and I like him too well ever to exert my authority over him. If ever you should meet, and chance to know him, take notice of him on my account.

You say that you shall write to the Dowager Soon; her address is at Southwell, *that* I need hardly inform you. Now, Augusta, I am going to tell you a secret, perhaps I shall appear undutiful to you, but, believe me, my affection for you is founded on a more firm basis. My mother has lately behaved to me in such an eccentric manner, that so far from feeling the affection of a Son, it is with difficulty I can restrain my dislike. Not that I can complain of want of liberality; no, She always supplies me with as much money as I can spend, and more than most boys hope for or desire. But with all this she is so hasty, so impatient, that I dread the approach of the holidays, more than most boys do their return from them. In former days she spoilt me; now she is altered to the contrary; for the most trifling thing, she upbraids me in a most outrageous manner, and all our disputes have been lately heightened by my one with that object of my cordial, deliberate detestation, Lord Grey de Ruthyn. She wishes me to explain my reasons for disliking him, which I will never do; would I do it to any one, be assured you, my dear Augusta, would be the first who would know them. She also insists on my being reconciled to him, and once she let drop such an odd expression that I was half inclined to believe the dowager was in love with him. But I hope not, for he is the most disagreeable person (in my opinion) that exists. He called once during my last vacation; she threatened, stormed, begged me to make it up, "he himself loved me, and wished it;" but my reason was so excellent — that neither had effect, nor would I speak or stay in the same room, till he took his departure. No doubt this appears odd; but was my

reason known, which it never will be if I can help it, I should be justified in my conduct. Now if I am to be tormented with her and him in this style, I cannot submit to it. You, Augusta, are the only relation I have who treats me as a friend; if you too desert me, I have nobody I can love but Delawarr. If it was not for his sake, Harrow would be a desert, and I should dislike staying at it. You desire me to burn your epistles; indeed I cannot do that, but I will take care that They shall be invisible. If you burn any of mine, I shall be *monstrous angry*; take care of them till we meet.

Delawarr and myself are in a manner connected, for one of our forefathers in Charles the 1st's time married into their family. Hartington, whom you enquire after, is on very good terms with me, nothing more, he is of a soft milky disposition, and of a happy apathy of temper which defies the softer emotions, and is insensible of ill treatment; so much for him. Don't betray me to the Dowager. I should like to know your Lady Gertrude, as you and her are so great Friends. Adieu, my Sister, write. From

[Signature, etc., cut out.]

[Footnote 1: The Rev. Joseph Drury, D.D. (1750-1834), educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, was appointed an Assistant-master at Harrow before he was one and twenty. He was Head-master from 1784 to 1805. In that year he retired, and till his death in 1834 lived at Cockwood, in Devonshire, where he devoted himself to farming. The following statement by Dr. Drury illustrates Byron's respect for his Head-master ('Life', p. 20): —

"After my retreat from Harrow, I received from him two very affectionate letters. In my occasional visits subsequently to London, when he had fascinated the public with his productions, I demanded of him, why, as in 'duty bound', he had sent none to me? 'Because,' said he, 'you are the only man I never wish to read them;' but in a few moments, he added, 'What do you think of the 'Corsair'?'"

Dr. Drury married Louisa Heath, sister of the Rev. Benjamin Heath, his predecessor in the Head-mastership. They had four children, all of whom have some connection with Byron's life. (1) Henry Joseph Drury (1778-1841), educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge (Fellow), Assistant-master at Harrow School, married (December 20, 1808) Ann Caroline Tayler, and had a numerous family. Mrs. Drury's sister married the Rev. F. Hodgson (see page 195 [Letter 102], [Foot]note 1). (2) Benjamin Heath Drury (1782-1835), educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge (Fellow), Assistant-master at Eton. (3) Charles Drury (1788-1869), educated at Harrow and Queen's College, Oxford (Fellow). (4) Louisa Heath Drury (1787-1873) married John Herman Merivale.

Dr. Drury's brother, Mark Drury, the Lower Master at Harrow, was the

candidate whom Byron supported for the Head-mastership.]

[Footnote 2: Thomas, third Lord Delawarr, Captain-general of all the Colonies planted or to be planted in Virginia, died in 1618. His fourth daughter, Cecilie, widow of Sir Francis Bindlose, married Sir John Byron, created Lord Byron by Charles I. His fifth daughter, Lucy, married Sir Robert Byron, brother to Lord Byron. But the first Lord Byron left no heirs, and the title descended to his brother, Richard Byron, from whom the poet was descended.]

[Footnote 3: William Spencer, Marquis of Hartington (1790-1858), succeeded his father as sixth Duke of Devonshire in 1811, and died unmarried. His sister, Georgiana Dorothy, married, in 1801, Lord Carlisle's eldest son.]

15. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

Harrow, Saturday, 11th Novr, 1804.

I thought, my dear Augusta, that your opinion of my *meek mamma* would coincide with mine; Her temper is so variable, and, when inflamed, so furious, that I dread our meeting; not but I dare say, that I am troublesome enough, but I always endeavour to be as dutiful as possible. She is so very strenuous, and so tormenting in her entreaties and commands, with regard to my reconciliation, with that detestable Lord G. that I suppose she has a penchant for his Lordship; but I am confident that he does not return it, for he rather dislikes her than otherwise, at least as far as I can judge. But she has an excellent opinion of her personal attractions, sinks her age a good six years, avers that when I was born she was only eighteen, when you, my dear Sister, know as well as I know that she was of age when she married my father, and that I was not born for three years afterwards. But vanity is the weakness of *your sex*, — and these are mere foibles that I have related to you, and, provided she never molested me, I should look upon them as follies very excusable in a woman.

But I am now coming to what must shock you, as much as it does me, when she has occasion to lecture me (not very seldom you will think no doubt) she does not do it in a manner that commands respect, and in an impressive style. No! did she do that, I should amend my faults with pleasure, and dread to offend a kind though just mother. But she flies into a fit of phrenzy, upbraids me as if I was the most undutiful wretch in existence, rakes up the ashes of my *father*, abuses him, says I shall be a true Byrrone, which is the worst epithet she can invent. Am I to call this woman mother? Because by nature's law she has authority over me, am I to be trampled upon in this manner? am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy, and suffer my feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a Son, But I renounce her as a Friend. What an example does she shew me! I hope in God I shall never follow it. I have not told you all, nor can I; I respect you as a female, nor, although I

ought to confide in you as a Sister, will I shock you with the repetition of Scenes, which you may judge of by the Sample I have given you, and which to all but you are buried in oblivion. Would they were so in my mind! I am afraid they never will. And can I, my dear Sister, look up to this mother, with that respect, that affection I ought? Am I to be eternally subjected to her caprice? I hope not — ; indeed a few short years will emancipate me from the Shackles I now wear, and then perhaps she will govern her passion better than at present.

You mistake me, if you think I dislike Lord Carlisle; I respect him, and might like him did I know him better. For him too my mother has an antipathy, why I know not. I am afraid he could be but of little use to me, in separating me from her, which she would oppose with all her might; but I dare say he would assist me if he could, so I take the will for the Deed, and am obliged to him in exactly the same manner as if he succeeded in his efforts.

I am in great hopes, that at Christmas I shall be with Mr. Hanson during the vacation, I shall do all I can to avoid a visit to my mother wherever she is. It is the first duty of a parent, to impress precepts of obedience in their children, but her method is so violent, so capricious, that the patience of Job, the versatility of a member of the House of Commons could not support it. I revere Dr. Drury much more than I do her, yet he is never violent, never outrageous: I dread offending him, not however through fear, but the respect I bear him makes me unhappy when I am under his displeasure. My mother's precepts, never convey instruction, never fix upon my mind; to be sure they are calculated, to inculcate obedience, so are chains, and tortures, but though they may restrain for a time, the mind revolts from such treatment. Not that Mrs. Byron ever injures my *sacred* person. I am rather too old for that, but her words are of that rough texture, which offend more than personal ill usage. "A talkative woman is like an Adder's tongue," so says one of the prophets, but which I can't tell, and very likely you don't wish to know, but he was a true one whoever he was.

The postage of your letters, My dear Augusta, don't fall upon me; but if they did, it would make no difference, for I am Generally in cash, and should think the trifle I paid for your epistles the best laid out I ever spent in my life. Write Soon. Remember me to Lord Carlisle, and, believe me, I ever am

Your affectionate Brother and Friend,

BYRONE.

[Footnote 1: In consequence of this letter, Augusta Byron wrote as follows to Hanson, and Byron spent the Christmas holidays of 1804 with his solicitor: —

"Castle Howard, Nov. 18, 1804.

My Dear Sir, — I am afraid you will think I presume almost too much upon the kind permission you have so often given me of applying to you about my Brother's concerns. The reason that induces me now to do so is his having lately written me several Letters containing the most extraordinary accounts of his Mother's conduct towards him and complaints of the uncomfortable Situation he is in during the Holidays when with her. All this you will easily imagine has more *vexed* than *surprized* me. I am quite unhappy about him, and wish I could in any way remedy the grievances he confides to me. I wished, as the most likely means of doing this, to mention the subject to Lord Carlisle, who has always expressed the greatest interest about Byron and also shewn me the greatest Kindness. Finding that he did *not object* to it, I yesterday had some conversation with Lord C. on the subject, and it is partly by his advice and wishes that I trouble you with this Letter. He authorized me to tell you that, if you would allow my Brother to spend the next vacation with you (which *he* seems *strongly* to wish), that it would put it into his power to see more of him and shew him more attention than he has hitherto, being withheld from doing so from the dread of having any concern whatever with Mrs. Byron.

I need hardly add that it is almost MY first wish that this should be accomplished. I am sure you are of my opinion that it is now of the greatest consequence to Byron to secure the friendship of Lord C., the only relation he has who possesses the *Will* and *power* to be of use to him. I think the Letters he writes me *quite perfect* and he does not express one sentiment or idea I should wish different; he tells me he is soon to leave Harrow, but does not say where he is to go. I conclude to Oxford or Cambridge. Pray be so good as to write me a few lines on this subject.

I trust entirely to the interest and friendship you have ever so kindly expressed for my Brother, for *my Forgiveness*. Of course you will not mention to Mrs. B. having heard from me, as she would only accuse me of wishing to estrange her Son from her, which would be very far from being the case further than his Happiness and comfort are concerned in it. My opinion is that *as* they cannot agree, they had better be separated, for such eternal Scenes of wrangling are enough to spoil the very best temper and Disposition in the universe. I shall hope to hear from you soon, my dear sir, and remain, Most sincerely yours,
AUGUSTA BYRON.”]

[Footnote 2: Lord Grey de Ruthyn. (See p. 23, note 1.)]

16. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, Malton, Yorkshire.]

Harrow-on-the-Hill, Novr., Saturday, 17th, 1804.

I am glad to hear, My dear Sister, that you like Castle Howard so well, I have no doubt what you say is true and that Lord C. is much more amiable than he has been represented to me. Never having been much with him and always hearing him reviled, it was hardly possible I should have conceived a very *great friendship* for his L'dship. My mother, you inform me, commends my *amiable disposition* and *good understanding*; if she does this to you, it is a great deal more than I ever hear myself, for the one or the other is always found fault with, and I am told to copy the *excellent pattern* which I see before me in *herself*. You have got an invitation too, you may accept it if you please, but if you value your own comfort, and like a pleasant situation, I advise you to avoid Southwell. — I thank you, My dear Augusta, for your readiness to assist me, and will in some manner avail myself of it; I do not however wish to be separated from *her* entirely, but not to be so much with her as I hitherto have been, for I do believe she likes me; she manifests that in many instances, particularly with regard to money, which I never want, and have as much as I desire. But her conduct is so strange, her caprices so impossible to be complied with, her passions so outrageous, that the evil quite overbalances her *agreeable qualities*. Amongst other things I forgot to mention a most *ungovernable appetite* for Scandal, which she never can govern, and employs most of her time abroad, in displaying the faults, and censuring the foibles, of her acquaintance; therefore I do not wonder, that my precious Aunt, comes in for her share of encomiums; This however is nothing to what happens when my conduct admits of animadversion; “then comes the tug of war.” My whole family from the conquest are upbraided! myself abused, and I am told that what little accomplishments I possess either in mind or body are derived from her and *her alone*.

When I leave Harrow I know not; that depends on her nod; I like it very well. The master Dr. Drury, is the most amiable *clergyman* I ever knew; he unites the Gentleman with the Scholar, without affectation or pedantry, what little I have learnt I owe to him alone, nor is it his fault that it was not more. I shall always remember his instructions with Gratitude, and cherish a hope that it may one day be in my power to repay the numerous obligations, I am under; to him or some of his family.

Our holidays come on in about a fortnight. I however have not mentioned that to my mother, nor do I intend it; but if I can, I shall contrive to evade going to Southwell. Depend upon it I will not approach her for some time to come if It is in my power to avoid it, but she must not know, that it is my wish to be absent. I hope you will excuse my sending so short a letter, but the Bell has just rung to summon us together. Write Soon, and believe me, Ever your affectionate

Brother, BYRON.

I am afraid you will have some difficulty in decyphering my epistles, but *that* I know you will excuse. Adieu. Remember me to Lord Carlisle.

17. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, Malton, Yorkshire.] Harrow-on-the-Hill, Novr. 21st, 1804.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA, — This morning I received your by no means unwelcome epistle, and thinking it demands an immediate answer, once more take up my pen to employ it in your service. There is no necessity for my mother to know anything of my intentions, till the time approaches; and when it does come, Mr. H. has only to write her a note saying, that, as I could not accept the invitation he gave me last holidays, he imagined I might do it now; to this she surely can make no objections; but, if she entertained the slightest idea of my making any complaint of her very *lenient* treatment, the scene that would ensue beggars all power of description. You may have some little idea of it, from what I have told you, and what you yourself know.

I wrote to you the other day; but you make no mention of receiving my letter in yours of the 18th inst. It is however of little importance, containing merely a recapitulation of circumstances which I have before detailed at full length.

To Lord Carlisle make my warmest acknowledgements. I feel more gratitude, than my feelings can well express; I am truly obliged to him for his endeavours, and am perfectly satisfied with your explanation of his reserve, though I was hitherto afraid it might proceed from personal dislike. I have some idea that I leave Harrow these holidays. The Dr., whose character I gave you in my last, leaves the mastership at Easter. Who his successor may be I know not, but he will not be a better I am confident. You inform me that you intend to visit my mother, then you will have an opportunity of seeing what I have described, and hearing a great *deal of Scandal*. She does not trouble me much with epistolary communications; when I do receive them, they are very concise, and much to the purpose. However I will do her the justice to say that she behaves, or rather means, well, and is in some respects very kind, though her manners are not the most conciliating. She likewise expresses a great deal of affection for you, but disapproves your marriage, wishes to know my opinion of it, and complains that you are negligent and do not write to her or care about her. How far her opinion of your love for her is well grounded, you best know. I again request you will return my sincere thanks to Lord Carlisle, and for the future I shall consider him as more my friend than I have hitherto been taught to think. I have more reasons than one, to wish to avoid going to Notts, for there I should be obliged to associate with Lord G. whom I detest, his manners being unlike those of a Gentleman, and the information to be derived from him but little except about

shooting, which I do not intend to devote my life to. Besides, I have a particular reason for not liking him. Pray write to me soon. Adieu, my Dear Augusta.

I remain, your affectionate Brother, BYRON.

18.-To John Hanson .

Saturday, Dec. 1st, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — Our vacation commences on the 5th of this Month, when I propose to myself the pleasure of spending the Holidays at your House, if it is not too great an Inconvenience. I tell you fairly, that at Southwell I should have nothing in the World to do, but play at cards and listen to the edifying Conversation of old Maids, two things which do not at all suit my inclinations. In my Mother's last Letter I find that my poney and pointers are not yet procured, and that Lord Grey is still at Newstead. The former I should be very dull at such a place as Southwell without; the latter is still more disagreeable to be with. I presume he goes on in the old way, — quarrelling with the farmers, and stretching his judicial powers (he being now in the commission) to the utmost, becoming a torment to himself, and a pest to all around him. — I am glad you approve of my Gun, feeling myself happy, that it has been tried by so *distinguished a Sportsman*.

I hope your Campaigns against the Partridges and the rest of the feathered Tribe have been attended with no serious Consequences — *trifling accidents* such as the top of a few fingers and a Thumb, you *Gentlemen* of the *city* being used to, of course occasion no interruption to your field sports.

Your Accommodation I have no doubt I shall be perfectly satisfied with, only do exterminate that *vile Generation* of *Bugs* which nearly ate me up the last Time I *sojourned* at your House. After undergoing the Purgatory of Harrow *board* and *Lodging* for three Months I shall not be *particular* or exorbitant in my demands.

Pray give my best Compliments to Mrs. Hanson and the now *quilldriving* Hargreaves . Till I see you, I remain, Yours, etc., BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Byron spent the Christmas holidays of 1804-5 with the Hansons. He gave Hanson to understand that it was his wish to leave the school, and that Dr. Drury agreed with him in the decision. Hanson, after consulting Lord Carlisle, wrote to Drury, urging that Byron was too young to leave the school. Drury's reply, dated December 29, 1804, gave a different colour to the matter.

"Your letter," he writes, "supposes that Lord Byron was desirous to leave school, and that I acquiesced in his Wish: but I must do him the Justice to observe that *the wish originated with me*. During his last residence at Harrow his conduct gave me much trouble and uneasiness; and as two of his Associates

were to leave me at Christmas, I certainly suggested to him *my wish* that he might be placed under the care of some private Tutor previously to his admission to either of the Universities. This I did no less with a view to the forming of his mind and manners, than to my own comfort; and I am fully convinced that if such a situation can be procured for his Lordship, it will be much more advantageous for him than a longer residence at school, where his animal spirits and want of judgment may induce him to do wrong, whilst his age and person must prevent his Instructors from treating him in some respects as a schoolboy. If we part now, we may entertain affectionate dispositions towards each other, and his Lordship will have left the school with credit; as my dissatisfactions were expressed to him only privately, and in such a manner as not to affect his public situation in the school.”

Finally, however, Dr. Drury, yielding to the appeal of Lord Carlisle and Hanson, allowed the boy to return to Harrow, and Byron remained at the school till July, 1805, the last three months being passed under the rule of Dr. Butler.]

[Footnote 2: Hargreaves Hanson, second son of John Hanson, had just left Harrow, and was articled as a pupil in his father’s business. He died in 1811, at the age of 23.]

19. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

6, Chancery Lane, Wednesday, 30th Jany., 1805.

I have delayed writing to you so long, My dearest Augusta, from ignorance of your residence, not knowing whether you *graced* Castle Howard, or Kireton with your *presence*. The instant Mr. H[anson] informed me where you was, I prepared to address you, and you have but just forestalled my intention. And now, I scarcely know what to begin with; I have so many things, to tell you. I wish to God, that we were together, for It is impossible that I can confine all I have got to say in an epistle, without I was to follow your example, and fill eleven pages, as I was informed, by my *proficiency* in *the art of magic*, that you sometimes send that *number* to *Lady Gertrude*.

To begin with an article of *grand importance*; I on Saturday dined with Lord Carlisle, and on further acquaintance I like them all very much. Amongst other circumstances, I heard of your *boldness* as a *Rider*, especially one anecdote about your horse carrying you into the stable *perforce*. I should have admired amazingly to have seen your progress, provided you met with no accident. I hope you recollect the circumstance, and know what I allude to; else, you may think that I am *soaring* into the *Regions of Romance*. I wish you to corroborate my account in your next, and inform me whether my information was correct.

I think your friend Lady G. is a sweet girl. If your taste in *love*, is as good as

it is in *friendship*, I shall think you a *very discerning little Gentlewoman*. His Lordship too improves upon further acquaintance, Her Ladyship I always liked, but of the Junior part of the family Frederick is my favourite. I believe with regard to my future destination, that I return to Harrow until June, and then I'm off for the university. Could I have found Room there, I was to have gone immediately.

I have contrived to pass the holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Hanson, to whom I am greatly obliged for their hospitality. You are now within a days journey of my *amiable Mama*. If you wish your spirits *raised*, or rather *roused*, I would recommend you to pass a week or two with her. However I daresay she would behave very well to *you*, for you do not know her disposition so well as I do. I return you, my dear Girl, a thousand thanks for hinting to Mr. H. and Lord C. my uncomfortable situation, I shall always remember it with gratitude, as a most *essential service*. I rather think that, if you were any time with my mother, she would bore you about your marriage which she *disapproves* of, as much for the sake of finding fault as any thing, for that is her favourite amusement. At any rate she would be very inquisitive, for she was always tormenting me about it, and, if you told her any thing, she might very possibly divulge it; I therefore advise you, *when you see her* to say nothing, or as little, about it, as you can help. If you make haste, you can answer this *well written* epistle by return of post, for I wish again to hear from you immediately; you need not fill *eleven pages*, *nine* will be sufficient; but whether it contains nine pages or nine lines, it will always be most welcome, my beloved Sister, to Your affectionate Brother and Friend, BYRON.

[Footnote 1: The Hon. Frederick Howard, third son of Lord Carlisle, the "young, gallant Howard" of *Childe Harold* (Canto III. stanzas xxix, xxx; see Byron's note), was killed at Waterloo. "The best of his race," says Byron, in a letter to Moore, July 7, 1815.]

20. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[London], Thursday, 4th April, 1805.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA, — You certainly have excellent reasons for complaint against my want of punctuality in our correspondence; but, as it does not proceed from want of affection, but an idle disposition, you will, I hope, accept my excuses. I am afraid, however, that when I shall take up my pen, you will not be greatly *edified* or *amused*, especially at present, since, I sit down in very bad spirits, out of humour with myself, and all the world, except *you*. I left Harrow yesterday, and am now at Mr. Hanson's till Sunday morning, when I depart for Nottinghamshire, to pay a visit to my *mother*, with whom I shall

remain for a week or two, when I return to town, and from thence to Harrow, until July, when I take my departure for the university, but which I am as yet undecided. Mr. H. Recommends Cambridge; Ld. Carlisle allows me to chuse for myself, and I must own I prefer Oxford. But, I am not violently bent upon it, and whichever is determined upon will meet with my concurrence. — This is the outline of my plans for the next 6 months.

I am Glad that you are Going to pay his *Lordship* a visit, as I shall have an opportunity of seeing you on my return to town, a pleasure, which, as I have been long debarred of it, will be doubly felt after so long a separation. My visit to the Dowager does not promise me all the happiness I could wish; however, it must be gone through, as it is some time since I have seen her. It shall be as short as possible. I shall expect to find a letter from you, when I come down, as I wish to know when you go to town, and how long you remain there. If you stay till The middle of next month, you may have an opportunity of hearing me speak, as the first day of our *Harrow orations* occurs in May. My friend Delawarr, (as you observed) danced with the little Princess, nor did I in the least *envy* him the honour. I presume you have heard That Dr. Drury leaves Harrow this Easter, and That, as a memorial of our Gratitude for his long services, The scholars presented him with plate to the amount of 330 Guineas.

I hope you will excuse this *Hypocondriac* epistle, as I never was in such low spirits in my life. Adieu, my Dearest Sister, and believe me,

Your ever affectionate though negligent Brother, BYRON.

[Footnote 1: On February 25, 1805, their Majesties gave a magnificent “house-warming” at Windsor Castle.

“The expenditure,” says the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ for 1805 (part i. pp. 262-264), “cannot have cost less than £50,000. The floor of the ball-room, instead of being chalked, was painted with most fanciful and appropriate devices by an eminent artist.” The “little Princess” Charlotte of Wales, we are told, left the Castle at half-past nine.]

21. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Burgage Manor, Southwell, Notts, 15 April, 1805.

DEAR HARGREAVES, — As I have been unable to return to Town with your father, I must request, that you will take care of my Books, and a parcel which I expect from my Taylor’s, and, as I understand you are going to pay Farleigh a visit, I would be obliged to you to leave them under the care of one of the Clerks, or a Servant, who may inform me where to find them. I shall be in Town on Wednesday the 24th at furthest, when I shall not hope to see you, or wish it; not but what I should be glad of your *entertaining and loquacious*

Society, but as I think you will be more amused at Farleigh, it would be selfish in me to wish that you should forego the pleasures of contemplating *pigs, poultry, pork, pease, and potatoes* together, with other Rural Delights, for my Company. Much pleasure may you find in your excursion and I dare say, when you have exchanged *pleadings* for *ploughshares* and *fleeing clients* for *feeding flocks*, you will be in no hurry to resume your Law Functions.

Remember me to your Father and Mother and the Juniors, and if you should find it convenient to dispatch a note in answer to this epistle, it will afford great pleasure to

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,
BYRON.

P.S. — It is hardly necessary to inform you that I am heartily tired of Southwell, for I am at this minute experiencing those delights which I have recapitulated to you and which are more entertaining to be *talked* of at a distance than enjoyed at Home. I allude to the Eloquence of a *near relation* of mine, which is as remarkable as your *taciturnity*.

22. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Burgage Manor, April 20, 1805.

Dear Hargreaves, — Dr. Butler, our new Master, has thought proper to postpone our Meeting till the 8th of May, which obliges me to delay my return to Town for one week, so that instead of Wednesday the 24th I shall not arrive in London till the 1st of May, on which Day (If I live) I shall certainly be in town, where I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. I shall remain with you only a week, as we are all to return to the very day, on account of the prolongation of our Holidays. However, if you shall previous to that period take a *jaunt* into Hants, I beg you will leave my *valuables*, etc., etc., in the care of one of the *Gentlemen* of your office, as that *Razor faced Villain*, James, might perhaps take the Liberty of walking off with a suit. I have heard several times from Tattersall and it is very probable we may see him on my return. I beg you will excuse this short epistle as my time is at present rather taken up, and Believe Me,

Yours very sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: The Rev. George Butler (1774-1853), who was Senior Wrangler (1794), succeeded Dr. Drury as Head-master of Harrow School in April, 1805. He was then Fellow, tutor, and classical lecturer at Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge. From affection to Dr. Drury, Byron supported the candidature of his

brother, Mark Drury, and avenged himself on Butler for the defeat of his candidate by the lines on "Pomposus" (see 'Poems', vol. i. pp. 16, 17, "On a Change of Masters," etc.; and pp. 84-106, "Childish Recollections"). At a later period he became reconciled to Butler, who knew the Continent well, was an excellent linguist, and gave him valuable advice for his foreign tour in 1809-11. Butler resigned the Head-mastership of Harrow in April, 1824, and retired to a country living. In 1842 he was appointed to the Deanery of Peterborough, where he died in 1853.]

[Footnote 2: John Cecil Tattersall entered Harrow in May, 1801. He was the "Davus" of "Childish Recollections" ('Poems', vol. i. pp. 97, 98, and notes). He went from Harrow to Christ Church, Oxford, took orders, and died December 8, 1812.]

23. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[The Earl of Carlisle's, Grosvenor Place, London.] Burgage Manor,
April 23d, 1805.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA, — I presume by this time, that you are safely arrived at the Earl's, at least I *hope* so; nor shall I feel myself perfectly easy, till I have the pleasure of hearing from yourself of your safety. I myself shall set out for town this day (Tuesday) week, and intend waiting upon you on Thursday at farthest; in the mean time I must console myself as well as I can; and I am sure, no unhappy mortal ever required much more consolation than I do at present. You as well as myself know the *sweet* and *amiable* temper of a certain personage to whom I am nearly related; of *course*, the pleasure I have enjoyed during my vacation, (although it has been greater than I expected) yet has not been so *superabundant* as to make me wish to stay a day longer than I can avoid. However, notwithstanding the dullness of the place, and certain *unpleasant things* that occur In a family not a hundred miles distant from Southwell, I contrived to pass my time in peace, till to day, when unhappily, In a most inadvertent manner, I said that Southwell was not *peculiarly* to my taste; but however, I merely expressed this in common conversation, without speaking disrespectfully of the *sweet* town; (which, between you and I, I wish was swallowed up by an earthquake, provided my *Eloquent mother* was not in it). No sooner had the unlucky sentence, which I believe was prompted by my evil Genius, escaped my lips, than I was treated with an Oration in the *ancient style*, which I have often so *pathetically* described to you, unequalled by any thing of *modern* or *antique* date; nay the *Philippics* against Lord Melville were nothing

to it; one would really Imagine, to have heard the *Good Lady*, that I was a most *treasonable culprit*, but thank St. Peter, after undergoing this *Purgatory* for the last hour, it is at length blown over, and I have sat down under these *pleasing impressions* to address you, so that I am afraid my epistle will not be the most entertaining. I assure you upon my *honour*, jesting apart, I have never been so *scurrilously*, and *violently* abused by any person, as by that woman, whom I think I am to call mother, by that being who gave me birth, to whom I ought to look up with veneration and respect, but whom I am sorry I cannot love or admire. Within one little hour, I have not only heard myself, but have heard my *whole family*, by the father's side, *stigmatized* in terms that the *blackest malevolence* would perhaps shrink from, and that too in words you would be shocked to hear. Such, Augusta, such is my mother; *my mother!* I disclaim her from this time, and although I cannot help treating her with respect, I cannot reverence, as I ought to do, that parent who by her outrageous conduct forfeits all title to filial affection. To you, Augusta, I must look up, as my nearest relation, to you I must confide what I cannot mention to others, and I am sure you will pity me; but I entreat you to keep this a secret, nor expose that unhappy failing of this woman, which I must bear with patience. I would be very sorry to have it discovered, as I have only one week more, for the present. In the mean time you may write to me with the greatest safety, as she would not open any of my letters, even from you. I entreat then that you will favour me with an answer to this. I hope however to have the pleasure of seeing you on the day appointed, but If you could contrive any way that I may avoid being asked to dinner by L'd C. I would be obliged to you, as I hate strangers. Adieu, my Beloved Sister,

I remain ever yours,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Henry Dundas (1742-1811), created Viscount Melville in 1802, Lord Advocate (1775-83), made himself useful to Lord North's Government as a shrewd, hard-working man of business, a ready speaker — in broad Scotch, and a consummate election agent. For twenty years he was the right-hand man of Pitt —

"Too proud from pilfered greatness to descend,
Too humble not to call Dundas his friend."

Not only was he Pitt's political colleague, but in private life his boon companion. A well-known epigram commemorates in a dialogue their convivial habits —

'Pitt'. "I cannot see the Speaker, Hal; can you?"

'Dundas'. "Not see the Speaker, Billy? I see two."

Melville, for a long series of years, held important political posts. He was Treasurer of the Navy (1782-1800); member of the Board of Control for India (1784-1802) and President (1790-1802); Home Secretary (1791-94); Secretary of War (1794-1801); First Lord of the Admiralty (1804-5). In 1802 a Commission had been appointed to examine into the accounts of the naval department for the past twenty years, and, in consequence of their tenth report, a series of resolutions were moved in the House of Commons (April, 1805) against Melville. The voting was even — 216 for and 216 against; the resolutions were carried by the casting vote of Speaker Abbott.

"Pitt was overcome; his friend was ruined. At the sound of the Speaker's voice, the Prime Minister crushed his hat over his brows to hide the tears that poured over his cheeks: he pushed in haste out of the House. Some of his opponents, I am ashamed to say, thrust themselves near, 'to see how Billy took it.'"

(Mark Boyd's 'Reminiscences of Fifty Years', p. 404.) Melville, who was heard at the bar of the House of Commons in his own defence, was impeached before the House of Lords (June 26, 1805) of high crimes and misdemeanours. At the close of the proceedings, which began in Westminster Hall on April 29, 1806, Melville was acquitted on all the charges. Whitbread took the leading part in the impeachment. See 'All the Talents: a Satirical Poem', by Polypus (E. S. Barrett) —

"Rough as his porter, bitter as his barm,
He sacrificed his fame to M — lv — lle's harm."

Dialogue ii.]

24. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[The Earl of Carlisle's, Grosvenor Place, London.] Burgage Manor,
Southwell, Friday, April 25th, 1805.

My dearest Augusta, — Thank God, I believe I shall be in town on Wednesday next, and at last relieved from those *agreeable amusements*, I described to you in my last. I return you and Lady G. many thanks for your *benediction*, nor do I doubt its efficacy as it is bestowed by *two such Angelic beings*; but as I am afraid my *profane blessing* would but expedite your road to

Purgatory, instead of *Salvation*, you must be content with my best wishes in return, since the *unhallowed adjurations* of a mere mortal would be of no effect. You say, you are sick of the Installation; and that L'd C. was not present; I however saw his name in the *Morning Post*, as one of the Knights Companions. I indeed expected that *you* would have been present at the Ceremony.

I have seen this young Roscius several times at the hazard of my life, from the *affectionate squeezes* of the surrounding crowd. I think him tolerable in some characters, but by no means equal to the ridiculous praises showered upon him by *John Bull*.

I am afraid that my stay in town ceases after the 10th. I should not continue it so long, as we meet on the 8th at Harrow, But, I remain on purpose to hear our *Sapient* and *noble Legislators* of Both Houses debate on the Catholic Question, as I have no doubt there will be many *nonsensical*, and some *Clever* things said on the occasion. I am extremely glad that you *sport* an audience Chamber for the Benefit of your *modest* visitors, amongst whom I have the *honour* to reckon myself: I shall certainly be most happy again to see you, notwithstanding my *wise* and *Good* mother (who is at this minute thundering against Somebody or other below in the Dining Room), has interdicted my visiting at his *Lordship's* house, with the threat of her malediction, in case of disobedience, as she says he has behaved very ill to her; the truth of this I much doubt, nor should the orders of all the mothers (especially such mothers) in the world, prevent me from seeing my Beloved Sister after so long an Absence. I beg you will forgive this *well written epistle*, for I write in a great Hurry, and, believe me, with the greatest impatience again to behold you, your

Attached Brother and [Friend,

BYRON].

P.S. — By the bye Lady G. ought not to complain of your writing a *decent* long letter to me, since I remember your *11 Pages* to her, at which I did not make the least complaint, but submitted like a *meek Lamb* to the innovation of my privileges, for nobody *ought* to have had so long an epistle but my *most excellent Self*.

[Footnote 1: On St. George's Day, April 23, 1805, seven Knights were installed at Windsor as Knights of the Garter, each in turn being invested with the surcoat, girdle, and sword. The new Knights were the Dukes of Rutland and Beaufort; the Marquis of Abercorn; the Earls of Chesterfield, Pembroke, and Winchilsea; and, by proxy, the Earl of Hardwicke.

Lady Louisa Strangways, writing to her sister, Lady Harriet Frampton, on April 24, 1805 ('Journal of Mary Frampton', p. 129), says, "I was full dressed for seventeen hours yesterday, and sat in one spot for seven, which is enough to tire any one who enjoyed what was going on, which I did not. I saw them walk to St. George's Chapel, which was the best part, as it did not last long ... Their dresses were very magnificent. The Knights, before they were installed, were in white and silver, like the old pictures of Henry VIII., and afterwards they had a purple mantle put on. They had immense plumes of ostrich feathers, with a heron's feather in the middle."]

[Footnote 2: William Henry West Betty (1791-1874), the "Young Roscius," made his first appearance on the stage at Belfast, in 1803, in the part of "Osman," in Hill's 'Zara;' and on December 1, 1804, at Covent Garden, as "Selim" disguised as "Achmet," in Browne's 'Barbarossa'. In the winter season of 1804-5, when he appeared at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, such crowds collected to see him, that the military were called out to preserve order. Leslie ('Autobiographical Recollections', vol. i. p. 218) speaks of him as a boy "of handsome features and graceful manners, with a charming voice." Fox, who saw him in 'Hamlet', said, "This is finer than Garrick" ('Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers', p. 88). Northcote ('Conversations', p. 23) spoke of his acting as "a beautiful effusion of natural sensibility; and then that graceful play of the limbs in youth gave such an advantage over every one about him." "Young Roscius's premature powers," writes Mrs. Piozzi, February 21, 1805, "attract universal attention, and I suppose that if less than an angel had told 'his' parents that a bulletin of that child's health should be necessary to quiet the anxiety of a metropolis for his safety, they would not have believed the prediction" ('Life and Writings of Mrs. Piozzi', vol. ii. p. 263). In society he was the universal topic of conversation, and he commanded a salary of £50 a night, at a time when John Kemble was paid £37 16's'. a week ('Life of Frederick Reynolds', vol. ii. p. 364).

"When," writes Mrs. Byron of her son to Hanson (December 8, 1804), "he goes to see the Young Roscius, I hope he will take care of himself in the crowd, and not go alone."

Betty lost his attractiveness with the growth of his beard. Byron's opinion of the merits of the youthful prodigy became that of the general public; but not till the actor had made a large fortune. He retired from the stage in 1824.]

[Footnote 3: On March 25, 1805, petitions were presented by Lord Grenville in the House of Lords, and Fox in the House of Commons, calling the attention of the country to the claims of the Roman Catholics, and praying their relief from their disabilities, civil, naval, and military. On Friday, May 10, Lord

Grenville moved, in the Upper House, for a committee of the whole House to consider the petition. At six o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, May 14, the motion was negatived by a division of 178 against 49. On Monday, May 13, Fox, in the Lower House, made a similar motion, which was negatived, at five o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, May 15, by a division of 336 against 126. Byron, on April 21, 1812, in the second of his three Parliamentary speeches, supported the relief of the Roman Catholics.]

25. — To John Hanson.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, 11 May, 1805.

Dear Sir, — As you promised to cash my Draft on the Day that I left your house, and as you was only prevented by the Bankers being shut up, I will be very much obliged to you to *give the ready* to this old Girl, Mother Barnard, who will either present herself or send a Messenger, as she demurs on its being not payable till the 25th of June. Believe me, Sir, by doing this you will greatly oblige

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

[Footnote: 1. Mother Barnard was the keeper of the “tuck-shop” at Harrow.]

26. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[The Earl of Carlisle's, Grosvenor Place, London.]

[Harrow, Wednesday, June 5, 1805.]

My Dearest Augusta, — At last you have a *decent* specimen of the dowager's talents for epistles in the *furioso* style. You are now freed from the *shackles* of her correspondence, and when I revisit her, I shall be bored with long stories of your *ingratitude*, etc., etc. She is as I have before declared certainly mad (to say she was in her senses, would be condemning her as a Criminal), her conduct is a *happy* compound of derangement and Folly. I had the other day an epistle from her; not a word was mentioned about you, but I had some of the usual *compliments* on my own account. I am now about to answer her letter, though I shall scarcely have patience, to treat her with civility, far less with affection, that was almost over before, and this has given the finishing stroke to *filial*, which now gives way to *fraternal* duty. Believe me, dearest Augusta, not ten thousand *such* mothers, or indeed any mothers, Could induce me to give you up. — No, No, as the dowager says in that rare epistle which now lies before me, “the time

has been, but that is past long since,” and nothing now can influence your *pretty sort of a brother* (bad as he is) to forget that he is your *Brother*. Our first Speech day will be over ere this reaches you, but against the 2d you shall have timely notice. — I am glad to hear your illness is not of a Serious nature; *young Ladies* ought not to throw themselves in to the fidgets about a trifling delay of 9 or 10 years; age brings experience and when you in the flower of youth, between 40 and 50, shall then marry, you will no doubt say that I am a *wise man*, and that the later one makes one’s self miserable with the matrimonial clog, the better. Adieu, my dearest Augusta, I bestow my *patriarchal blessing* on you and Lady G. and remain,

[Signature cut out.]

27. — To John Hanson.

Harrow-on-the-Hill, 27 June, 1805.

Dear Sir, — I will be in Town on Saturday Morning, but it is absolutely necessary for me to return to Harrow on Tuesday or Wednesday, as Thursday is our 2d Speechday and Butler says he cannot dispense with my Presence on that Day. I thank you for your Compliment in the Beginning of your Letter, and with the Hope of seeing you and Hargreaves well on Saturday,

I remain, yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

28. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Address cut out], Tuesday, July 2d, 1805.

My dearest Augusta, — I am just returned from Cambridge, where I have been to enter myself at Trinity College. — Thursday is our Speechday at Harrow, and as I forgot to remind you of its approach, previous to our first declamation, I have given you *timely* notice this time. If you intend doing me the *honour* of attending, I would recommend you not to come without a Gentleman, as I shall be too much engaged all the morning to take care of you, and I should not imagine you would admire *stalking* about by yourself. You had better be there by 12 o’clock as we begin at 1, and I should like to procure you a good place; Harrow is 11 miles from town, it will just make a *comfortable* mornings drive for you. I don’t know how you are to come, but for *Godsake* bring as few women with you as possible. I would wish you to Write me an answer immediately, that I may know on Thursday morning, whether you will drive over or not, and I will arrange my other engagements accordingly. I *beg*, *Madam*, you may make your appearance in one of his Lordships most *dashing* carriages, as our Harrow *etiquette*, admits of nothing but the most *superb*

vehicles, on our Grand *Festivals*. In the mean time, believe me, dearest Augusta,
Your affectionate Brother,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Byron, writing to Hanson (June 25, 1805), says, “The fame of Byron’s oratory has reached Southwell” (see page 27, note 1).]

29. — To John Hanson.

Harrow, 8 July, 1805.

My dear Sir, — I have just received a Letter from my Mother, in which she talks of coming to Town about the *commencement* of our Holidays. If she does, it will be impossible for me to call on *my Sister*, previous to my leaving it, and at the same time I cannot conceive what the Deuce she can want at this season in London. I have written to tell her that my Holidays commence on the 6th of August, but however, July the 1st is the proper day. — I beg that if you cannot find some means to keep her in the Country that you at least will connive at this deception which I can palliate, and then I shall be down in the country before she knows where I am. My reasons for this are, that I do *not wish* to be detained in Town so uncomfortably as I know I shall be if I remain with her; that *I do wish* to see my Sister; and in the next place she can just as well come to Town after my return to Notts, as I don’t desire to be dragged about according to her caprice, and there are some other causes I think unnecessary to be now mentioned. If you will only contrive by settling this business (if it is in your power), or if that is impossible, not mention anything about the day our Holidays commence, of which you can be easily supposed not to be informed. If, I repeat, you can by any means prevent this Mother from executing her purposes, believe me, you will greatly oblige

Yours truly,

BYRON.

30. — To Charles O. Gordon.

Burgage Manor, Southwell, Notts, August 4, 1805.

Although I am greatly afraid, my Dearest Gordon, that you will not receive this epistle till you return from Abergeldie, (as your letter stated that you would be at Ledbury on Thursday next) yet, that is not my fault, for I have not deferred answering yours a moment, and, as I have just now concluded my Journey, my first, and, I trust you will believe me when I say, most pleasing occupation will be to write to you.

We have played the Eton and were most confoundedly beat; however it was

some comfort to me that I got 11 notches the 1st Innings and 7 the 2nd, which was more than any of our side except Brockman & Ipswich could contrive to hit. After the match we dined together, and were extremely friendly, not a single discordant word was uttered by either party. To be sure, we were most of us rather drunk and went together to the Haymarket Theatre, where we kicked up a row, As you may suppose, when so many Harrovians & Etonians met at one place; I was one of seven in a single hackney, 4 Eton and 3 Harrow, and then we all got into the same box, and the consequence was that such a devil of a noise arose that none of our neighbours could hear a word of the drama, at which, not being *highly delighted*, they began to quarrel with us, and we nearly came to a *battle royal*. How I got home after the play God knows. I hardly recollect, as my brain was so much confused by the heat, the row, and the wine I drank, that I could not remember in the morning how I found my way to bed.

The rain was so incessant in the evening that we could hardly get our Jarveys, which was the cause of so many being stowed into one. I saw young Twilt, your brother, with Malet, and saw also an old schoolfellow of mine whom I had not beheld for six years, but he was not the one whom you were so good as to enquire after for me, and for which I return you my sincere thanks. I set off last night at eight o'clock to my mother's, and am just arrived this afternoon, and have not delayed a second in thanking you for so soon fulfilling my request that you would correspond with me. My address at Cambridge will be Trinity College, but I shall not go there till the 20th of October. You may continue to direct your letters here, when I go to Hampshire which will not be till you have returned to Harrow. I will send my address previous to my departure from my mother's. I agree with you in the hope that we shall continue our correspondence for a long time. I trust, my dearest friend, that it will only be interrupted by our being some time or other in the same place or under the same roof, as, when I have finished my *Classical Labour*, and my minority is expired, I shall expect you to be a frequent visitor to Newstead Abbey, my seat in this county which is about 12 miles from my mother's house where I now am. There I can show you plenty of hunting, shooting and fishing, and be assured no one ever will be more welcome guest than yourself — nor is there any one whose correspondence can give me more pleasure, or whose friendship yield me greater delight than yours, sweet, dearest Charles, believe me, will always be the sentiments of

Yours most affectionately,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: This and Letter 33 are written to Byron's Harrow friend, Charles Gordon, one of his "juniors and favourites," whom he "spoilt by indulgence."

Gordon, who was the son of David Gordon of Abergeldie, died in 1829.]

[Footnote 2: Byron's reputation as a cricketer rests on this match between Eton and Harrow. It was played on the old cricket ground in Dorset Square, August 2, 1805, and ended in a victory for Eton by an innings and two runs. The score is thus given by Lillywhite, in his *Cricket Scores and Biographies of Celebrated Cricketers from 1745 to 1826* (vol. i. pp. 319, 320) —

HARROW.

First Innings. Second Innings.

— — — — —
— — — — —
Lord Ipswich, b Carter — 10 b Heaton — 21
T. Farrer, Esq., b Carter — 7 c Bradley — 3
T. Drury, Esq., b Carter — 0 st Heaton — 6
— Bolton, Esq., run out — 2 b Heaton — 0
C. Lloyd, Esq., b Carter — 0 b Carter — 0
A. Shakespeare, Esq., st Heaton — 8 runout — 5
Lord Byron, c Barnard — 7 b Carter — 2
Hon. T. Erskine, b Carter — 4 b Heaton — 8
W. Brockman, Esq., b Heaton — 9 b Heaton — 10
E. Stanley, Esq., not out — 3 c Canning — 7
— Asheton, Esq., b Carter — 3 not out — 0
Byes — 2 Byes — 3

— —
55 65

ETON.

— — — — —
— — — — —
— Heaton, Esq., b Lloyd — 0
— Slingsby, Esq., b Shakespeare — 29
— Carter, Esq., b Shakespeare — 3
— Farhill, Esq., c Lloyd — 6
— Canning, Esq., c Farrer — 12
— Camplin, Esq., b Ipswich — 42
— Bradley, Esq., b Lloyd — 16
— Barnard, Esq., b Shakespeare — 0
— Barnard, Esq., not out — 3

— Kaye, Esq., b Byron — 7
— Dover, Esq., c Bolton — 4
Byes — 0
—

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At this match Lord Stratford de Redcliffe remembers seeing a “moody-looking boy” dismissed for a small score. The boy was Byron. But the moment is not favourable to expression of countenance.

31. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, Malton, Yorkshire.] Burgage Manor, August 6th, 1805.

Well, my dearest Augusta, here I am, once more situated at my mother’s house, which together with its *inmate* is as *agreeable* as ever. I am at this moment *vis à vis* and Tête à tête with that amiable personage, who is, whilst I am writing, pouring forth complaints against your *ingratitude*, giving me many oblique hints that I ought not to correspond with you, and concluding with an interdiction that if you ever after the expiration of my minority are invited to my residence, *she* will no longer condescend to grace it with her *Imperial* presence. You may figure to yourself, for your amusement, my solemn countenance on the occasion, and the *meek Lamblike* demeanour of her Ladyship, which, contrasted with my *Saintlike visage*, forms a *striking family painting*, whilst in the back ground, the portraits of my Great Grandfather and Grandmother, suspended in their frames, seem to look with an eye of pity on their *unfortunate descendant*, whose *worth* and *accomplishments* deserve a milder fate.

I am to remain in this *Garden of Eden* one month, I do not indeed reside at Cambridge till October, but I set out for Hampshire in September where I shall be on a visit till the commencement of the term. In the mean time, Augusta, your *sympathetic* correspondence must be some alleviation to my sorrows, which however are too ludicrous for me to regard them very seriously; but they are *really* more *uncomfortable* than *amusing*.

I presume you were rather surprised not to see my *consequential* name in the papers amongst the orators of our 2nd speech day, but unfortunately some wit who had formerly been at Harrow, suppressed the merits of Long , Farrer and myself, who were always supposed to take the Lead in Harrow eloquence, and by way of a *hoax* thought proper to insert a panegyric on those speakers who were really and truly allowed to have rather disgraced than distinguished themselves, of course for the *wit* of the thing, the best were left out and the worst inserted, which accounts for the *Gothic omission* of my *superior talents*. Perhaps

it was done with a view to weaken our vanity, which might be too much raised by the flattering paragraphs bestowed on our performance the 1st speechday; be that as it may, we were omitted in the account of the 2nd, to the astonishment of all Harrow. These are *disappointments* we *great men* are liable to, and we must learn to bear them with philosophy, especially when they arise from attempts at wit. I was indeed very ill at that time, and after I had finished my speech was so overcome by the exertion that I was obliged to quit the room. I had caught cold by sleeping in damp sheets which was the cause of my indisposition. However I am now perfectly recovered, and live in hopes of being emancipated from the slavery of Burgage manor. But Believe me, Dearest Augusta, whether well or ill,
I always am your affect. Brother,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: See page 27, note 1.]

[Footnote 2: Edward Noel Long, son of E. B. Long of Hampton Lodge, Surrey, the “Cleon” of “Childish Recollections” (‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 101, 102), entered Harrow in April, 1801. He went with Byron to Trinity College, Cambridge, and till the end of the summer of 1806 was his most intimate friend.

“We were,” says Byron, in his Diary (‘Life’, p. 31), “rival swimmers, fond of riding, reading, and of conviviality. Our evenings we passed in music (he was musical, and played on more than one instrument — flute and violoncello), in which I was audience; and I think that our chief beverage was soda-water. In the day we rode, bathed, and lounged, reading occasionally. I remember our buying, with vast alacrity, Moore’s new quarto (in 1806), and reading it together in the evenings. ... *His* friendship, and a violent though pure passion — which held me at the same period — were the then romance of the most romantic period of my life.”

Long was Byron’s companion at Littlehampton in August, 1806. In 1807 he entered the Guards, served with distinction in the expedition to Copenhagen, and was drowned early in 1809, “on his passage to Lisbon with his regiment in the ‘St. George’ transport, which was run foul of in the night by another transport” (‘Life’, p. 31. See also Byron’s lines “To Edward Noel Long, Esq.,” ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 184-188).]

[Footnote 3: Thomas Farrer entered Harrow in April, 1801. He played in Byron’s XI. against Eton, on the ground in Dorset Square, on August 2, 1805.]

CHAPTER II. 1805-1808.

CAMBRIDGE AND JUVENILE POEMS.

32. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, Malton, Yorkshire.] Burgage Manor, August 10th, 1805.

I have at last succeeded, my dearest Augusta, in pacifying the dowager, and mollifying that *piece of flint* which the good Lady denominates her heart. She now has condescended to send you her *love*, although with many comments on the occasion, and many compliments to herself. But to me she still continues to be a torment, and I doubt not would continue so till the end of my life. However this is the last time she ever will have an opportunity, as, when I go to college, I shall employ my vacations either in town; or during the summer I intend making a tour through the Highlands, and to Visit the Hebrides with a party of my friends, whom I have engaged for the purpose. This my old preceptor Drury recommended as the most improving way of employing my Summer Vacation, and I have now an additional reason for following his advice, as I by that means will avoid the society of this woman, whose detestable temper destroys every Idea of domestic comfort. It is a happy thing that she is my mother and not my wife, so that I can rid myself of her when I please, and indeed, if she goes on in the style that she has done for this last week that I have been with her, I shall quit her before the month I was to drag out in her company, is expired, and place myself any where, rather than remain with such a vixen. As I am to have a very handsome allowance, which does not deprive her of a sixpence, since there is an addition made from my fortune by the Chancellor for the purpose, I shall be perfectly independent of her, and, as she has long since trampled upon, and harrowed up every affectionate tie, It is my serious determination never again to visit, or be upon any friendly terms with her. This I owe to myself, and to my own comfort, as well as Justice to the memory of my nearest relations, who have been most shamefully libelled by this female ‘Tisiphom’, a name which your ‘Ladyship’ will recollect to have belonged to one of the Furies. You need not take the precaution of writing in so enigmatical a style in your next, as, bad as the woman is, she would not dare to open any letter addressed to me from you. Whenever you can find time to write, believe me, your epistles will be productive of the greatest pleasure, to your

Affectionate Brother,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: During Byron’s schooldays, Mrs. Byron received £500 a year from the Court of Chancery for his education. When he went to Cambridge, she gave up this allowance to her son, and the expenditure of a certain sum was sanctioned by Chancery for furniture, clothes, plate, *etc.* At the same time, Mrs. Byron applied for an allowance of £200 a year, but in 1807 the allowance had

not been granted. Her pension, it may be added, most irregularly paid at all times, was reduced to £200 a year. Writing to Hanson (September 23, 1805), she says, "I give up the five hundred a year to my son, and you will supply him with money accordingly. The two hundred a year addition I shall reserve for myself; nor can I do with less, as my house will always be a home for my son whenever he chooses to come to it."]

33. — To Charles O. Gordon.

Burgage Manor, August 14, 1805.

Believe me, my dearest Charles, no letter from you can ever be unentertaining or dull, at least to me; on the contrary they will always be productive of the highest pleasure as often as you think proper to gratify me by your correspondence. My answer to your first was addressed to Ledbury; and I fear you will not receive it till you return from your tour, which I hope may answer your expectation in every respect; I recollect some years ago passing near Abergeldie on an excursion through the Highlands, it was at that time a most beautiful place.

I suppose you will soon have a view of the eternal snows that summit the top of Lachin y Gair, which towers so magnificently above the rest of our *Northern Alps*. I still remember with pleasure the admiration which filled my mind, when I first beheld it, and further on the dark frowning mountains which rise near Invercauld, together with the romantic rocks that overshadow Mar Lodge, a seat of Lord Fife's, and the cataract of the Dee, which dashes down the declivity with impetuous violence in the grounds adjoining to the House. All these I presume you will soon see, so that it is unnecessary for me to expatiate on the subject. I sincerely wish that every happiness may attend you in your progress. I have given you an account of our match in my epistle to Herefordshire. We unfortunately lost it. I got 11 notches the first innings and 7 the 2nd, making 18 in all, which was more runs than any of our side (except Ipswich) could make. Brockman also scored 18. We were very *convivial* in the evening.

[Footnote 1: Here the letter, which is printed from a copy made by the Rev. W. Harness (see page 177 [Letter 92], [Foot]note 1), comes to an end.]

34. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Burgage Manor, August 19th, 1805.

My Dear Hargreaves, — You may depend upon my Observance of your father's Invitation to Farleigh in September, where I hope we shall be the cause of much destruction to the feathered Tribe and great Amusement to ourselves. The Lancashire Trial comes on very soon, and Mr. Hanson will come down by Nottingham; perhaps, I may then have a chance of seeing him; at all events, I shall probably accompany him on his way back; as I hope his Health is by this

time perfectly reestablished, and will not require a journey to Harrowgate. I shall not as you justly conjecture have any occasion for my *Chapeau de Bras*, as there is nobody in the Neighbourhood who would be worth the trouble of wearing it, when I went to their parties. I am uncommonly dull at this place, as you may easily imagine, nor do I think I shall have much Amusement till the commencement of the shooting season. I shall expect (when you next write) an account of your military preparations, to repel the Invader of our Isle whenever he makes the attempt. — You will doubtless acquire *great Glory* on the occasion, and in expectation of hearing of your Warlike Exploits,

I remain, yours very truly,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Hanson had property at Farleigh, near Basingstoke.]

[Footnote 2: The Rochdale property of the Byron family had been illegally sold by William, fifth Lord Byron. Proceedings were taken to recover the property; but fresh points arose at every stage, and eventually Byron, unable to wait longer, sold Newstead.]

35. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Burgage Manor.

My Dear Hargeaves, — I would be obliged to you, if you would write to your father, and enquire — what time it will be most convenient for him to receive my visit, and I will come to Town immediately to the time appointed and accompany you to the *Rural Shades* and *Fertile Fields* of Hants. You must excuse the laconic Style of my Epistle as this place is damned dull and I have nothing to relate, but believe me,

Yours truly,

BYRON.

36. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Trinity Coll., October 25, 1805.

Dear Hargreaves, — I presume your father has by this time informed you of our safe Arrival here. I can as yet hardly form an Opinion in favour, or against the College, but as soon as I am settled you shall have an account. I wish you to pack up carefully — & send immediately the remainder of my books, and also my *Stocks* which were left in Chancery Lane. *Mon Chapeau de Bras* take care of till Winter extends his Icy Reign and I shall visit the Metropolis. Tell your father that I am getting in the furniture he spoke of, but shall defer papering and painting till the Recess. The sooner you execute my *commands* the better.

Beware of Mr. Terry,
And believe me, yours faithfully,
BYRON.

The Bills for Furniture I shall send to Mr. H., your worthy papa, according to his *particular Desire*. The Cambridge Coach sets off from the White Horse, Fetter Lane.

[Footnote 1: Byron entered Trinity on July 1, 1805; but he did not go into residence till the following October. His tutors were the Rev. Thomas Jones (1756-1807), who was Senior Tutor from 1787 till his death in 1807, and the Rev. George Frederick Tavell (B.A., 1792; M.A., 1795), to whom Byron alludes in 'Hints from Horace', lines 228-230: —

"Unlucky Tavell! doom'd to daily cares
By pugilistic pupils, and by bears!"]

37. — To John Hanson.
Trinity Coll., Oct. 26, 1805.

Dear Sir, — I will be obliged to you to order me down 4 Dozen of Wine — Port, Sherry, Claret, and Madeira, one dozen of each. I have got part of my furniture in, and begin to admire a College life. Yesterday my appearance in the Hall in my State Robes was *Superb*, but uncomfortable to my *Diffidence*. You may order the Saddle, etc., etc., for "Oateater" as soon as you please and I will pay for them.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,
BYRON.

P.S. — Give Hargreaves a hint to be expeditious in his sending my *Valuables* which I begin to want. Your Cook had the Impudence to charge my Servant 15 Shillings for 5 Days provision which I think is exorbitant; but I hear that in *Town* it is but reasonable. Pray is it the custom to allow your Servants 3/6 per Diem, in London? I will thank you for Information on the Subject.

38. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.
[Castle Howard, near Malton, Yorkshire.]
Trin. Coll. [Wednesday], Novr. 6th, 1805.

My dear Augusta, — As might be supposed I like a College Life extremely, especially as I have escaped the Trammels or rather *Fetters* of my domestic Tyrant Mrs. Byron, who continued to plague me during my visit in July and September. I am now most pleasantly situated in *Superexcellent* Rooms, flanked

on one side by my Tutor, on the other by an old Fellow, both of whom are rather checks upon my *vivacity*. I am allowed 500 a year, a Servant and Horse, so Feel as independent as a German Prince who coins his own Cash, or a Cherokee Chief who coins no Cash at all, but enjoys what is more precious, Liberty. I talk in raptures of that *Goddess* because my amiable Mama was so despotic. I am afraid the Specimens I have lately given her of my Spirit, and determination to submit to no more unreasonable demands, (or the insults which follow a refusal to obey her implicitly whether right or wrong,) have given high offence, as I had a most *fiery* Letter from the *Court* at *Southwell* on Tuesday, because I would not turn off my Servant, (whom I had not the least reason to distrust, and who had an excellent Character from his last Master) at her suggestion, from some caprice she had taken into her head. I sent back to the Epistle, which was couched in *elegant* terms, a severe answer, which so nettled her Ladyship, that after reading it, she returned it in a Cover without deigning a Syllable in return.

The Letter and my answer you shall behold when you next see me, that you may judge of the Comparative merits of Each. I shall let her go on in the *Heroics*, till she cools, without taking the least notice. Her Behaviour to me for the last two Years neither merits my respect, nor deserves my affection. I am comfortable here, and having one of the best allowances in College, go on Gaily, but not extravagantly. I need scarcely inform you that I am not the least obliged to Mrs. B. for it, as it comes off my property, and She refused to fit out a single thing for me from her own pocket; my Furniture is paid for, & she has moreover a handsome addition made to her own income, which I do not in the least regret, as I would wish her to be happy, but by *no means* to live with me in *person*. The sweets of her society I have already drunk to the last dregs, I hope we shall meet on more affectionate Terms, or meet no more.

But why do I say *meet*? her temper precludes every idea of happiness, and therefore in future I shall avoid her *hospitable* mansion, though she has the folly to suppose She is to be mistress of my house when I come of [age]. I must apologize to you for the [dullness?] of this letter, but to tell you the [truth] [the effects] of last nights Claret have no[t gone] out of my head, as I supped with a large party. I suppose that Fool Hanson in his *vulgar* Idiom, by the word Jolly did not mean Fat, but High Spirits, for so far from increasing I have lost one pound in a fortnight as I find by being regularly weighed.

Adieu, Dearest Augusta.

[Signature cut out.]

[NB: Words in square brackets were cut and torn out with the seal.]

[Footnote 1: The servant, Byron's valet Frank, was accused of obtaining

money on false pretences from a Nottingham tradesman, and Mrs. Byron informed her son of the charge. Frank was afterwards transported. (See letter to Lord Clare, February 6, 1807; and letter to Hanson, April 19, 1807.)]

[Footnote 2: See page 76, note 1.]

39. — To Hargreaves Hanson.

Trinity Coll., Novr. 12th, 1805.

DEAR HARGREAVES, — Return my Thanks to your father for the *Expedition* he has used in filling my *Cellar*.

He deserves commendation for the *Attention* he paid to my Request. The Time of “Oateater’s” Journey approaches; I presume he means to repair his Neglect by Punctuality in this Respect. However, no *Trinity Ale* will be forthcoming, till I have broached the promised *Falernum*.

College improves in every thing but Learning. Nobody here seems to look into an Author, ancient or modern, if they can avoid it. The Muses, poor Devils, are totally neglected, except by a few Musty old *Sophs* and *Fellows*, who, however agreeable they may be to *Minerva*, are perfect Antidotes to the *Graces*. Even I (great as is my *inclination* for Knowledge) am carried away by the Tide, having only supped at Home twice since I saw your father, and have more engagements on my Hands for a week to come. Still my Tutor and I go on extremely well and for the first three weeks of my life I have not involved myself in any Scrape of Consequence.

I have News for you which I bear with *Christian* Resignation and without any *violent Transports* of *Grief*. My Mother (whose diabolical Temper you well know) has taken it into her *Sagacious* Head to quarrel with me her *dutiful Son*. She has such a Devil of a Disposition, that she cannot be quiet, though there are fourscore miles between us, which I wish were lengthened to 400. The Cause too frivolous to require taking up your time to read or mine to write. At last in answer to a *Furious Epistle* I returned a *Sarcastick* Answer, which so incensed the *Amiable Dowager* that my Letter was sent back without her deigning a Line in the cover. When I next see you, you shall behold her Letter and my Answer, which will amuse you as they both contain fiery Philippics. I must request you will write immediately, that I may be informed when my Servant shall convey “Oateater” from London; the 20th was the appointed; but I wish to hear further from your father. I hope all the family are in a convalescent State. I shall see you at Christmas (if I live) as I propose passing the Vacation, which is only a Month, in London.

Believe me, Mr. Terry, your's Truly,
BYRON.

40. — To John Hanson.

Trin. Coll. Cambridge, Novr. 23, 1805.

Dear Sir, — Your Advice was good but I have not determined whether I shall follow it; this Place is the *Devil* or at least his principal residence. They call it the University, but any other Appellation would have suited it much better, for Study is the last pursuit of the Society; the Master eats, drinks, and sleeps, the Fellows *Drink, dispute and pun*; the Employment of the Under graduates you will probably conjecture without my description. I sit down to write with a Head confused with Dissipation which, tho' I hate, I cannot avoid.

I have only supped at Home 3 times since my Arrival, and my table is constantly covered with invitations, after all I am the most *steady* Man in College, nor have I got into many Scrapes, and none of consequence. Whenever you appoint a day my Servant shall come up for "Oateater," and as the Time of paying my Bills now approaches, the remaining £50 will be very *agreeable*. You need not make any deduction as I shall want most of it; I will settle with you for the Saddle and Accoutrements *next* quarter. The Upholsterer's Bill will not be sent in yet as my rooms are to be papered and painted at Xmas when I will procure them. No Furniture has been got except what was absolutely necessary including some Decanters and Wine Glasses.

Your Cook certainly deceived you, as I know my Servant was in Town 5 days, and she stated 4. I have yet had no reason to distrust him, but we will examine the affair when I come to Town when I intend lodging at Mrs. Massingbird's. My Mother and I have quarrelled, which I bear with the *patience* of a Philosopher; custom reconciles me to everything.

In the Hope that Mrs. H. and the *Battalion* are in good Health.

I remain, Sir, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: William Lort Mansel (1753-1820), Master of Trinity (1798-1820), Bishop of Bristol (1808-1820), was the chief wit of Cambridge in his day, and the author of many neat epigrams. "I wish," said Rogers (*Table-Talk*, etc., p. 60), "somebody would collect all the Epigrams written by Dr. Mansel; they are remarkably neat and clever." Beloe, in *The Sexagenarian* (vol. i. p. 98), speaks of Mansel as "a young man remarkable for his personal confidence, for his wit and humour, and, above all, for his gallantries." Apparently, on the same

somewhat unreliable authority, he was, as Master, a severe disciplinarian, and extremely tenacious of his dignity (i. p. 99).]

[Footnote 2: Byron probably refers to Richard Porson (1759-1808), Professor of Greek (1792-1808). The son of the parish clerk of Bacton and Earl Ruston, in Norfolk, Porson was entered, by the kindness of friends, on the foundation of Eton College (1774-1778). At Trinity, Cambridge, he became a Scholar in 1780, and a Fellow (1782-1792). In 1792, as he could not conscientiously take orders, he vacated his Fellowship, but was elected Professor of Greek. When Byron was at Cambridge, Porson's health and powers were failing. Silent and reserved, except in the society of his friends, a sloven in his person, he had probably taken to drink as a cure for sleeplessness. In a note to the *Pursuits of Literature* (Dialogue iv. lines 508-516),

"What," asks the author, J. T. Mathias, himself a Fellow of Trinity, "is mere genius without a regulated life! To show the deformity of vice to the rising hopes of the country, the policy of ancient Sparta exhibited an inebriated slave."

Yet Porson's fine love of truth and genius for textual criticism make him one of the greatest, if not the greatest, name in British scholarship. Porson married, in 1795, Mrs. Lunan, sister of Mr. Perry, the editor of the 'Morning Chronicle', for which he frequently wrote. In the 'Shade of Alexander Pope', Mathias again attacks him as "Dogmatic Bardolph in his nuptial noose." Porson's wife died shortly after their marriage. His controversial method was merciless. Of his 'Letters to Archdeacon Travis', Green ('Lover of Literature', p. 213) says that

"he dandles Travis as a tyger would a fawn: and appears only to reserve him alive, for a time, that he may gratify his appetite for sport, before he consigns his feeble prey, by a rougher squeeze, to destruction."]

41. — To John Hanson.

Trinity College, Cambridge, Novr. 30, 1805.

Sir, — After the contents of your Epistle, you will probably be less surprized at my answer, than I have been at many points of yours; never was I more astonished than at the perusal, for I confess I expected very different treatment. Your *indirect* charge of Dissipation does not affect me, nor do I fear the strictest inquiry into my conduct; neither here nor at *Harrow* have I disgraced myself, the "Metropolis" and the "Cloisters" are alike unconscious of my Debauchery, and on the plains of *merry Sherwood* I have experienced *Misery* alone; in July I visited them for the last time.

Mrs. Byron and myself are now totally separated, injured by her, I sought refuge with Strangers, too late I see my error, for how was kindness to be expected from *others*, when denied by a *parent*? In you, Sir, I imagined I had

found an Instructor; for your advice I thank you; the Hospitality of yourself and Mrs. H. on many occasions I shall always gratefully remember, for I am not of opinion that even present Injustice can cancel past obligations.

Before I proceed, it will be necessary to say a few words concerning Mrs. Byron; you hinted a probability of her appearance at Trinity; the instant I hear of her arrival I quit Cambridge, though *Rustication* or *Expulsion* be the consequence. Many a weary week of *torment* have I passed with her, nor have I forgot the insulting *Epithets* with which myself, my *Sister*, my *father* and my *Family* have been repeatedly reviled.

To return to you, Sir, though I feel obliged by your Hospitality, etc., etc., in the present instance I have been completely deceived. When I came down to College, and even previous to that period I stipulated that not only my Furniture, but even my Gowns and Books, should be paid for that I might set out free from *Debt*. Now with all the *Sang Froid* of your profession you tell me, that not only I shall not be permitted to repair my rooms (which was at first agreed to) but that I shall not even be indemnified for my present expence. In one word, hear my determination. I will *never* pay for them out of my allowance, and the Disgrace will not attach to me but to *those* by whom I have been deceived. Still, Sir, not even the Shadow of dishonour shall reflect on *my* Name, for I will see that the Bills are discharged; whether by you or not is to me indifferent, so that the men I employ are not the victims of my Imprudence or your Duplicity. I have ordered nothing extravagant; every man in College is allowed to fit up his rooms; mine are secured to me during my residence which will probably be some time, and in rendering them decent I am more praiseworthy than culpable. The Money I requested was but a secondary consideration; as a *Lawyer* you were not obliged to advance it till due; as a *Friend* the request might have been complied with. When it is required at Xmas I shall expect the demand will be answered. In the course of my letter I perhaps have expressed more asperity than I intended, it is my nature to feel warmly, nor shall any consideration of interest or Fear ever deter me from giving vent to my Sentiments, when injured, whether by a Sovereign or a Subject.

I remain, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: The quarrel arose from Byron misunderstanding a letter from Hanson on the subject of the allowance made by the Court of Chancery for his furniture.]

42. — To John Hanson.

Trin. Coll. Cambridge, Dec. 4, 1805.

Sir, — In charging you with downright *Duplicity* I wronged you, nor do I hesitate to atone for an Injury which I feel I have committed, or add to my Fault by the Vindication of an expression dictated by Resentment, an *expression* which deserves Censure, and demands the apology I now offer; for I think that Disposition indeed *mean* which adds Obstinacy to Insult, by attempting the Palliation of unmerited Invective from the mistaken principle of disdaining the Avowal of even *self convicted* Error. In regard to the other *Declarations* my Sentiments remain *unaltered*; the event will shew whether my Prediction is false. I know Mrs. Byron too well to imagine that she would part with a *Sous*, and if by some *Miracle* she was prevailed upon, the *Details* of her *Generosity* in allowing me part of my *own property* would be continually *thundered* in my ears, or *launched* in the *Lightening* of her letters, so that I had rather encounter the Evils of Embarrassment than lie under an obligation to one who would continually reproach me with her Benevolence, as if her Charity had been extended to a *Stranger* to the Detriment of her own Fortune. My opinion is perhaps harsh for a Son, but it is justified by experience, it is confirmed by *Facts*, it was generated by oppression, it has been nourished by Injury. To you, Sir, I attach no Blame. I am too much indebted to your kindness to retain my anger for a length of Time, that *Kindness* which, by a forcible contrast, has taught me to spurn the *Ties of Blood* unless strengthened by proper and gentle Treatment. I declare upon my honor that the Horror of entering Mrs. Byron's House has of late years been so implanted in my Soul, that I dreaded the approach of the Vacations as the *Harbingers* of *Misery*. My letters to my Sister, written during my residence at Southwell, would prove my Assertion. With my kind remembrances to Mrs. H. and Hargreaves,

I remain, Sir, yours truly,
BYRON.

43. — To John Hanson.

Trin. Coll. Cambridge, Dec. 13, 1805.

DEAR SIR, — I return you my Thanks for the remaining £50 which came in extremely *apropos*, and on my visit to Town about the 19th will give you a regular receipt. In your Extenuation of Mrs. Byron's Conduct you use as a *plea*, that, by her being my Mother, greater allowance ought to be made for those *little* Traits in her Disposition, so much more *energetic* than *elegant*. I am afraid, (however good your intention) that you have added to rather than diminished my Dislike, for independent of the moral Obligations she is under to *protect*,

cherish, and *instruct* her *offspring*, what can be expected of that Man's heart and understanding who has continually (from Childhood to Maturity) beheld so pernicious an Example? His nearest relation is the first person he is taught to revere as his Guide and Instructor; the perversion of Temper before him leads to a corruption of his own, and when that is depraved, vice quickly becomes habitual, and, though timely Severity may sometimes be necessary & justifiable, surely a peevish harassing System of Torment is by no means commendable, & when that is interrupted by ridiculous Indulgence, the only purpose answered is to soften the feelings for a moment which are soon after to be doubly wounded by the recal of accustomed Harshness. I will now give this disagreeable Subject to the *Winds*. I conclude by observing that I am the more confirmed in my opinion of the Futility of Natural Ties, unless supported not only by Attachment but *affectionate* and *prudent* Behaviour.

Tell Mrs. H. that the predicted alteration in my Manners and Habits has not taken place. I am still the Schoolboy and as great a *Rattle* as ever, and between ourselves College is not the place to improve either Morals or Income.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
BYRON.

44. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[[Cas]tle Howard, [ne]ar Malton, Yorkshire.]

16, Piccadilly, [Thursday], Decr. 26th, 1805.

My dearest Augusta, — By the Date of my Letter you will perceive that I have taken up my Residence in the metropolis, where I presume we shall behold you in the latter end of January. I sincerely hope you will make your appearance at that Time, as I have some subjects to discuss with you, which I do not wish to communicate in my Epistle.

The Dowager has thought proper to solicit a reconciliation which in some measure I have agreed to; still there is a coolness which I do not feel inclined to *thaw*, as terms of Civility are the only resource against her impertinent and unjust proceedings with which you are already acquainted.

Town is not very full and the weather has been so unpropitious that I have not been able to make use of my Horses above twice since my arrival. I hope your everlasting negotiation with the Father of your *Intended* is near a conclusion in *some* manner; if you do not hurry a little, you will be verging into the "*Vale of Years*," and, though you may be blest with Sons and daughters, you will never live to see your *Grandchildren*.

When convenient, favour me with an Answer and believe me,

[Signature cut out.]

45. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howar[d], neat Malto[n], Yorkshire.] 16, Piccadilly, [Friday],
Decr. 27th, 1805.

My Dear Augusta, — You will doubtless be surprised to see a second epistle so close upon the arrival of the first, (especially as it is not my custom) but the Business I mentioned rather mysteriously in my last compels me again to proceed. But before I disclose it, I must require the most inviolable Secrecy, for if ever I find that it has transpired, all confidence, all Friendship between us has concluded. I do not mean this exordium as a threat to induce you to comply with my request but merely (whether you accede or not) to keep it a Secret. And although your compliance would essentially oblige me, yet, believe me, my esteem will not be diminished by your Refusal; nor shall I suffer a complaint to escape. The Affair is briefly thus; like all other young men just let loose, and especially one as I am, freed from the worse than bondage of my maternal home, I have been extravagant, and consequently am in want of Money. You will probably now imagine that I am going to apply to you for some. No, if you would offer me thousands, I declare solemnly that I would without hesitation refuse, nor would I accept them were I in danger of Starvation. All I expect or wish is, that you will be joint Security with me for a few Hundreds a person (one of the money lending tribe) has offered to advance in case I can bring forward any collateral guarantee that he will not be a loser, the reason of this requisition is my being a Minor, and might refuse to discharge a debt contracted in my non-age. If I live till the period of my minority expires, you cannot doubt my paying, as I have property to the amount of 100 times the sum I am about to raise; if, as I think rather probable, a pistol or a Fever cuts short the thread of my existence, you will receive half the *Dross* saved since I was ten years old, and can be no great loser by discharging a debt of 7 or £800 from as many thousands. It is far from my Breast to exact any promise from you that would be detrimental, or tend to lower me in your opinion. If you suppose this leads to either of those consequences, forgive my impertinence and bury it in oblivion. I have many Friends, most of them in the same predicament with myself; to those who are not, I am too proud to apply, for I hate obligation; my Relations you know I *detest*; who then is there that I can address on the subject but yourself? to you therefore I appeal, and if I am disappointed, at least let me not be tormented by the advice of Guardians, and let silence rule your Resolution. I know you will think me foolish, if not criminal; but tell me so yourself, and do not rehearse my

failings to others, no, not even to that proud Grandee the Earl, who, whatever his qualities may be, is certainly not amiable, and that Chattering puppy Hanson would make still less allowance for the foibles of a Boy. I am now trying the experiment, whether a woman can retain a secret; let me not be deceived. If you have the least doubt of my integrity, or that you run too great a Risk, do not hesitate in your refusal. Adieu. I expect an answer with impatience, believe me, whether you accede or not,

[Signature cut out.]

P.S. — I apologize for the numerous errors probably enveloped in this cover; the temper of my mind at present, and the hurry I have written in, must plead for pardon. Adieu.

46. — To the Hon. Augusta Byron.

[Castle Howard, near Malton, Yorkshire.]

16, Piccadilly, [Tuesday], January 7th, 1805.

[In another hand] — 6.

My dearest Augusta, — Your efforts to reanimate my sinking spirits will, I am afraid, fail in their effect, for my melancholy proceeds from a very different cause to that which you assign, as, my nerves were always of the strongest texture. — I will not however pretend to say I possess that *Gaieté de Coeur* which formerly distinguished me, but as the diminution of it arises from what you could not alleviate, and might possibly be painful, you will excuse the Disclosure. Suffice it to know, that it cannot spring from Indisposition, as my Health was never more firmly established than now, nor from the subject on which I lately wrote, as that is in a promising Train, and even were it otherwise, the Failure would not lead to Despair. You know me too well to think it is *Love*; & I have had no quarrel or dissention with Friend or enemy, you may therefore be easy, since no unpleasant consequence will be produced from the present Sombre cast of my Temper. I fear the Business will not be concluded before your arrival in Town, when we will settle it together, as by the 20th these *sordid Bloodsuckers* who have agreed to furnish the Sum, will have drawn up the Bond. Believe me, my dearest Sister, it never entered in to my head, that you either could or would propose to antic[ipate] my application to others, by a P[resent from?] yourself; I and I only will be [injured] by my own extravagance, nor would I have wished you to take the least concern, had any other means been open for extrication. As it is, I hope you will excuse my Impertinence, or if you feel an inclination to retreat, do not let affection for me counterbalance prudence.

[Signature cut out.]

[Footnote 1: Words in square brackets accidentally torn off the edge of the

paper, and conjecturally supplied.]

47. — To his Mother.

16, Piccadilly, Febry. 26, 1806.

Dear Mother, — Notwithstanding your sage and economical advice I have paid my *Harrow* Debts, as I can better afford to wait for the Money than the poor Devils who were my creditors. I have also discharged my college Bills amounting to £231, — £75 of which I shall trouble Hanson to repay, being for Furniture, and as my allowance is £500 per annum, I do not chuse to lose the overplus as it makes only £125 per Quarter. I happen to have a few hundreds in ready Cash by me, so I have paid the accounts; but I find it inconvenient to remain at College, not for the expence, as I could live on my allowance (only I am naturally extravagant); however the mode of going on does not suit my constitution. Improvement at an English University to a Man of Rank is, you know, impossible, and the very Idea *ridiculous*. Now I sincerely desire to finish my Education and, having been sometime at Cambridge, the Credit of the University is as much attached to my Name, as if I had pursued my Studies *there* for a Century; but, believe me, it is nothing more than a Name, which is already acquired. I can now leave it with Honour, as I have paid everything, & wish to pass a couple of years abroad, where I am certain of employing my time to far more advantage and at much less expence, than at our English Seminaries. 'Tis true I cannot enter France; but Germany and the Courts of Berlin, Vienna & Petersburg are still open, I shall lay the Plan before Hanson & Lord C. I presume you will all agree, and if you do not, I will, if possible, get away without your Consent, though I should admire it more in the regular manner & with a Tutor of your furnishing. This is my project, at present I wish *you* to be silent to Hanson about it. Let me have your Answer. I intend remaining in Town a Month longer, when perhaps I shall bring my Horses and myself down to your residence in that *execrable* Kennel. I hope you have engaged a Man Servant, else it will be impossible for me to visit you, since my Servant must attend chiefly to his horses; at the same Time you must cut an indifferent Figure with only maids in your habitation.

I remain, your's,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1:

"The Bills," writes Mrs. Byron to Hanson (January 11, 1806), "are coming in thick upon me to double the amount I expected; he went and ordered just what he pleased here, at Nottingham, and in London. However, it is of no use to say

anything about it, and I beg you will take no notice. I am determined to have everything clear within the year, if possible.”

Again she writes (March 1, 1806):

“I beg you will not mention to my son, having heard from me, but try to get out of him his reason for wishing to leave England, and where he got the money. I much fear he has fallen into bad hands, not only in regard to Money Matters, but in other respects. My idea is that he has inveigled himself with some woman that he wishes to get rid of and finds it difficult. But whatever it is, he must be got out of it.”

Again (March 4, 1806):

“That Boy will be the death of me, and drive me mad! I never will consent to his going Abroad. Where can he get Hundreds? Has he got into the hands of Moneylenders? He has no feeling, no Heart. This I have long known; he has behaved as ill as possible to me for years back. This bitter Truth I can no longer conceal: it is wrung from me by *heart-rending agony*. I am well rewarded. I came to Nottinghamshire to please him, and now he hates it. He knows that I am doing everything in my power to pay his Debts, and he writes to me about hiring servants!”

Once more (April 24, 1806):

“Lord Byron has given £31 10s. to Pitt’s statue. He has also bought a Carriage, which he says was intended for me, which I *refused* to accept of, being in hopes it would stop his having one.”]

48. — To John Hanson.

16, Piccadilly, March 3, 1806.

Sir, — I called at your House in Chancery Lane yesterday Evening, as I expected you would have been in Town, but was disappointed. If convenient, I should be glad to see you on Wednesday Morning about one o’Clock, as I wish for your advice on some Business. On Saturday one of my Horses threw me; I was stunned for a short time, but soon recovered and suffered no material *Injury*; the accident happened on the Harrow Road. I have paid Jones’s Bill amounting to £231.4.5 of which I expect to be reimbursed £75 for Furniture. I have got his Bankers’ receipt and the account ready for your Inspection. I now owe nothing at Cambridge; but shall not return this Term, as I have been extremely *unwell*, and at the same time can stay where I am at much less Expence and *equal Improvement*. I wish to consult you on several Subjects and expect you will pay me a visit on Wednesday; in the mean time,

I remain, yours, etc., BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Lectures began on February 5, 1806, as is stated on the

College bills, sent in by Mr. Jones, the Senior Tutor of Trinity. But Byron preferred to remain in London. Augusta Byron writes to Hanson (March 7, 1806) — —

“I trouble you again in consequence of some conversation I had last night with Lord Carlisle about my Brother. He expressed himself to me as kindly on that subject as on all others, and though he says it may not be productive of any good, and that he may be only *able to join his lamentations* with yours, he should like to talk to you and try if anything can be done. I was much surprized and vexed to see my Brother a week ago at the Play, as I think he ought to be employing his time more profitably at Cambridge.”]

49. — To John Hanson.

16, Piccadilly, near Park Lane, 10th March, 1806.

SIR, — As in all probability you will not make your appearance tomorrow I must disclose by Letter the Business I intended to have discussed at our interview. — We know each other sufficiently to render Apology unnecessary. I shall therefore without further Prelude proceed to the Subject in Question. You are not ignorant, that I have lately lived at considerable Expence, to support which my allotted Income by the ‘sapient’ Court of Chancery is inadequate. — I confess I have borrowed a trifling sum and now wish to raise £500 to discharge some Debts I have contracted; my approaching Quarter will bring me £200 due from my Allowance, and if you can procure me the other £300 at a moderate Interest, it will save 100 per cent I must pay my *Israelite* for the same purpose. — You see by this I have an *excellent* Idea of Oeconomy even in my Extravagance by being willing to pay as little Money as possible, for the Cash must be disbursed *somewhere* or *somehow*, and if you decline (as in prudence I tell you fairly you ought), the *Tribe of Levi* will be my *dernier resort*. However I thought proper to make this Experiment with very slender hopes of success indeed, since Recourse to the *Law* is at best a *desperate* effort. I have now laid open my affairs to you without Disguise and Stated the Facts as they appear, declining all Comments, or the use of any Sophistry to palliate my application, or urge my request. All I desire is a speedy Answer, whether successful or not.

Believe me, yours truly, BYRON.

50. — To John Hanson.

16, Piccadilly, 25th March, 1806.

SIR, — Your last Letter, as I expected, contained much advice, but no Money. I could have excused the former unaccompanied by the latter, since any one thinks himself capable of giving that, but very few chuse to own themselves competent to the other. I do not now write to urge a 2nd Request, one Denial is

sufficient. I only require what is my right. This is Lady Day. £125 is due for my last Quarter, and £75 for my expenditure in Furniture at Cambridge and I will thank you to remit.

The Court of Chancery may perhaps put in Force your Threat. I have always understood it formed a Sanction for legal plunderers to protract the Decision of Justice from year to year, till weary of spoil it at length condescended to give Sentence, but I never yet understood even its unhallowed Hands preyed upon the Orphan it was bound to protect. Be it so, only let me have your answer.

I remain, etc., etc., BYRON.

51. — To Henry Angelo. Trinity College, Cambridge, May 16, 1806.

SIR, — You cannot be more indignant, at the insolent and unmerited conduct of Mr. Mortlock, than those who authorised you to request his permission. However we do not yet despair of gaining our point, and every effort shall be made to remove the obstacles, which at present prevent the execution of our project. I yesterday waited on the Master of this College, who, having a personal dispute with the Mayor, declined interfering, but recommended an application to the Vice Chancellor, whose authority is paramount in the University. I shall communicate this to Lord Altamont, and we will endeavour to bend the obstinacy of the *upstart* magistrate, who seems to be equally deficient in justice and common civility. On my arrival in town, which will take place in a few days, you will see me at Albany Buildings, when we will discuss the subject further. Present my remembrance to the Messrs. Angelo, junior, and believe me, we will yet *humble* this *impertinent bourgeois*.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Henry Angelo, the famous fencing-master, was at the head of his profession for nearly forty years. His position was recognized at least as early as 1787, when he published *The School of Fencing*, and fenced, with the Chevalier de St. George and other celebrities, before the Prince of Wales at Carlton House. In 1806 he was travelling down every other week to Cambridge, as he states in his *Pic Nic* (1837), to visit his pupils. He had made Byron's acquaintance at Harrow by teaching him to fence, and in later years had many bouts with him with the foils, single-sticks, and Highland broadsword. His *Reminiscences* (1830), together with his *Pic Nic*, contain numerous anecdotes of Byron, to whom he seems to have been sincerely attached. In 1806 he had several rooms in London for the use of his pupils. One of these was at 13, Bond Street, which he shared with Gentleman Jackson, the pugilist and ex-champion. In Cruikshank's

picture of the room (Pierce Egan's *Life in London*, p. 254), two fencers have unmasked and stopped their bout to see Jackson spar with Corinthian Tom. Angelo contributed an article on fencing to Sir John Sinclair's *Code of Health and Longevity*, vol. ii. p. 163.

Angelo, who retired from London in 1821, and lived near Bath, was in 1806 at the height of his reputation. An old Etonian (1767), he knew every one in London; had dined at the same table with the Prince of Wales, acted with Lord Barrymore, sung comic songs with Dibdin, punned with Bannister and Colman, fished at Benham on the invitation of the Margravine of Anspach, played the flute to Lady Melfort's accompaniment on the piano, and claimed his share of the table-talk at the Keep Line Club. Nearly every celebrity of the day, from Lord Sidmouth and Lord Liverpool to Kean and Macready, was his pupil.]

[Footnote 2: Mr. Mortlock, the Mayor of Cambridge, is thus mentioned in a letter from S. T. Coleridge to Southey, dated September 26, 1794: "All last night I was obliged to listen to the damned chatter of "Mortlock, our mayor, a fellow that would certainly be a pantisocrat "were his head and heart as highly illuminated as his face. In the tropical latitude of this fellow's nose was I obliged to fry" (*Letters of S. T. Coleridge* (1895), vol. i. p. 87).]

[Footnote 3: William Lort Mansel, Master of Trinity, and Bishop of Bristol. (See page 84 [Letter 40], [Foot]note 1.)]

[Footnote 4: Howe Peter Browne, Lord Altamont (1788-1845), of Jesus College, succeeded his father in 1809 as second Marquis of Sligo. Byron spent some time with him at Athens in 1810. Lord Sligo's letter on the origin of the 'Giaour' is quoted by Moore ('Life', p. 178). (See also page 289 [Letter 144], [Foot]note 1 .)]

52. — To John M. B. Pigot.

16, Piccadilly, August 9, 1806.

MY DEAR PIGOT, — Many thanks for your amusing narrative of the last proceedings of my amiable Alecto, who now begins to feel the effects of her folly. I have just received a penitential epistle, to which, apprehensive of pursuit, I have despatched a moderate answer, with a *kind* of promise to return in a fortnight; — this, however (*entre nous*), I never mean to fulfil. Her soft warblings must have delighted her auditors, her higher notes being particularly musical, and on a calm moonlight evening would be heard to great advantage. Had I been present as a spectator, nothing would have pleased me more; but to have come forward as one of the *dramatis personae* — St. Dominic defend me from such a scene! Seriously, your mother has laid me under great obligations,

and you, with the rest of your family, merit my warmest thanks for your kind connivance at my escape from “Mrs. Byron *furiosa*.”

Oh! for the pen of Ariosto to rehearse, in epic, the scolding of that momentous eve, — or rather, let me invoke the shade of Dante to inspire me, for none but the author of the *Inferno* could properly preside over such an attempt. But, perhaps, where the pen might fail, the pencil would succeed. What a group! — Mrs. B. the principal figure; you cramming your ears with cotton, as the only antidote to total deafness; Mrs. — — in vain endeavouring to mitigate the wrath of the lioness robbed of her whelp; and last, though not least, Elizabeth and Wousky, — wonderful to relate! — both deprived of their parts of speech, and bringing up the rear in mute astonishment. How did S. B. receive the intelligence? How many *puns* did he utter on so *facetious* an event? In your next inform me on this point, and what excuse you made to A. You are probably, by this time, tired of deciphering this hieroglyphical letter; — like Tony Lumpkin, you will pronounce mine to be “a damned up and down hand.” All Southwell, without doubt, is involved in amazement. *Apropos*, how does my blue-eyed nun, the fair — — ? Is she “*robed in sable garb of woe?*”

Here I remain at least a week or ten days; previous to my departure you shall receive my address, but what it will be I have not determined. My lodgings must be kept secret from Mrs. B. You may present my compliments to her, and say any attempt to pursue me will fail, as I have taken measures to retreat immediately to Portsmouth, on the first intimation of her removal from Southwell. You may add, I have proceeded to a friend’s house in the country, there to remain a fortnight.

I have now *blotted* (I must not say written) a complete double letter, and in return shall expect a *monstrous budget*. Without doubt, the dames of Southwell reprobate the pernicious example I have shown, and tremble lest their *babes* should disobey their mandates, and quit, in dudgeon, their mammas on any grievance. Adieu. When you begin your next, drop the “lordship,” and put “Byron” in its place.

Believe me yours, etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: J. M. B. Pigot, eldest brother of Miss E. B. Pigot (see Letter of August 29, 1804, page 32, note 1). To him Byron addressed his “Reply” (‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 53-56) and verses “To the Sighing Strephon” (‘Ibid’., pp. 63-66). In 1805-6 Pigot was studying medicine at Edinburgh, and in his vacations saw much of Byron. He died at Ruddington, Notts., November 26,

1871, aged 86. It would appear that Byron had, with the connivance of the Pigots, escaped to London, after a quarrel with his mother; but the caution to keep his lodgings secret gives a theatrical air to the letter, as the rooms, kept by Mrs. Massingberd, were originally taken by Mrs. Byron, and often occupied by her, and she was at the time corresponding with Hanson about her son's debt to Mrs. Massingberd, who seems to have been both landlady and money-lender to Byron.]

53. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

London, August 10, 1806.

MY DEAR BRIDGET, — As I have already troubled your brother with more than he will find pleasure in deciphering, you are the next to whom I shall assign the employment of perusing this second epistle. You will perceive from my first, that no idea of Mrs. B.'s arrival had disturbed me at the time it was written; *not* so the present, since the appearance of a note from the *illustrious cause* of my *sudden decampment* has driven the “natural ruby from my cheeks,” and completely blanched my woebegone countenance. This gunpowder intimation of her arrival (confound her activity!) breathes less of terror and dismay than you will probably imagine, from the volcanic temperament of her ladyship; and concludes with the comfortable assurance of *present motion* being prevented by the fatigue of her journey, for which my *blessings* are due to the rough roads and restive quadrupeds of his Majesty's highways. As I have not the smallest inclination to be chased round the country, I shall e'en make a merit of necessity; and since, like Macbeth, “they've tied me to the stake, I cannot fly,” I shall imitate that valorous tyrant, and bear-like fight the “course,” all escape being precluded. I can now engage with less disadvantage, having drawn the enemy from her intrenchments, though, like the *prototype* to whom I have compared myself, with an excellent chance of being knocked on the head. However, “lay on Macduff”, and “damned be he who first cries, Hold, enough.”

I shall remain in town for, at least, a week, and expect to hear from *you* before its expiration. I presume the printer has brought you the offspring of my *poetic mania*. Remember in the first line to read “*loud* the winds whistle,” instead of “round,” which that blockhead Ridge had inserted by mistake, and makes nonsense of the whole stanza. Addio! — Now to encounter my *Hydra*.

Yours ever.

[Footnote 1: Byron's first volume of verse was now in the press. The line to which he alludes is the first line of the poem, “On Leaving Newstead Abbey” (‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 1-4). It now runs —

“Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle.”

(For the bibliography of his early poems, see ‘Poems’, vol. i., Bibliographical Note; and vol. vi., Appendix.) The first collection (‘Fugitive Pieces’, printed by S. and J. Ridge, Newark, 4to, 1806) was destroyed, with the exception of two copies, by the advice of the Rev. J. T. Becher (see page 182 [Letter 94], [Foot]note 1). The second collection (‘Poems on Various Occasions’, printed by S. and J. Ridge, Newark, 12mo, 1807) was published anonymously. It is to this edition that Letters 60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, refer.

In the summer of 1807, ‘Poems on Various Occasions’ was superseded by the third collection, called ‘Hours of Idleness’ (printed by S. and J. Ridge, Newark, 12mo, 1807), published with the author’s name. To this edition Letters 76 and 78 refer. ‘Hours of Idleness’ was reviewed by Lord Brougham (‘Notes from a Diary’, by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, vol. ii. p. 189) in the ‘Edinburgh Review’ for January, 1808.

The fourth and final collection, entitled ‘Poems Original and Translated’ (printed by S. and J. Ridge, Newark, 12mo, 1808), was dedicated to the Earl of Carlisle.

54. — To John M. B. Pigot.

London, Sunday, midnight, August 10, 1806.

Dear Pigot, — This *astonishing* packet will, doubtless, amaze you; but having an idle hour this evening, I wrote the enclosed stanzas, which I request you will deliver to Ridge, to be printed *separate* from my other compositions, as you will perceive them to be improper for the perusal of ladies; of course, none of the females of your family must see them. I offer 1000 apologies for the trouble I have given you in this and other instances.

Yours truly.

[Footnote 1: These are probably some silly lines “To Mary,” written in the erotic style of Moore’s early verse. To the same Mary, of whom nothing is known, are addressed the lines “To Mary, on receiving her Picture” (‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 32, 33).]

55. — To John M. B. Pigot.

Piccadilly, August 16, 1806.

I cannot exactly say with Caesar, “Veni, vidi, vici:” however, the most important part of his laconic account of success applies to my present situation; for, though Mrs. Byron took the *trouble* of “*coming*,” and “*seeing*,” yet your humble servant proved the *victor*. After an obstinate engagement of some hours, in which we suffered considerable damage, from the quickness of the enemy’s fire, they at length retired in confusion, leaving behind the artillery, field equipage, and some prisoners: their defeat is decisive for the present campaign.

To speak more intelligibly, Mrs. B. returns immediately, but I proceed, with all my laurels, to Worthing, on the Sussex coast; to which place you will address (to be left at the post office) your next epistle. By the enclosure of a second *gingle of rhyme*, you will probably conceive my muse to be *vastly prolific*; her inserted production was brought forth a few years ago, and found by accident on Thursday among some old papers. I have recopied it, and, adding the proper date, request that it may be printed with the rest of the family. I thought your sentiments on the last bantling would coincide with mine, but it was impossible to give it any other garb, being founded on *facts*. My stay at Worthing will not exceed three weeks, and you may *possibly* behold me again at Southwell the middle of September.

Will you desire Ridge to suspend the printing of my poems till he hears further from me, as I have determined to give them a new form entirely? This prohibition does not extend to the two last pieces I have sent with my letters to you. You will excuse the *dull vanity* of this epistle, as my brain is a *chaos* of absurd images, and full of business, preparations, and projects.

I shall expect an answer with impatience; — believe me, there is nothing at this moment could give me greater delight than your letter.

56. — To John M. B. Pigot.

London, August 18, 1806.

I am just on the point of setting off for Worthing, and write merely to request you will send that *idle scoundrel Charles* with my horses immediately; tell him I am excessively provoked he has not made his appearance before, or written to inform me of the cause of his delay, particularly as I supplied him with money for his journey. On *no* pretext is he to postpone his *march* one day longer; and if, in obedience to the caprices of Mrs. B. (who, I presume, is again spreading desolation through her little monarchy), he thinks proper to disregard my positive orders, I shall not, in future, consider him as my servant. He must bring the surgeon's bill with him, which I will discharge immediately on receiving it. Nor can I conceive the reason of his not acquainting Frank with the state of my unfortunate quadrupeds. Dear Pigot, forgive this *petulant* effusion, and attribute it to the idle conduct of that *precious* rascal, who, instead of obeying my injunctions, is sauntering through the streets of that *political Pandemonium*, Nottingham. Present my remembrance to your family and the Leacrofts, and believe me, *etc.*

P.S. — I delegate to *you* the unpleasant task of despatching him on his journey — Mrs. B.'s orders to the contrary are not to be attended to: he is to proceed first to London, and then to Worthing, without delay. Every thing I have

left must be sent to London. My *Poetics* you will *pack up* for the same place, and not even reserve a copy for yourself and sister, as I am about to give them an *entire new form*: when they are complete, you shall have the *first fruits*. Mrs. B. on no account is to see or touch them. Adieu.

57. — To John M. B. Pigot.

Little Hampton, August 26, 1806.

I this morning received your epistle, which I was obliged to send for to Worthing, whence I have removed to this place, on the same coast, about eight miles distant from the former. You will probably not be displeased with this letter, when it informs you that I am £30,000 richer than I was at our parting, having just received intelligence from my lawyer that a cause has been gained at Lancaster assizes, which will be worth that sum by the time I come of age. Mrs. B. is, doubtless, acquainted of this acquisition, though not apprised of its exact *value*, of which she had better be ignorant; for her behaviour under any sudden piece of favourable intelligence, is, if possible, more ridiculous than her detestable conduct on the most trifling circumstances of an unpleasant nature. You may give my compliments to her, and say that her detaining my servant's things shall only lengthen my absence: for unless they are immediately despatched to 16, Piccadilly, together with those which have been so long delayed, belonging to myself, she shall never again behold my *radiant countenance* illuminating her gloomy mansion. If they are sent, I may probably appear in less than two years from the date of my present epistle.

Metrical compliment is an ample reward for my strains: you are one of the few votaries of Apollo who unite the sciences over which that deity presides. I wish you to send my poems to my lodgings in London immediately, as I have several alterations and some additions to make; *every* copy must be sent, as I am about to *amend* them, and you shall soon behold them in all their glory. I hope you have kept them from that upas tree, that antidote to the arts, Mrs. B. *Entre nous*, — you may expect to see me soon. Adieu.

Yours ever.

[Footnote 1: Byron was disappointed in his expectations. Fresh legal difficulties arose, and Newstead had to be sold before they were settled (see page 78 [Letter 34], [Foot]note 2).]

58. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

My Dear Bridget, — I have only just dismounted from my *Pegasus*, which has prevented me from descending to *plain prose* in an epistle of greater length to your *fair* self. You regretted, in a former letter, that my poems were not more extensive; I now for your satisfaction announce that I have nearly doubled them,

partly by the discovery of some I conceived to be lost, and partly by some new productions. We shall meet on Wednesday next; till then, believe me,

Yours affectionately,

BYRON.

P.S. — Your brother John is seized with a poetic mania, and is now rhyming away at the rate of three lines *per hour* — so much for *inspiration*! Adieu!

[Footnote 1: This letter was written about September, 1806, from Harrogate, where Byron had gone with John Pigot. It forms the conclusion of a longer letter, written by Pigot to his sister, from which Moore quotes ('Life', p. 37) the following passage: —

“Harrowgate is still extremely full; Wednesday (to-day) is our ball-night, and I meditate going into the room for an hour, although I am by no means fond of strange faces. Lord B., you know, is even more shy than myself; but for an hour this evening I will shake it off.... How do our theatricals proceed? Lord Byron can say ‘all’ his part, and I ‘most’ of mine. He certainly acts it inimitably. Lord B. is now ‘poetising’, and, since he has been here, has written some very pretty verses [‘To a Beautiful Quaker,’ see ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 38-41]. He is very good in trying to amuse me as much as possible, but it is not in my nature to be happy without either female society or study.... There are many pleasant rides about here, which I have taken in company with Bo’swain, who, with Brighton, is universally admired. ‘You’ must read this to Mrs. B., as it is a little ‘Tony Lumpkinish’. Lord B. desires some space left: therefore, with respect to all the comedians ‘elect’, believe me,” etc., etc.

(For the theatricals to which Mr. Pigot alludes, see page 117 [Letter 65], [Foot]note 3 .) Brighton, it may be added, was one of Byron’s horses; the other was called Sultan. Bo’swain was the dog to which Byron addressed the well-known epitaph (see ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 280, 281, and note 1).

Moore also quotes Pigot’s recollections of the visit to Harrogate (‘Life’, pp. 37, 38).

“We, I remember, went in Lord Byron’s own carriage, with post-horses; and he sent his groom with two saddle-horses, and a beautifully formed, very ferocious, bull-mastiff, called Nelson, to meet us there. Boatswain went by the side of his valet Frank on the box, with us.

“The bull-dog, Nelson, always wore a muzzle, and was occasionally sent for into our private room, when the muzzle was taken off, much to my annoyance, and he and his master amused themselves with throwing the room into disorder. There was always a jealous feud between this Nelson and Boatswain; and whenever he latter came into the room while the former was there, they instantly seized each other; and then, Byron, myself, Frank, and all the waiters that could be found, were vigorously engaged in parting them, — which was in general only effected by thrusting poker and tongs into the mouths of each. But, one day, Nelson unfortunately escaped out of the room without his muzzle, and going into the stable-yard fastened upon the throat of a horse from which he could not be disengaged. The stable-boys ran in alarm to find Frank, who taking one of his Lord’s Wogdon’s pistols, always kept loaded in his room, shot poor Nelson through the head, to the great regret of Byron.

“We were at the Crown Inn, at Low Harrowgate. We always dined in the

public room, but retired very soon after dinner to our private one; for Byron was no more a friend to drinking than myself. We lived retired, and made few acquaintance; for he was naturally shy, ‘very’ shy; which people who did not know him mistook for pride. While at Harrowgate he accidentally met with Professor Hailstone from Cambridge, and appeared much delighted to see him. The professor was at Upper Harrowgate: we called upon him one evening to take him to the theatre, I think, — and Lord Byron sent his carriage for him, another time, to a ball at the Granby. This desire to show attention to one of the professors of his college is a proof that, though he might choose to satirise the mode of education in the university, and to abuse the antiquated regulations and restrictions to which undergraduates are subjected, he had yet a due discrimination in his respect for the individuals who belonged to it. I have always, indeed, heard him speak in high terms of praise of Hailstone, as well as of his master, Bishop Mansel, of Trinity College, and of others whose names I have now forgotten.

“Few people understood Byron; but I know that he had naturally a kind and feeling heart, and that there was not a single spark of malice in his composition.”

Professor Hailstone was Woodwardian Professor of Geology (1788-1818).
(For Bishop Mansel, see page 84, note 1.)]

59. — To John Hanson.

Southwell, Dec. 7th, 1806.

Sir, — A Letter to Mrs. Byron has just arrived which states, from what “you have *heard* of the Tenor of my Letters,” you will not put up with Insult. I presume this means (for I will not be positive on what is rather ambiguously expressed) that some offence to you has been conveyed in the above mentioned Epistles. If you will peruse the papers in question, you will discover that the *person* insulted is not *yourself*, or any one of your “*Connections*.” On Mr. B.’s apology, I have expressed my opinion in a Letter to your Son, if any Misrepresentation has taken place, it must be those “*Connections*” to whom I am to pay such Deference, & whose conduct to me has deserved such *ample respect*. I must now beg leave to observe in turn, that I am by no means disposed to bear Insult, & be the consequences what they may, I will always declare, in plain and explicit Terms, my Grievance, nor will I overlook the slightest Mark of disrespect, & silently brood over affronts from a mean and interested dread of Injury to my person or property. The former I have Strength and resolution to protect; the latter is too trifling by its Loss to occasion a moments Uneasiness.

Though not conversant with the methodical & dilatory arrangements of Law

or Business, I know enough of Justice to direct my conduct by the principles of Equity, nor can I reconcile the "Insolence of office" to her regulations or forget in an Instant a poignant Affront.

But enough of this Dispute. You will perceive my Sentiments on the Subject, in my correspondence with Mr. B. and Mr. H. Junior. In future to prevent a repetition and altercation I shall advise; but as, even then, some Demur may take place, I wish to be informed, if the equitable Court of Chancery, whose paternal care of their Ward can never be sufficiently commended, have determined, in the great Flow of parental Affection, to withhold their beneficent Support, till I return to "Alma Mater" (i.e.) Cambridge. Your Information on this point will oblige, as a College life is neither conducive to my Improvement, nor suitable to my Inclination. As to the reverse of the Rochdale Trial, I received the News of Success without confidence or exultation; I now sustain the Loss without repining. My Expectations from *Law* were never very sanguine.

I remain, yr very obedt. sert.,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Hanson's partner, Birch, the "Mr. B." of the letter, seems to have irritated Byron by withholding the income allotted to him by the Court of Chancery for his education at Cambridge. The attempt to compel his return to Trinity by cutting off the supplies, failed. He did not appear again at Cambridge till the summer term of 1807.]

60. — To J. Ridge.

Dorant's Hotel, Albemarle Street, Jany. 12, 1807.

Mr. Ridge, — I understand from some of my friends, that several of the papers are in the habit of publishing extracts from my volume, particularly the *Morning Herald*. I cannot say for my own part I have observed this, but I am assured it is so. The thing is of no consequence to me, except that I dislike it. But it is to you, and as publisher you should put a stop to it. The *Morning Herald* is the paper; of course you cannot address any other, as I am sure I have seen nothing of the kind in mine. You will act upon this as you think proper, and proceed with the 2d. Edition as you please. I am in no hurry, and I still think you were *premature* in undertaking it.

Etc., etc.,
BYRON.

P.S. — Present a copy of the *Antijacobin* therein to Mrs. Byron.

61. — To John M. B. Pigot.

Southwell, Jan. 13, 1807.

I ought to begin with *sundry* apologies, for my own negligence, but the variety of my avocations in *prose* and *verse* must plead my excuse. With this epistle you will receive a volume of all my *Juvenilia*, published since your departure: it is of considerably greater size than the *copy* in your possession, which I beg you will destroy, as the present is much more complete. That *unlucky* poem to my poor Mary has been the cause of some animadversion from *ladies in years*. I have not printed it in this collection, in consequence of my being pronounced a most *profligate sinner*, in short, a “*young Moore*,” by — — — , your — — — friend. I believe, in general, they have been favourably received, and surely the age of their author will preclude *severe* criticism. The adventures of my life from sixteen to nineteen, and the dissipation into which I have been thrown in London, have given a voluptuous tint to my ideas; but the occasions which called forth my muse could hardly admit any other colouring. This volume is *vastly* correct and miraculously chaste. Apropos, talking of love, ...

...
If you can find leisure to answer this farrago of unconnected nonsense, you need not doubt what gratification will accrue from your reply to yours ever, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: See page 104 [Letter 53], [Foot]note 2 .]

[Footnote 2: Thomas Moore (1779-1852) had already published ‘Anacreon’ (1800), ‘The Poetical Works of the late Thomas Little’ (1801), and ‘Odes, Epistles, and other Poems’ (1806). In all, especially in the second, the poetry was of an erotic character.

“So heartily,” said Rogers (‘Table-Talk, etc.’, pp. 281, 282), “has Moore repented of having published ‘Little’s Poems’, that I have seen him shed tears — tears of deep contrition — when we were talking of them. Young ladies read his ‘Lalla Rookh’ without being aware (I presume) of the grossness of ‘The Veiled Prophet’. These lines by Mr. Sneyd are amusing enough —

”“‘Lalla Rookh’
Is a naughty book
By Tommy Moore,
Who has written four,
Each warmer
Than the former.
So the most recent
Is the least decent.’“]

62. — To Captain John Leacroft.

January 31, 1807.

Sir, — Upon serious reflection on the conversation we last night held, I am concerned to say, that the only effectual method to crash the animadversions of officious malevolence, is by my declining all future intercourse with those whom my acquaintance has unintentionally injured. At the same time I must observe that I do not form this resolution from any resentment at your representation, which was temperate and gentlemanly, but from a thorough conviction that the desirable end can be attained by no other line of conduct.

I beg leave to return my thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Leacroft, for the attention and hospitality I have always experienced, of which I shall ever retain a grateful remembrance.

So much to them; with your permission, I must add a few words for myself. You will be sensible, that a coolness between families, hitherto remarkable for their intimacy, cannot remain unobserved in a town, whose inhabitants are notorious for officious curiosity; that the causes for our separation will be misrepresented I have little doubt; if, therefore, I discover that such misrepresentation does take place, I shall call upon you, to unite with myself in making a serious example of those *men*, be they *who* they may, that dare to cast an aspersion on the character I am sacrificing my own comfort to protect.

If, on the other hand, they imagine, that my conduct is the consequence of intimidation, from my conference with you, I must require a further explanation of what passed between us on the subject, as, however careful I am of your Sister's honour, I am equally tenacious of my own.

I do not wish this to be misconstrued into any desire to quarrel; it is what I shall endeavour to avoid; but, as a young man very lately entered into the world, I feel compelled to state, that I can permit no suspicion to be attached to my name with impunity.

I have the honour to remain,
Your very obedient Servant,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: This and the two following letters refer to a quarrel between Byron and the Leacroft family, which arose from his attentions to Miss Julia Leacroft. Moore's statement, that Captain Leacroft, the lady's brother (see page 34 [Letter 12], [foot]note 3), sent a challenge to Byron, who was at first inclined to accept it, is inaccurate. But it is possible that Byron was acting on the advice of the Rev. J. T. Becher, when he decided, in order to prevent misunderstanding, to break off his acquaintance with the Leacrofts absolutely.]

63. — To Captain John Leacroft.

February 4th, 1807.

Sir, — I have just received your note, which conveys all that can be said on the subject. I can easily conceive your feelings must have been irritated in the course of the affair. I am sorry that I have been the unintentional cause of so disagreeable a business. The line of conduct, however painful to myself, which I have adopted, is the only effectual method to prevent the remarks of a *meddling world*. I therefore again take my leave for the last time. I repeat, that, though the intercourse, from which I have derived so many hours of happiness, is for ever interrupted, the remembrance can never be effaced from the bosom of

Your very obedient Servant,

BYRON.

64. — To Captain John Leacroft.

February 4th, 1807.

Sir, — I am concerned to be obliged again to trouble you, as I had hoped that our conversations had terminated amicably. Your good Father, it seems, has desired otherwise; he has just sent a most *agreeable* epistle, in which I am honoured with the appellations of *unfeeling* and ungrateful. But as the consequences of all this must ultimately fall on you and myself, I merely write this to apprise you that the dispute is not of my seeking, and that, if we must cut each other's throats to please our relations, you will do me the justice to say it is from no *personal* animosity between us, or from any insult on my part, that such *disagreeable* events (for I am not so much enamoured of quarrels as to call them *pleasant*) have arisen.

I remain, your's, etc.,

BYRON.

65.-To the Earl of Clare.

Southwell, Notts, February 6, 1807.

My Dearest Clare, — Were I to make all the apologies necessary to atone for my late negligence, you would justly say you had received a petition instead of a letter, as it would be filled with prayers for forgiveness; but instead of this, I will acknowledge my *sins* at once, and I trust to your friendship and generosity rather than to my own excuses. Though my health is not perfectly re-established, I am out of all danger, and have recovered every thing but my spirits, which are subject to depression. You will be astonished to hear I have lately written to Delawarr, for the purpose of explaining (as far as possible without involving

some *old friends* of mine in the business) the cause of my behaviour to him during my last residence at Harrow (nearly two years ago), which you will recollect was rather “*en cavalier*.” Since that period, I have discovered he was treated with injustice both by those who misrepresented his conduct, and by me in consequence of their suggestions. I have therefore made all the reparation in my power, by apologizing for my mistake, though with very faint hopes of success; indeed I never expected any answer, but desired one for form’s sake; *that* has not yet arrived, and most probably never will. However, I have *eased* my own *conscience* by the atonement, which is humiliating enough to one of my disposition; yet I could not have slept satisfied with the reflection of having, *even unintentionally*, injured any individual. I have done all that could be done to repair the injury, and there the affair must end. Whether we renew our intimacy or not is of very trivial consequence.

My time has lately been much occupied with very different pursuits. I have been *transporting* a servant, who cheated me, — rather a disagreeable event; — performing in private theatricals; — publishing a volume of poems (at the request of my friends, for their perusal); — making love, — and taking physic. The two last amusements have not had the best effect in the world; for my attentions have been divided amongst so many fair damsels, and the drugs I swallow are of such variety in their composition, that between Venus and Æsculapius I am harassed to death. However, I have still leisure to devote some hours to the recollections of past, regretted friendships, and in the interval to take the advantage of the moment, to assure you how much I am, and ever will be, my dearest Clare,

Your truly attached and sincere
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: John Fitzgibbon (1792-1851), son of the first Earl of Clare, by his wife Anne Whaley, succeeded his father as second Earl in January, 1802. A schoolfellow of Byron's at Harrow, he was the "Lycus" of "Childish Recollections," and one of his dearest friends. Clare, after leaving Harrow, went to a private tutor, the Rev. Mr. Smith, at Woodnesborough, near Sandwich. There he formed so close a friendship with Lord John Russell as to provoke Byron's jealousy ('Life', p. 21). Clare was at Christ Church, Oxford (B.A. 1812); Byron at Trinity, Cambridge. They rarely met after leaving Harrow. Their meeting on the road between Imola and Bologna in 1821,

"annihilated for a moment," says Byron (see 'Life', p. 540; 'Detached Thoughts', November 5, 1821), "all the years between the present time and the days of Harrow. We were but five minutes together, and on the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them. Of all I have ever known, he has always been the least altered in everything from the excellent qualities and kind affections which attached me to him so strongly at school. I should hardly have thought it possible for society (or the world, as it is called) to leave a being with so little of the leaven of bad passions. I do not speak from personal experience only, but from all I have ever heard of him from others, during absence and distance."

Lord Clare was Governor of Bombay from 1830 to 1834.]

[Footnote 2: See page 41 [Letter 14], note 1 [Footnote 5].]

[Footnote 3: See page 81 [Letter 38], [Foot]note 1.]

[Footnote 4: In the theatricals, which took place at Southwell in the autumn of 1806, Byron was the chief mover. A letter received by Mr. Pigot, quoted by Moore ('Life', p. 38), shows how eagerly his return from Harrogate was expected: —

"Tell Lord Byron that, if any accident should retard his return, his mother desires he will write to her, as she shall be 'miserable' if he does not arrive the day he fixes. Mr. W. B. has written a card to Mrs. H. to offer for the character of 'Henry Woodville,' — Mr. and Mrs. — — not approving of their son's taking a part in the play: but I believe he will persist in it. Mr. G. W. says, that sooner than the party should be disappointed, 'he' will take any part, — sing — dance — in short, do any thing to oblige. Till Lord Byron returns, nothing can be done; and positively he must not be later than Tuesday or Wednesday."

A full account of the theatricals is given in a manuscript written by

Miss Bristoe, one of the performers. Two plays were represented, (1) Cumberland's 'Wheel of Fortune' and (2) Allingham's 'Weathercock'. The following were the respective casts: —

(1) 'Penruddock', Lord Byron.
'Sir David Daw', Mr. C. Becher.
'Woodville', Captain Lightfoot.
'Sydenham', Mr. Pigot.
'Henry Woodville', Mr. H. Houson.
'Mrs. Woodville', Miss Bristoe.
'Emily Tempest', Miss J. Leacroft
'Dame Dunckley', Miss Leacroft.
'Weazel', Mr. G. Wylde.
'Jenkins', Mr. G. Heathcote.

(2) 'Tristram Fickle', Lord Byron.
'Old Fickle', Mr. Pigot.
'Briefwit', Captain Lightfoot.
'Sneer', Mr. R. Leacroft.
'Variella', Miss Bristoe.
'Ready', Miss Leacroft.
'Gardener', Mr. C. Becher.
'Barber', Mr. G. Wylde.

Between the two plays, a member of the Southwell choir sang "The Death of Abercrombie." The brave General, attended by two aides-de-camp, all three in the costume of the Southwell volunteers, appeared on the stage, and the General, sinking into the outstretched arms of his two friends, warbled out his dying words in a style which convulsed Byron with laughter.

The play itself nearly came to an untimely conclusion. Captain Lightfoot screwed his failing courage to the sticking point by several glasses of wine, with the result that, being a very abstemious man, he became tipsy. But "restoratives were administered," and he went through his part with credit. Byron, who was the star of the company, repeatedly brought down the house by his acting.

(For Byron's Prologue to 'The Wheel of Fortune', see 'Poems', vol. i. pp. 45, 46.) Moore's account of the epilogue, written by the Rev. J. T. Becher, and spoken by Byron, is erroneous. Only one word gave any opportunity for mimicry. It occurs in the lines —

"Tempest becalmed forgets his blust'ring rage,

He calls Dame Dunckley ‘sister’ off the stage.”

In pronouncing the word “sister,” Byron “took off exactly the voice and manner of Mr. R. Leacroft.”]

66. — To Mrs. Hanson.

Southwell, Feb. 8, 1807.

Dear Madam, — Having understood from Mrs. Byron that Mr. Hanson is in a very indifferent State of Health, I have taken the Liberty of addressing you on the Subject.

Though the *Governor* & I have lately not been on the *best* of *Terms*, yet I should be extremely sorry to learn he was in Danger, and I trust *he* and *I* will live to have many more *Squabbles* in *this world*, before we *finally make peace* in the next. If therefore you can favor me with any *salutary* Intelligence of the *aforesaid* Gentleman, believe me, nothing will be more acceptable to

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

P.S. — Remember me to all the family now in *Garrison*, particularly my old Friend Harriet.

67. — To William Bankes.

Southwell, March 6, 1807.

Dear Bankes, — Your critique is valuable for many reasons: in the first place, it is the only one in which flattery has borne so slight a part; in the *next*, I am *cloyed* with insipid compliments. I have a better opinion of your judgment and ability than your *feelings*. Accept my most sincere thanks for your kind decision, not less welcome, because totally unexpected. With regard to a more exact estimate, I need not remind you how few of the *best poems*, in our language, will stand the test of *minute* or *verbal* criticism: it can, therefore, hardly be expected the effusions of a boy (and most of these pieces have been produced at an early period) can derive much merit either from the subject or composition. Many of them were written under great depression of spirits, and during severe indisposition: — hence the gloomy turn of the ideas. We coincide in opinion that the “*poësies érotiques*” are the most exceptionable; they were, however, grateful to the *deities*, on whose altars they were offered — more I seek not.

The portrait of Pomposus was drawn at Harrow, after a *long sitting*; this accounts for the resemblance, or rather the *caricatura*. He is *your* friend, he *never was mine* — for both our sakes I shall be silent on this head. The *collegiate* rhymes are not personal — one of the notes may appear so, but could

not be omitted. I have little doubt they will be deservedly abused — a just punishment for my unfilial treatment of so excellent an Alma Mater. I sent you no copy, lest we should be placed in the situation of *Gil Blas* and the *Archbishop* of Grenada; though running some hazard from the experiment, I wished your *verdict* to be unbiassed. Had my “*Libellus*” been presented previous to your letter, it would have appeared a species of bribe to purchase compliment. I feel no hesitation in saying, I was more anxious to hear your critique, however severe, than the praises of the *million*. On the same day I was honoured with the encomiums of *Mackenzie*, the celebrated author of the *Man of Feeling*. Whether *his* approbation or *yours* elated me most, I cannot decide.

You will receive my *Juvenilia*, — at least all yet published. I have a large volume in manuscript, which may in part appear hereafter; at present I have neither time nor inclination to prepare it for the press. In the spring I shall return to Trinity, to dismantle my rooms, and bid you a final adieu. The *Cam* will not be much increased by my *tears* on the occasion. Your further remarks, however *caustic* or bitter, to a palate vitiated with the *sweets of adulation*, will be of service. Johnson has shown us *that no poetry* is perfect; but to correct mine would be an Herculean labour. In fact I never looked beyond the moment of composition, and published merely at the request of my friends. Notwithstanding so much has been said concerning the “*Genus irritabile vatum*,” we shall never quarrel on the subject — poetic fame is by no means the “*acme*” of my wishes. — Adieu. Yours ever,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: William John Bankes, of Kingston Lacy, Dorsetshire, was Byron’s friend, possibly at Harrow, though his name does not occur in the school lists, certainly at Trinity College, Cambridge (B.A. 1808). He represented Truro from 1810 to 1812, when he left England on his Eastern travels. At Philæ he discovered an obelisk, the geometrical elevation and inscriptions of which he published in 1820. In Mesopotamia he encountered John Silk Buckingham, whom he afterwards charged with making use of his notes in his ‘*Travels*’, a statement, found to be libellous, which (October 19, 1826) cost Bankes £400 in damages. He also travelled with Giovanni Finati, a native of Ferrara, who, under the assumed name of Mahomet, made the campaigns against the Wahabees for the recovery of Mecca and Medina. Finati’s Italian ‘*Narrative*’ was translated by Bankes, to whom it is dedicated by his “attached and faithful servant Hadjee Mahomet,” and published in 1830. In 1822 Bankes was elected M.P. for Cambridge University, but lost his seat to Sir J. Copley in 1826. At a bye-

election in 1827, he was again unsuccessful. His candidature gave occasion to Macaulay's squib, which appeared in the 'Times' for May 14, 1827, 'A Country Clergyman's Trip to Cambridge'.

"A letter — and free — bring it here:
I have no correspondent who franks.
No! Yes! Can it be? Why, my dear,
'Tis our glorious, our Protestant Bankes.

'Dear Sir as I know your desire
That the Church should receive due protection,
I humbly presume to require
Your aid at the Cambridge election,' "etc., etc.

Bankes subsequently represented Marlborough (1829-1832) and Dorsetshire (1833-1834). He was Byron's "collegiate pastor, and master and patron," "ruled the roast" at Trinity, "or, rather, the 'roasting', and was father of all mischief" (Byron to Murray, October 12, 1820). "William Bankes," Byron told Lady Blessington ('Conversations', p. 172), "is another of my early friends. He is very clever, very original, and has a fund of information: he is also very good-natured, but he is not much of a flatterer." Bankes died at Venice in 1855.]

[Footnote 2: Dr. Butler, Head-master of Harrow. (See page 58 [Letter 22], [Foot]note 1.)]

[Footnote 3: "Thoughts suggested by a College Examination" ('Poems', vol. i. pp. 28-31); and "Granta, A Medley" ('Poems', vol. i. pp. 56-62).]

[Footnote 4: Alluding to 'Gil Blas', bk. vii. chap. iv., where Gil Blas ventures to criticize the Archbishop's work, and is dismissed for his candour.

"Adieu, monsieur Gil Blas; Je vous souhaite toutes sortes de prospérités, avec un peu plus de goût."]

[Footnote 5: The praise was worth having. Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831) was not only the author of the lackadaisical 'Man of Feeling', but in real life a shrewd, hard-headed man. As a novelist, he wrote 'The Man of Feeling' (1771), 'The Man of Honour' (1773), and 'Julia de Roubigne' (1777). As a playwright, he produced four plays, none of which succeeded. As an essayist, he contributed to the 'Mirror' (1779-80) and the 'Lounger' (1785-86). As a political writer, he supported Pitt, and was rewarded by the comptrollership of taxes. An original member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, many of his papers appear in its 'Transactions'. In Edinburgh society he was "the life of the company," a connecting link on the literary side between David Hume, Walter Scott, and

Lord Cockburn, and in all matters of sport a fund of anecdotes and reminiscences.]

68. — To William Bankes.

For my own part, I have suffered severely in the decease of my two greatest friends, the only beings I ever loved (females excepted); I am therefore a solitary animal, miserable enough, and so perfectly a citizen of the world, that whether I pass my days in Great Britain or Kamschatka, is to me a matter of perfect indifference. I cannot evince greater respect for your alteration than by immediately adopting it — this shall be done in the next edition. I am sorry your remarks are not more frequent, as I am certain they would be equally beneficial. Since my last, I have received two critical opinions from Edinburgh, both too flattering for me to detail. One is from Lord Woodhouselee, at the head of the Scotch literati, and a most *voluminous* writer (his last work is a *Life* of Lord Kaimes); the other from Mackenzie, who sent his decision a second time, more at length. I am not personally acquainted with either of these gentlemen, nor ever requested their sentiments on the subject: their praise is voluntary, and transmitted through the medium of a friend, at whose house they read the productions.

Contrary to my former intention, I am now preparing a volume for the public at large: my amatory pieces will be exchanged, and others substituted in their place. The whole will be considerably enlarged, and appear the latter end of May. This is a hazardous experiment; but want of better employment, the encouragement I have met with, and my own vanity, induce me to stand the test, though not without *sundry palpitations*. The book will circulate fast enough in this country from mere curiosity; what I prin — — ...

[letter incomplete]

[Footnote 1: This fragment refers, like the previous letter, to Byron's volume of verse, 'Poems on Various Occasions'.]

[Footnote 2: Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, one of the Senators of the College of Justice in Scotland, and a friend of Robert Burns. Besides the 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Hon. Henry Home of Kames' (1807), he published 'Elements of General History' (1801), 'Essay on the Principles of Translation', *etc.* He died in 1813. His 'Universal History', in six vols., appeared in 1834.]

69. — To — — Falkner.

Sir, — The volume of little pieces which accompanies this, would have been presented before, had I not been apprehensive that Miss Falkner's indisposition

might render some trifles unwelcome. There are some errors of the printer which I have not had time to correct in the collection: you have it thus, with “all its imperfections on its head,” a heavy weight, when joined with the faults of its author. Such *Juvenilia*, as they can claim no great degree of approbation, I may venture to hope, will also escape the severity of uncalled for, though perhaps *not* undeserved, criticism.

They were written on many and various occasions, and are now published merely for the perusal of a friendly circle. Believe me, sir, if they afford the slightest amusement to yourself and the rest of my *social* readers, I shall have gathered all the *bays* I ever wish to adorn the head of yours very truly,

BYRON.

P.S. — I hope Miss F. is in a state of recovery.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Byron’s landlord at Burgage Manor.]

70. — To John Hanson.

[Farleigh House, Basingstoke, Hants.]

Southwell, April 2nd, 1807.

Dear Sir, — Before I proceed in Reply to the other parts of your Epistle, allow me to congratulate you on the *Accession of Dignity* and *profit*, which will doubtless accrue, from your official appointment.

You was fortunate in obtaining Possession at so critical a period; your Patrons “*exeunt omnes.*” I trust they will soon supersede the Cyphers, their successors. The Reestablishment of your Health is another happy event, and, though *secondary* in my *Statement*, is by no means so in my *Wishes*. As to our Feuds, they are purely *official*, the natural consequence of our relative Situations, but as little connected with *personal animosity*, as the *Florid Declamations of parliamentary Demagogues*. I return you my thanks for your favorable opinion of my muse; I have lately been honoured with many very flattering literary critiques, from men of high Reputation in the Sciences, particularly Lord Woodhouselee and Henry Mackenzie, both *Scots* and of great Eminence as Authors themselves. I have received also some most favorable Testimonies from *Cambridge*. This you will *marvel* at, as indeed I did myself. Encouraged by these and several other Encomiums, I am about to publish a Volume at large; this will be very different from the present; the amatory effusions, not to be wondered at from the *dissipated* Life I have led, will be cut out, and others substituted. I coincide with you in opinion that the *Poet* yields to the *orator*; but as nothing can be done in the latter capacity till the Expiration of my *Minority*, the former occupies my present attention, and both *ancients* and *moderns* have declared that

the two pursuits are so nearly similar as to require in a great measure the same Talents, and he who excels in the one, would on application succeed in the other. Lyttleton, Glover, and Young (who was a celebrated Preacher and a Bard) are instances of the kind. *Sheridan & Fox* also; *these* are *great Names*. I may imitate, I can never equal them.

You speak of the *Charms* of Southwell; the *Place* I *abhor*. The Fact is I remain here because I can appear no where else, being *completely done up*. *Wine* and *Women* have *dished* your *humble Servant*, not a *Sou* to be *had*; all over; condemned to exist (I cannot say live) at this *Crater* of Dullness till my *Lease* of *Infancy* expires. To appear at Cambridge is impossible; no money even to pay my College expences. You will be surprized to hear I am grown *very thin*; however it is the *Fact*, so much so, that the people here think I am *going*. I have lost 18 LB in my weight, that is one Stone & 4 pounds since January, this was ascertained last Wednesday, on account of a *Bet* with an acquaintance. However don't be alarmed; I have taken every means to accomplish the end, by violent exercise and Fasting, as I found myself too plump. I shall continue my Exertions, having no other amusement; I wear *seven* Waistcoats and a great Coat, run, and play at cricket in this Dress, till quite exhausted by excessive perspiration, use the Hip Bath daily; eat only a quarter of a pound of Butcher's Meat in 24 hours, no Suppers or Breakfast, only one Meal a Day; drink no malt liquor, but a little Wine, and take Physic occasionally. By these means my *Ribs* display Skin of no great Thickness, & my Clothes have been taken in nearly *half a yard*. Do you believe me now?

Adieu. Remembrance to Spouse and the Acorns.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: In March, 1807, George III demanded from the Coalition Ministry a written pledge that they would propose no further concessions to the Roman Catholics. They refused to give it, and the Tories, with the Duke of Portland as their nominal head, were recalled to the Government.]

71. — To John M. B. Pigot.

Southwell, April, 1807.

My Dear Pigot, — Allow me to congratulate you on the success of your first examination — "*Courage, mon ami.*" The title of Doctor will do wonders with the damsels. I shall most probably be in Essex or London when you arrive at this damned place, where I am detained by the publication of my *rhymes*.

Adieu. — Believe me,

Yours very truly,
BYRON.

P.S. — Since we met, I have reduced myself by violent exercise, *much* physic, and *hot* bathing, from 14 stone 6 lb. to 12 stone 7 lb. In all I have lost 27 pounds. Bravo! — what say you?

[Footnote 1: The following extract is taken from a ledger in the possession of Messrs. Merry, of St. James's Street, S.W.: —

“1806 — January 4. Lord Byron (boots, no hat) 13 stone 12 lbs
1807 — July 8. Lord Byron (shoes) 10 stone 13 lbs
1807 — July 23. Lord Byron (shoes) 11 stone 0 lbs
1807 — August 13. Lord Byron (shoes) 10 stone 11-1/2 lbs
1808 — May 27. Lord Byron (shoes) 11 stone 1 lbs
1809 — June 10. Lord Byron (shoes) 11 stone 5-3/4 lbs
1811 — July 15. Lord Byron (shoes) 9 stone 11-1/2 lbs”]

72. — To John Hanson.

[6, Chancery Lane, Temple Bar, London.]

Southwell, 19 April, 1807.

Sir, — My last was an Epistle “*entre nous*,” this is a *Letter of Business*, Of course the *formalities of official communication* must be attended to. From lying under pecuniary difficulties, I shall draw for the Quarter due the 25th June, in a short Time. You will recollect I was to receive £100 for the Expence of Furniture, etc., at Cambridge. I placed in your possession accounts to amount and then I have received £70, for which I believe you have my Receipt. This extra £25 or £30 (though the Bills are long ago discharged from my own purse) I should not have troubled you for, had not my present Situation rendered even that Trifle of some Consequence. I have therefore to request that my Draft for £150, instead of £125 the simple Quarter, may be honoured, but think it necessary to apprise you previous to its appearance, and indeed to request an early Answer, as I had one Draft returned by Mistake from your *House*, some Months past. I have no Inclination to be placed in a similar Dilemma.

I lent Mrs. B. £60 last year; of this I have never received a Sou and in all probability never shall. I do not mention the circumstance as any Reproach on that worthy and lamblike Dame, but merely to show you how affairs stand. ‘Tis true myself and two Servants lodge in the House, but my Horses, etc., and their expences are defrayed by your humble Sert. I quit Cambridge in July, and shall have considerable payments to make at that period; for this purpose I must sell

my *Steeds*. I paid Jones in January £150, £38 to my Stable Keeper, £21 to my wine Merchant, £20 to a *Lawyer* for the prosecution of a Scoundrel, a late Servant. In short I have done all I can, but am now completely *done* up.

Your answer will oblige
Yours, etc., etc.,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Byron, on the other hand, tells a different story.

“Lord Byron,” she writes to Hanson (March 19, 1807), “has now been with me seven months, with two Men Servants, for which I have never received one farthing, as he requires the five hundred a year for himself. Therefore it is impossible I can keep him and them out of my small income of four hundred a year, — two in Scotland [Mrs. Gordon of Gight (see Chapter I. p. 4) was dead], and the pension is now reduced to two hundred a year. But if the Court allows the additional two hundred, I shall be perfectly satisfied.

“I do not know what to say about Byron’s returning to Cambridge. When he was there, I believe he did nothing but drink, gamble, and spend money.”

A month later (April 29, 1807), she consults Hanson about raising £1000 by a loan from Mrs. Parkyns on her security.

“Byron from their last letter gave up all hopes of getting the money, and behaved very well on the occasion, and proposed selling his Horses and plans of OEconomy that I much fear will be laid aside if the Money is procured. My only motive for wishing it was to keep him clear of the Jews; but at present he does not seem at all disposed to have anything to do with them, even if he is disappointed in this resource. I wish to act for the best: but God knows what is for the best.”

Eventually money was provided on Mrs. Byron’s security (see Letters of March 6 [Letter 117] and April 26 [Letter 121], 1809), and he resided at Trinity for a few days at the end of the May term, 1807.

73. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.
June 11, 1807.

Dear Queen Bess, — *Savage* ought to be *immortal*: — though not a *thoroughbred bull-dog*, he is the finest puppy I ever saw, and will answer much better; in his great and manifold kindness he has already bitten my fingers, and disturbed the *gravity* of old Boatswain, who is *grievously discomposed*. I wish to be informed what he *costs*, his *expenses*, etc., etc., that I may indemnify Mr. G — — . My thanks are *all* I can give for the trouble he has taken, make a *long speech*, and conclude it with 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. I am out of practice, so *deputize* you as a legate, — *ambassador* would not do in a matter concerning the *Pope*, which I presume this must, as the *whole* turns upon a *Bull*.

Yours,
BYRON.

P.S. — I write in bed.

[Footnote 1: He here alludes to an odd fancy or trick of his own; — whenever he was at a loss for something to say, he used always to gabble over “1 2 3 4 5 6 7” (Moore).]

74. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Cambridge, June 30, 1807.

“Better late than never, Pal,” is a saying of which you know the origin, and as it is applicable on the present occasion, you will excuse its conspicuous place in the front of my epistle. I am almost superannuated here. My old friends (with the exception of a very few) all departed, and I am preparing to follow them, but remain till Monday to be present at three *Oratorios*, two *Concerts*, a *Fair*, and a *Ball*. I find I am not only *thinner* but *taller* by an inch since my last visit. I was obliged to tell every body my *name*, nobody having the least recollection of my *visage*, or person. Even the hero of my *Cornelian* (who is now sitting *vis-à-vis* reading a volume of my *Poetics*) passed me in Trinity walks without recognising me in the least, and was thunderstruck at the alteration which had taken place in my countenance, etc., etc. Some say I look *better*, others *worse*, but all agree I am *thinner*, — more I do not require. I have lost two pounds in my weight since I left your *cursed*, *detestable*, and *abhorred* abode of *scandal*, where, excepting yourself and John Becher, I care not if the whole race were consigned to the *Pit of Acheron*, which I would visit in person rather than contaminate my *sandals* with the polluted dust of Southwell. *Seriously*, unless obliged by the *emptiness* of my purse to revisit Mrs. B., you will see me no more.

On Monday I depart for London. I quit Cambridge with little regret, because our *set* are *vanished*, and my *musical protégé* before mentioned has left the choir, and is stationed in a mercantile house of considerable eminence in the metropolis. You may have heard me observe he is exactly to an hour two years younger than myself. I found him grown considerably, and as you will suppose, very glad to see his former *Patron*. He is nearly my height, very *thin*, very fair complexion, dark eyes, and light locks. My opinion of his mind you already know; — I hope I shall never have occasion to change it. Every body here conceives me to be an *invalid*. The University at present is very gay from the *fêtes* of divers kinds. I supped out last night, but eat (or ate) nothing, sipped a bottle of claret, went to bed at two, and rose at eight. I have commenced early rising, and find it agrees with me. The Masters and the Fellows all very *polite*,

but look a little *askance* — don't much admire *lampoons* — truth always disagreeable.

Write, and tell me how the inhabitants of your *Menagerie* go on, and if my publication goes *off* well: do the quadrupeds *growl*? Apropos, my bull-dog is deceased — "Flesh both of cur and man is grass." Address your answer to Cambridge. If I am gone, it will be forwarded. Sad news just arrived — Russians beat — a bad set, eat nothing but *oil*, consequently must melt before a *hard fire*. I get awkward in my academic habiliments for want of practice. Got up in a window to hear the oratorio at St. Mary's, popped down in the middle of the *Messiah*, tore a *woeful* rent in the back of my best black silk gown, and damaged an egregious pair of breeches. Mem. — never tumble from a church window during service. Adieu, dear — — ! do not remember me to any body: — to *forget* and be forgotten by the people of Southwell is all I aspire to.

[Footnote 1: The allusion is to the farce *Better Late than Never* (attributed to Miles Peter Andrews, but really, according to Reynolds (*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 79, 80), by himself, Topham, and Andrews), in which Pallet, an artist, is a prominent character. It was played at Drury Lane for the first time October 17, 1790, with Kemble as "Saville" and Mrs. Jordan as "Augusta."]

[Footnote 2: "The hero of *my Cornelian*" was a Cambridge chorister named Edleston, whose life, as Harness has recorded in a MS. note, Byron saved from drowning. This began their acquaintance. (See Byron's lines on "The Cornelian," *Poems*, vol. i. 66-67.) Edleston died of consumption in May, 1811. Byron, writing to Mrs. Pigot, gives the following account of his death: —

"Cambridge, Oct. 28, 1811.

Dear Madam, — I am about to write to you on a silly subject, and yet I cannot well do otherwise. You may remember a *cornelian*, which some years ago I consigned to Miss Pigot, indeed *gave* to her, and now I am going to make the most selfish and rude of requests. The person who gave it to me, when I was very young, is *dead*, and though a long time has elapsed since we met, as it was the only memorial I possessed of that person (in whom I was very much interested), it has acquired a value by this event I could have wished it never to have borne in my eyes. If, therefore, Miss Pigot should have preserved it, I must, under these circumstances, beg her to excuse my requesting it to be transmitted to me at No. 8, St. James's Street, London, and I will replace it by something she may remember me by equally well. As she was always so kind as to feel interested in the fate of him that formed the subject of our conversation, you may tell her that the giver of that *cornelian* died in May last of a consumption, at the age of twenty-one, making the sixth, within four months, of friends and relatives

that I have lost between May and the end of August.

“Believe me, dear Madam, yours very sincerely,
“BYRON.

“P.S. — I go to London to-morrow.”

The cornelian heart was, of course, returned, and Lord Byron, at the same time, reminded that he had left it with Miss Pigot as a deposit, *not* a gift (Moore).]

[Footnote 3: See page 182 [Letter 94], [Foot]note 1 .]

[Footnote 4: See “Thoughts suggested by a College Examination” (*Poems*, vol. i. pp. 28-31), also “Granta: a Medley” (*Poems*, vol. i. pp. 56-62).]

[Footnote 5: The Battle of Friedland, June 15, 1807. This is almost the first allusion that Byron makes to the war.]

75. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Trin. Coll. Camb. July 5, 1807.

Since my last letter I have determined to reside *another year* at Granta, as my rooms, etc., etc., are finished in great style, several old friends come up again, and many new acquaintances made; consequently my inclination leads me forward, and I shall return to college in October if still *alive*. My life here has been one continued routine of dissipation — out at different places every day, engaged to more dinners, etc., etc., than my *stay* would permit me to fulfil. At this moment I write with a bottle of claret in my *head* and *tears* in my *eyes*; for I have just parted with my “*Cornelian*” who spent the evening with me. As it was our last interview, I postponed my engagement to devote the hours of the *Sabbath* to friendship: — Edleston and I have separated for the present, and my mind is a chaos of hope and sorrow. To-morrow I set out for London: you will address your answer to “Gordon’s Hotel, Albemarle Street,” where I *sojourn* during my visit to the metropolis.

I rejoice to hear you are interested in my *protégé*; he has been my *almost constant* associate since October, 1805, when I entered Trinity College. His *voice* first attracted my attention, his *countenance* fixed it, and his *manners* attached me to him for ever. He departs for a *mercantile house* in town in October, and we shall probably not meet till the expiration of my minority, when I shall leave to his decision either entering as a *partner* through my interest, or residing with me altogether. Of course he would in his present frame of mind prefer the *latter*, but he may alter his opinion previous to that period; — however, he shall have his choice. I certainly love him more than any human being, and neither time nor distance have had the least effect on my (in general)

changeable disposition. In short, we shall, put *Lady E. Butler* and *Miss Ponsonby* to the blush, *Pylades* and *Orestes* out of countenance, and want nothing but a catastrophe like *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, to give *Jonathan* and *David* the “go by.” He certainly is perhaps more attached to *me* than even I am in return. During the whole of my residence at Cambridge we met every day, summer and winter, without passing *one* tiresome moment, and separated each time with increasing reluctance. I hope you will one day see us together. He is the only being I esteem, though I *like* many.

The Marquis of Tavistock was down the other day; I supped with him at his tutor’s — entirely a Whig party. The opposition muster strong here now, and Lord Hartington, the Duke of Leinster, etc., etc., are to join us in October, so every thing will be *splendid*. The *music* is all over at present. Met with another “*accidency*” — upset a butter-boat in the lap of a lady — look’d very *blue* — *spectators* grinned — “curse ‘em!” Apropos, sorry to say, been *drunk* every day, and not quite *sober* yet — however, touch no meat, nothing but fish, soup, and vegetables, consequently it does me no harm — sad dogs all the *Cantabs*. Mem. — *we mean* to reform next January. This place is a *monotony of endless variety* — like it — hate Southwell. Has Ridge sold well? or do the ancients demur? What ladies have bought?

Saw a girl at St. Mary’s the image of Anne — — , thought it was her — all in the wrong — the lady stared, so did I — I *blushed*, so did *not* the lady, — sad thing — wish women had *more modesty*. Talking of women, puts me in mind of my terrier Fanny — how is she? Got a headache, must go to bed, up early in the morning to travel. My *protégé* breakfasts with me; parting spoils my appetite — excepting from Southwell. Mem. *I hate Southwell*.

Yours, etc.

[Footnote 1: Lady Eleanor Butler (c. 1745-1829), sister of the seventeenth Earl of Ormonde, and Sarah Ponsonby (circ. 1755-1831), cousin of the Earl of Bessborough, were the two “Ladies of the Vale,” or “Ladies of Llangollen.” About the year 1779 they settled in a cottage at Plasnewydd, in the Vale of Llangollen, where they lived, with their maidservant, Mary Caryll, for upwards of half a century. They are buried, with their servant, in the churchyard of Plasnewydd, under a triangular pyramid. Though they had withdrawn from the world, they watched its proceedings with the keenest interest.

“If,” writes Mrs. Piozzi, from Brynbella, July 9, 1796, “Mr. Bunbury’s ‘Little Gray Man’ is printed, do send it hither; the ladies at Llangollen are dying for it. They like those old Scandinavian tales and the imitations of them exceedingly; and tell me about the prince and princess of ‘this’ loyal country, one province of

which alone had disgraced itself”

(‘Life and Writings of Mrs. Piozzi’, vol. ii. p. 234). Nor did they despise the theatre. Charles Mathews (‘Memoirs’, vol. iii. pp. 150, 151), writing from Oswestry, September 4, 1820, says,

“The dear inseparable inimitables, Lady Butler and Miss Ponsonby, were in the boxes here on Friday. They came twelve miles from Llangollen, and returned, as they never sleep from home. Oh, such curiosities! I was nearly convulsed.... As they are seated, there is not one point to distinguish them from men; the dressing and powdering of the hair; their well-starched neckcloths; the upper part of their habits, which they always wear, even at a dinner-party, made precisely like men’s coats; and regular black beaver men’s hats. They looked exactly like two respectable superannuated old clergymen.... I was highly flattered, as they never were in the theatre before.”

Among the many people who visited them in their retreat, and have left descriptions of them, are Madame de Genlis, De Quincey, Prince Pückler-Muskau. Their friendships were sung by Sotheby and Anne Seward, and their cottage was depicted by Pennant.

”It is very singular,” writes John Murray, August 24, 1829, to his son (‘Memoir of John Murray’, vol. ii. p. 304),

“that the ladies, intending to ‘retire’ from the world, absolutely brought all the world to visit them, for after a few years of seclusion their strange story was the universal subject of conversation, and there has been no person of rank, talent, and importance in any way who did not procure introductions to them.”

[Footnote 2: Lord Tavistock’s experience at Cambridge resembled that of Byron. He had received only a “pretended education,” and the Duke of Bedford had come to the conclusion that “nothing was learned at English Universities.” “Tavistock left Cambridge in May,” Lord J. Russell notes in his Diary for 1808, “having been there in supposition two years” (Walpole’s ‘Life of Lord John Russell’, vol. i. pp. 44 and 35).]

[Footnote 3: Probably Miss Anne Houson, daughter of the Rev. Henry Houson of Southwell. She married the Rev. Luke Jackson, died December 25, 1821, and is buried at Hucknall Torkard. (For verses addressed to her, see ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 70-2, 244-45, 246-47, 251-52, 253.)]

76. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Gordon’s Hotel, July 13, 1807.

You write most excellent epistles — a fig for other correspondents, with their nonsensical apologies for “*knowing nought about it*” — you send me a delightful budget. I am here in a perpetual vortex of dissipation (very pleasant for all that), and, strange to tell, I get thinner, being now below eleven stone considerably. Stay in town a *month*, perhaps six weeks, trip into Essex, and then, as a favour, *irradiate* Southwell for three days with the light of my countenance; but nothing shall ever make me *reside* there again. I positively return to Cambridge in October; we are to be uncommonly gay, or in truth I should *cut* the University. An extraordinary circumstance occurred to me at Cambridge; a girl so very like — — made her appearance, that nothing but the most *minute inspection* could have undeceived me. I wish I had asked if *she* had ever been at H — —

What the devil would Ridge have? is not fifty in a fortnight, before the advertisements, a sufficient sale? I hear many of the London booksellers have them, and Crosby has sent copies to the principal watering places. Are they liked or not in Southwell? ... I wish Boatswain had *swallowed* Damon! How is Bran? by the immortal gods, Bran ought to be a *Count* of the *Holy Roman Empire*.

The intelligence of London cannot be interesting to you, who have rusticated all your life — the annals of routs riots, balls and boxing-matches, cards and crim. cons., parliamentary discussion, political details, masquerades, mechanics, Argyle Street Institution and aquatic races, love and lotteries, Brookes’s and Buonaparte, opera-singers and oratorios, wine, women, wax-work, and weathercocks, can’t accord with your *insulated* ideas of decorum and other *silly expressions* not inserted in *our vocabulary*.

Oh! Southwell, Southwell, how I rejoice to have left thee, and how I curse the heavy hours I dragged along, for so many months, among the Mohawks who inhabit your kraals! — However, one thing I do not regret, which is having *pared off* a sufficient quantity of flesh to enable me to slip into “an eel-skin,” and vie with the *slim* beaux of modern times; though I am sorry to say, it seems to be the mode amongst *gentlemen* to grow *fat*, and I am told I am at least fourteen pound below the fashion. However, I *decrease* instead of enlarging, which is extraordinary, as *violent* exercise in London is impracticable; but I attribute the *phenomenon* to our *evening squeezes* at public and private parties. I heard from Ridge this morning (the 14th, my letter was begun yesterday): he says the poems go on as well as can be wished; the seventy-five sent to town are circulated, and a demand for fifty more complied with, the day he dated his epistle, though the advertisements are not yet half published. Adieu.

P.S. — Lord Carlisle, on receiving my poems, sent, before he opened the

book, a tolerably handsome letter: — I have not heard from him since. His opinions I neither know nor care about: if he is the least insolent, I shall enrol him with *Butler* and the other worthies. He is in Yorkshire, poor man! and very ill! He said he had not had time to read the contents, but thought it necessary to acknowledge the receipt of the volume immediately. Perhaps the Earl “*bears no brother near the throne*” — *if so*, I will make his *sceptre totter in his hands*. — Adieu!

[Footnote 1: This is probably the third collection of early verse, ‘Hours of Idleness’, the first collection published with Byron’s name (see page 104 [Letter 53], [Foot]note 1).]

[Footnote 2: B. Crosby & Co., of Stationers’ Court, were the London agents of Ridge, the Newark bookseller. Crosby was also the publisher of a magazine called ‘Monthly Literary Recreations’, in which (July, 1807) appeared a highly laudatory notice of ‘Hours of Idleness’, and Byron’s review of Wordsworth’s ‘Poems’ (2 vols. 1807. See Appendix I.), and his “Stanzas to Jessy” (see ‘Poems’, vol. i. pp. 234-236). These lines were enclosed with the following letter, addressed to “Mr. Crosby, Stationers’ Court:” —

“July 21, 1807.

Sir, — I have sent according to my promise some Stanzas for ‘Literary Recreations’. The insertion I leave to the option of the Editors. They have never appeared before. I should wish to know whether they are admitted or not, and when the work will appear, as I am desirous of a copy.

Etc., etc.,

BYRON.

P.S. — Send your answer when convenient.”]

[Footnote 3:

“My Dear Lord, — Your letter of yesterday found me an invalid, and unable to do justice to your poems by a dilligent [‘sic’] perusal of them. In the meantime I take the first occasion to thank you for sending them to me, and to express a sincere satisfaction in finding you employ your leisure in such occupations. Be not disconcerted if the reception of your works should not be that you may have a right to look for from the public. Persevere, whatever that reception may be, and tho’ the Public maybe found very fastidious, ... you will stand better with the world than others who only pursue their studies in Bond St. or at Tatershall’s.

Believe me to be, yours most sincerely,

CARLISLE.

July 8th, 1807.”]

77. — To John Hanson.

July 20th, 1807.

Sir, — Your proposal to make Mrs. Byron my *Treasurer* is very kind, but does not meet with my approbation. Mrs. Byron has already made more *free* with my *funds* than suits my convenience & I do not chuse to expose her to the Danger of Temptation.

Things will therefore stand as they are; the remedy would be worse than the Disease.

I wish you would order your Drafts payable to me and not Mrs. B. This is worse than Hannibal Higgins; who the Devil could suppose that any Body would have mistaken him for a *real personage*? & what earthly consequence could it be whether the Blank in the Draft was filled up with *Wilkins, Tomkyns, Simkins, Wiggins, Spriggins, Jiggins, or Higgins*? If I had put in *James Johnson* you would not have demurred, & why object to Hannibal Higgins? particularly after his *respectable Endorsements*. As to Business, I make no pretensions to a Knowledge of any thing but a Greek Grammer or a Racing Calendar; but if the *Quintessence* of information on that head consists in unnecessary & unpleasant delays, explanations, rebuffs, retorts, repartees, & recriminations, the House of H.& B. stands pre-eminent in the profession, as from the Bottom of his Soul testifies

Yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

P.S — Will you dine with me on Sunday Tête a Tête at six o’clock? I should be happy to see you before, but my Engagements will not permit me, as on Wednesday I go to the House. I shall have Hargreaves & his Brother on some day after you; I don’t like to annoy Children with the *formal* Faces of *legal* papas.

[Footnote 1: The point of the allusion is that Byron had endorsed one of Hanson’s drafts with the name of “Hannibal Higgins,” and had been solemnly warned of the consequences of so tampering with the dignity of the law.]

78. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

August 2, 1807.

London begins to disgorge its contents — town is empty — consequently I can scribble at leisure, as occupations are less numerous. In a fortnight I shall depart to fulfil a country engagement; but expect two epistles from you previous to that period. Ridge does not proceed rapidly in Notts — very possible. In town

things wear a more promising aspect, and a man whose works are praised by *reviewers*, admired by *duchesses*, and sold by every bookseller of the metropolis, does not dedicate much consideration to *rustic readers*. I have now a review before me, entitled *Literary Recreations* where my *hardship* is applauded far beyond my deserts. I know nothing of the critic, but think *him* a very discerning gentleman, and *myself* a devilish *clever* fellow. His critique pleases me particularly, because it is of great length, and a proper quantum of censure is administered, just to give an agreeable *relish* to the praise. You know I hate insipid, unqualified, common-place compliment. If you would wish to see it, order the 13th Number of *Literary Recreations* for the last month. I assure you I have not the most distant idea of the writer of the article — it is printed in a periodical publication — and though I have written a paper (a review of Wordsworth), which appears in the same work, I am ignorant of every other person concerned in it — even the editor, whose name I have not heard. My cousin, Lord Alexander Gordon, who resided in the same hotel, told me his mother, her Grace of Gordon, requested he would introduce my *Poetical Lordship* to her *Highness*, as she had bought my volume, admired it exceedingly, in common with the rest of the fashionable world, and wished to claim her relationship with the author. I was unluckily engaged on an excursion for some days afterwards; and, as the Duchess was on the eve of departing for Scotland, I have postponed my introduction till the winter, when I shall favour the lady, *whose taste I shall not dispute*, with my most sublime and edifying conversation. She is now in the Highlands, and Alexander took his departure, a few days ago, for the same *blessed* seat of “*dark rolling winds*.”

Crosby, my London publisher, has disposed of his second importation, and has sent to Ridge for a *third* — at least so he says. In every bookseller’s window I see my *own name*, and *say nothing*, but enjoy my fame in secret. My last reviewer kindly requests me to alter my determination of writing no more: and “A Friend to the Cause of Literature” begs I will *gratify* the *public* with some new work “at no very distant period.” Who would not be a bard? — that is to say, if all critics would be so polite. However, the others will pay me off, I doubt not, for this *gentle* encouragement. If so, have at ‘em? By the by, I have written at my intervals of leisure, after two in the morning, 380 lines in blank verse, of Bosworth Field. I have luckily got Hutton’s account. I shall extend the poem to eight or ten books, and shall have finished it in a year. Whether it will be published or not must depend on circumstances. So much for *egotism*! My *laurels* have turned my brain, but the *cooling acids* of forthcoming criticism will probably restore me to *modesty*.

Southwell is a damned place — I have done with it — at least in all probability; excepting yourself, I esteem no one within its precincts. You were my only *rational* companion; and in plain truth, I had more respect for you than the whole *bevy*, with whose foibles I amused myself in compliance with their prevailing propensities. You gave yourself more trouble with me and my manuscripts than a thousand *dolls* would have done.

Believe me, I have not forgotten your good nature in *this circle of sin*, and one day I trust I shall be able to evince my gratitude. Adieu.

Yours, *etc.*

P.S. — Remember me to Dr. P.

[Footnote 1: See page 137 [Letter 76], [Foot]note 2.]

[Footnote 2: The Duchess of Gordon (1748-1812), ‘née’ Jean Maxwell of Monreith, daughter of Sir W. Maxwell, Bart., married in 1767 the Duke of Gordon. The most successful matchmaker of the age, she married three of her daughters to three dukes — Manchester, Richmond, and Bedford. A fourth daughter was Lady Mandalina Sinclair, afterwards, by a second marriage, Lady Mandalina Palmer. A fifth was married to Lord Cornwallis (see the extraordinary story told in the ‘Recollections of Samuel Rogers’, pp. 145-146). According to Wraxall (‘Posthumous Memoirs’, vol. ii. p. 319), she schemed to secure Pitt for her daughter Lady Charlotte, and Eugène Beauharnais for Lady Georgiana, afterwards Duchess of Bedford. Cyrus Redding (‘Memoirs of William Beckford’, vol. ii. pp. 337-339) describes her attack upon the owner of Fonthill, where she stayed upwards of a week, magnificently entertained, without once seeing the wary master of the house.

She was also the social leader of the Tories, and her house in Pall Mall, rented from the Duke of Buckingham, was the meeting-place of the party. Malcontents accused her of using her power tyrannically: —

”Not Gordon’s broad and brawny Grace,
The last new Woman in the Place
With more contempt could blast.”
’Pandolfo Attonito’ (1800).

Lord Alexander Gordon died in 1808.]

[Footnote 3: William Hutton (1723-1815), a Birmingham bookseller, who took to literature and became a voluminous writer of poems, and of topographical works which still have their value. In his ‘Trip to Redcar and Coatham’ (Preface, p. vi.) he says,

“I took up my pen at the advanced age of fifty-six ... I drove the quill thirty

years, during which time I wrote and published thirty books.”

‘The Battle of Bosworth Field’ was published in 1788. A new edition, with additions by John Nichols, appeared in 1813. Byron’s poem was never published.]

79. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

London, August 11, 1807.

On Sunday next I set off for the Highlands. A friend of mine accompanies me in my carriage to Edinburgh. There we shall leave it, and proceed in a *tandem* (a species of open carriage) though the western passes to Inverary, where we shall purchase *shelties*, to enable us to view places inaccessible to *vehicular conveyances*. On the coast we shall hire a vessel, and visit the most remarkable of the Hebrides; and, if we have time and favourable weather, mean to sail as far as Iceland, only 300 miles from the northern extremity of Caledonia, to peep at *Hecla*. This last intention you will keep a secret, as my nice *mamma* would imagine I was on a Voyage of *Discovery*, and raised the accustomed *maternal warwhoop*.

Last week I swam in the Thames from Lambeth through the two bridges, Westminster and Blackfriars, a distance, including the different turns and tracks made on the way, of three miles! You see I am in excellent training in case of a *squall* at sea. I mean to collect all the Erse traditions, poems, etc., etc., and translate, or expand the subject to fill a volume, which may appear next spring under the denomination of “*The Highland “Harp”*” or some title equally *picturesque*. Of Bosworth Field, one book is finished, another just began. It will be a work of three or four years, and most probably never *conclude*. What would you say to some stanzas on Mount Hecla? they would be written at least with *fire*. How is the immortal Bran? and the Phoenix of canine quadrupeds, Boatswain? I have lately purchased a thorough-bred bull-dog, worthy to be the coadjutor of the aforesaid celestials — his name is *Smut*!

“Bear it, ye breezes, on your *balmy* wings.”

Write to me before I set off, I conjure you, by the fifth rib of your grandfather. Ridge goes on well with the books — I thought that worthy had not done much in the country. In town they have been very successful; Carpenter (Moore’s publisher) told me a few days ago they sold all their’s immediately, and had several enquiries made since, which, from the books being gone, they could not supply. The Duke of York, the Marchioness of Headfort, the Duchess of Gordon, etc., etc., were among the purchasers; and Crosby says the circulation will be still more extensive in the winter, the summer season being very bad for a sale, as most people are absent from London. However, they have gone off

extremely well altogether. I shall pass very near you on my journey through Newark, but cannot approach. Don't tell this to Mrs. B, who supposes I travel a different road. If you have a letter, order it to be left at Ridge's shop, where I shall call, or the post-office, Newark, about six or eight in the evening. If your brother would ride over, I should be devilish glad to see him — he can return the same night, or sup with us and go home the next morning — the Kingston Arms is my inn. Adieu.

Yours ever,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: This projected trip to the Highlands, mentioned in his letter to Augusta Byron of August 30, 1805, seems to have become a joke among Byron's friends. Moore quotes ('Life', p. 56) a letter written by Miss Pigot to her brother:

"How can you ask if Lord B. is going to visit the Highlands in the summer? Why, don't *you* know that he never knows his own mind for ten minutes together? I tell him he is as fickle as the winds, and as uncertain as the waves."]

[Footnote 2:

"The first time I saw Lord Byron," says Leigh Hunt ('Lord Byron and his Contemporaries', p. 1), "he was rehearsing the part of Leander, under the auspices of Mr. Jackson the prize-fighter. It was in the river Thames, before he went to Greece. I had been bathing, and was standing on the floating machine adjusting my clothes, when I noticed a respectable-looking manly person who was eyeing something at a distance. This was Mr. Jackson waiting for his pupil. The latter was swimming with somebody for a wager."

On this occasion, however, Hunt only saw "his Lordship's head bob up and down in the water, like a "buoy."]

80. — To John Hanson.

Dorant's Hotel, October 19th, 1807.

Dear Hanson, — I will thank you to disburse the quarter due as soon as possible, for I am at this moment contemplating with woeful visage, one *solitary Guinea, two bad sixpences* and a shilling, being *all the cash* at present in possession of

Yours very truly,
BYRON.

81. — To Elizabeth Bridget Pigot.

Trinity College, Cambridge, October 26, 1807.

My Dear Elizabeth, — Fatigued with sitting up till four in the morning for the

last two days at hazard, I take up my pen to inquire how your highness and the rest of my female acquaintance at the seat of archiepiscopal grandeur go on. I know I deserve a scolding for my negligence in not writing more frequently; but racing up and down the country for these last three months, how was it possible to fulfil the duties of a correspondent? Fixed at last for six weeks, I write, as *thin* as ever (not having gained an ounce since my reduction), and rather in better humour; — but, after all, Southwell was a detestable residence. Thank St. Dominica, I have done with it: I have been twice within eight miles of it, but could not prevail on myself to *suffocate* in its heavy atmosphere. This place is wretched enough — a villainous chaos of din and drunkenness, nothing but hazard and burgundy, hunting, mathematics, and Newmarket, riot and racing. Yet it is a paradise compared with the eternal dulness of Southwell. Oh! the misery of doing nothing but make *love*, *enemies*, and *verses*.

Next January (but this is *entre nous only*, and pray let it be so, or my maternal persecutor will be throwing her tomahawk at any of my curious projects,) I am going to *sea* for four or five months, with my cousin Captain Bettesworth, who commands the *Tartar*, the finest frigate in the navy. I have seen most scenes, and wish to look at a naval life. We are going probably to the Mediterranean, or to the West Indies, or — to the devil; and if there is a possibility of taking me to the latter, Bettesworth will do it; for he has received four and twenty wounds in different places, and at this moment possesses a letter from the late Lord Nelson, stating Bettesworth as the only officer in the navy who had more wounds than himself.

I have got a new friend, the finest in the world, a *tame bear*. When I brought him here, they asked me what I meant to do with him, and my reply was, “he should *sit for a fellowship*.” Sherard will explain the meaning of the sentence, if it is ambiguous. This answer delighted them not. We have several parties here, and this evening a large assortment of jockeys, gamblers, boxers, authors, parsons, and poets, sup with me, — a precious mixture, but they go on well together; and for me, I am a *spice* of every thing except a jockey; by the bye, I was dismounted again the other day.

Thank your brother in my name for his treatise. I have written 214 pages of a novel — one poem of 380 lines, to be published (without my name) in a few weeks, with notes, — 560 lines of Bosworth Field, and 250 lines of another poem in rhyme, besides half a dozen smaller pieces. The poem to be published is a Satire. *Apropos*, I have been praised to the skies in the *Critical Review*, and abused greatly in another publication. So much the better, they tell me, for the sale of the book: it keeps up controversy, and prevents it being forgotten.

Besides, the first men of all ages have had their share, nor do the humblest escape; — so I bear it like a philosopher. It is odd two opposite critiques came out on the same day, and out of five pages of abuse, my censor only quotes *two lines* from different poems, in support of his opinion. Now, the proper way to *cut up*, is to quote long passages, and make them appear absurd, because simple allegation is no proof. On the other hand, there are seven pages of praise, and more than *my modesty* will allow said on the subject. Adieu.

P.S. — Write, write, write!!!

[Footnote 1: George Edmund Byron Bettesworth (1780-1808), as lieutenant of the ‘Centaur’, was wounded (1804) in the capture of the ‘Curieux’. In command of the latter vessel he captured the ‘Dame Ernouf’ (1805), and was again wounded. He was made a post-captain in the latter year, when he brought home despatches from Nelson at Antigua, announcing Villeneuve’s return to Europe. He was killed off Bergen in 1808, while in command of the ‘Tartar’. Captain Bettesworth, whose father assumed the name of Bettesworth in addition to that of Trevanion, married, in 1807, Lady Alethea Grey, daughter of Earl Grey. Through his grandmother, Sophia Trevanion, Byron was Captain Bettesworth’s cousin.]

[Footnote 2: See ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 406.]

[Footnote 3: This poem, printed in book form, but not published, under the title of ‘British Bards’, is the foundation of ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’. The MS. is in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

[Footnote 4: For September, 1807. In noticing the Elegy on Newstead Abbey, the writer says, “We could not but hail, with something of prophetic rapture, the hope conveyed in the closing stanza: —

”‘Haply thy sun, emerging, yet may shine,
Thee to irradiate with meridian ray.’“]

[Footnote 5: The first number of ‘The Satirist: A Monthly Meteor’ (October, 1807).]

82. — To J. Ridge.

Trinity College, Cambridge, November 20, 1807.

Sir, — I am happy to hear every thing goes on so well, and I presume you will soon commence, though I am still of opinion the first Edition had better be entirely sold, before you risk the printing of a second. As Curly recommends fine wove Foolscap, let it be used, and I will order a design in London for a plate, my own portrait would perhaps be best, but as that would take up so long a

time in completing we will substitute probably a view of Harrow, or Newstead in its stead.

You will omit the poems mentioned below:

Stanzas on a view of Harrow.

To a Quaker.

The First Kiss of Love.

College Examinations.

Lines to the Rev. J. T. Becher.

To be inserted, not exactly in the place, but in different parts of the volume, I will send you five poems never yet published. Two of tolerable length, at least much longer than any of the above, which are ordered to be omitted.

Mention in your answer when you would like to receive the manuscripts that they may be sent. By the bye, I must have the proofs of the Manuscripts sent to Cambridge as they occur; the proofs from the printed copy you can manage with care, if Mr. Becher will assist you. Attend to the list of *Errata*, that we may not have a *Second Edition* of them also.

The Preface we have done with, perhaps I may send an Advertisement, a dedication shall be forthcoming in due Season.

You will send a proof of the first Sheet for Inspection, and soon too, for I am about to set out for London next week. If I remain there any time, I shall apprise you where to send the Manuscript Proofs.

Do you think the others will be sold before the next are ready, what says Curly? remember I have advised you not to risk it a second time, and it is not too late to retract. However, you must abide by your own discretion:

Etc., etc.,

BYRON.

P.S. — You will print from the Copy I sent you with the alterations, pray attend to these, and be careful of mistakes. In my last I gave you directions concerning the Title page and Mottoes.

[Footnote 1: A view of Harrow was given.]

83. — To John Hanson.

Trin. Coll., Cambridge, Dec. 2nd, 1807.

My Dear Sir, — I hope to take my New Years Day dinner with you *en famille*. Tell Hargreaves I will bring his Blackstones, and shall have no objection to see my Daniel's *Field Sports*, if they have not escaped his recollection. — I certainly wish the expiration of my minority as much as you do, though for a

reason more nearly affecting my magisterial person at this moment, namely, the want of twenty pounds, for no spendthrift peer, or unlucky poet, was ever less indebted to *Cash* than George Gordon is at present, or is more likely to continue in the same predicament. — My present quarter due on the 25th was drawn long ago, and I must be obliged to you for the loan of twenty on my next, to be deducted when the whole becomes tangible, that is, probably, some months after it is exhausted. Reserve Murray's quarter, of course, and I shall have just 100 !. to receive at Easter, but if the risk of my demand is too great, inform me, that I may if possible convert my Title into cash, though I am afraid twenty pounds will be too much to ask as Times go, if I were an Earl ... but a Barony must fetch ten, perhaps fifteen, and that is something when we have not as many pence. Your answer will oblige

Yours very truly,
BYRON.

P.S. — Remember me to Mrs. H. in particular, and the family in general.

[Footnote 1: Joe Murray. (See page 21 [Letter 7], [Foot]note 3 .)]

84. — To John Murray.

Ravenna, 9bre 19, 1820.

What you said of the late Charles Skinner Matthews has set me to my recollections; but I have not been able to turn up any thing which would do for the purposed Memoir of his brother, — even if he had previously done enough during his life to sanction the introduction of anecdotes so merely personal. He was, however, a very extraordinary man, and would have been a great one. No one ever succeeded in a more surpassing degree than he did as far as he went. He was indolent, too; but whenever he stripped, he overthrew all antagonists. His conquests will be found registered at Cambridge, particularly his *Downing* one, which was hotly and highly contested, and yet easily *won*. Hobhouse was his most intimate friend, and can tell you more of him than any man. William Bankes also a great deal. I myself recollect more of his oddities than of his academical qualities, for we lived most together at a very idle period of *my* life. When I went up to Trinity, in 1805, at the age of seventeen and a half, I was miserable and untoward to a degree. I was wretched at leaving Harrow, to which I had become attached during the two last years of my stay there; wretched at going to Cambridge instead of Oxford (there were no rooms vacant at Christchurch); wretched from some private domestic circumstances of different kinds, and consequently about as unsocial as a wolf taken from the troop. So that, although I knew Matthews, and met him often *then* at Bankes's, (who was

my collegiate pastor, and master, and patron,) and at Rhode's, Milnes's, Price's, Dick's, Macnamara's, Farrell's, Gally Knight's, and others of that *set* of contemporaries, yet I was neither intimate with him nor with any one else, except my old schoolfellow Edward Long (with whom I used to pass the day in riding and swimming), and William Bankes, who was good-naturedly tolerant of my ferocities.

It was not till 1807, after I had been upwards of a year away from Cambridge, to which I had returned again to *reside* for my degree, that I became one of Matthews's familiars, by means of Hobhouse, who, after hating me for two years, because I wore a *white hat*, and a *grey* coat, and rode a *grey* horse (as he says himself), took me into his good graces because I had written some poetry. I had always lived a good deal, and got drunk occasionally, in their company — but now we became really friends in a morning. Matthews, however, was not at this period resident in College. I met *him* chiefly in London, and at uncertain periods at Cambridge. Hobhouse, in the mean time, did great things: he founded the Cambridge "Whig Club" (which he seems to have forgotten), and the "Amicable Society," which was dissolved in consequence of the members constantly quarrelling, and made himself very popular with "us youth," and no less formidable to all tutors, professors, and heads of Colleges. William Bankes was gone; while he stayed, he ruled the roast — or rather the *roasting* — and was father of all mischiefs.

Matthews and I, meeting in London, and elsewhere, became great cronies. He was not good tempered — nor am I — but with a little tact his temper was manageable, and I thought him so superior a man, that I was willing to sacrifice something to his humours, which were often, at the same time, amusing and provoking. What became of his *papers* (and he certainly had many), at the time of his death, was never known. I mention this by the way, fearing to skip it over, and *as* he wrote remarkably well, both in Latin and English. We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and *Monks'* dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of some seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking burgundy, claret, champagne, and what not, out of the *skull-cup*, and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house, in our conventual garments. Matthews always denominated me "the Abbot," and never called me by any other name in his good humours, to the day of his death. The harmony of these our symposia was somewhat interrupted, a few days after our assembling, by Matthews's threatening to throw Hobhouse out of a *window*, in consequence of I know not what commerce of jokes ending in this epigram.

Hobhouse came to me and said, that “his respect and regard for me as host would not permit him to call out any of my guests, and that he should go to town next morning.” He did. It was in vain that I represented to him that the window was not high, and that the turf under it was particularly soft. Away he went.

Matthews and myself had travelled down from London together, talking all the way incessantly upon one single topic. When we got to Loughborough, I know not what chasm had made us diverge for a moment to some other subject, at which he was indignant. “Come,” said he, “don’t let us break through — let us go on as we began, to our journey’s end;” and so he continued, and was as entertaining as ever to the very end. He had previously occupied, during my year’s absence from Cambridge, my rooms in Trinity, with the furniture; and Jones, the tutor, in his odd way, had said, on putting him in,

“Mr. Matthews, I recommend to your attention not to damage any of the moveables, for Lord Byron, Sir, is a young man of *tumultuous passions*.”

Matthews was delighted with this; and whenever anybody came to visit him, begged them to handle the very door with caution; and used to repeat Jones’s admonition in his tone and manner. There was a large mirror in the room, on which he remarked, “that he thought his friends were grown uncommonly assiduous in coming to *see him*, but he soon discovered that they only came to *see themselves*.” Jones’s phrase of “*tumultuous passions*” and the whole scene, had put him into such good humour, that I verily believe that I owed to it a portion of his good graces.

When at Newstead, somebody by accident rubbed against one of his white silk stockings, one day before dinner; of course the gentleman apologised.

“Sir,” answered Matthews, “it may be all very well for you, who have a great many silk stockings, to dirty other people’s; but to me, who have only this *one pair*, which I have put on in honour of the Abbot here, no apology can compensate for such carelessness; besides, the expense of washing.”

He had the same sort of droll sardonic way about every thing. A wild Irishman, named Farrell, one evening began to say something at a large supper at Cambridge, Matthews roared out “Silence!” and then, pointing to Farrell, cried out, in the words of the oracle, “Orson is endowed with reason.” You may easily suppose that Orson lost what reason he had acquired, on hearing this compliment. When Hobhouse published his volume of poems, the *Miscellany* (which Matthews would call the “*Miss-sell-any*”), all that could be drawn from him was, that the preface was “extremely like *Walsh*.” Hobhouse thought this at first a compliment; but we never could make out what it was, for all we know of *Walsh* is his Ode to King William, and Pope’s epithet of “*knowing Walsh*.”

When the Newstead party broke up for London, Hobhouse and Matthews, who were the greatest friends possible, agreed, for a whim, to *walk together* to town. They quarrelled by the way, and actually walked the latter half of the journey, occasionally passing and repassing, without speaking. When Matthews had got to Highgate, he had spent all his money but three-pence halfpenny, and determined to spend that also in a pint of beer, which I believe he was drinking before a public-house, as Hobhouse passed him (still without speaking) for the last time on their route. They were reconciled in London again.

One of Matthews's passions was "the fancy;" and he sparred uncommonly well. But he always got beaten in rows, or combats with the bare fist. In swimming, too, he swam well; but with *effort* and *labour*, and *too high* out of the water; so that Scrope Davies and myself, of whom he was therein somewhat emulous, always told him that he would be drowned if ever he came to a difficult pass in the water. He was so; but surely Scrope and myself would have been most heartily glad that

"the Dean had lived,
And our prediction proved a lie."

His head was uncommonly handsome, very like what *Pope's* was in his youth.

His voice, and laugh, and features, are strongly resembled by his brother Henry's, if Henry be *he* of *King's College*. His passion for boxing was so great, that he actually wanted me to match him with Dogherty (whom I had backed and made the match for against Tom Belcher), and I saw them spar together at my own lodgings with the gloves on. As he was bent upon it, I would have backed Dogherty to please him, but the match went off. It was of course to have been a private fight, in a private room.

On one occasion, being too late to go home and dress, he was equipped by a friend (Mr. Baillie, I believe,) in a magnificently fashionable and somewhat exaggerated shirt and neckcloth. He proceeded to the Opera, and took his station in Fop's Alley. During the interval between the opera and the ballet, an acquaintance took his station by him and saluted him:

"Come round," said Matthews, "come round."

"Why should I come round?" said the other; "you have only to turn your head — I am close by you."

"That is exactly what I cannot do," said Matthews; "don't you see the state I am in?"

pointing to his buckram shirt collar and inflexible cravat, — and there he stood with his head always in the same perpendicular position during the whole spectacle.

One evening, after dining together, as we were going to the Opera, I happened to have a spare Opera ticket (as subscriber to a box), and presented it to Matthews.

"Now, sir," said he to Hobhouse afterwards, "this I call *courteous* in the Abbot — another man would never have thought that I might do better with half a guinea than throw it to a door-keeper; — but here is a man not only asks me to dinner, but gives me a ticket for the theatre."

These were only his oddities, for no man was more liberal, or more honourable in all his doings and dealings, than Matthews. He gave Hobhouse and me, before we set out for Constantinople, a most splendid entertainment, to which we did ample justice. One of his fancies was dining at all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Somebody popped upon him in I know not what coffee-house in the Strand — and what do you think was the attraction? Why, that he paid a shilling (I think) to *dine with his hat on*. This he called his "*hat* house," and used to boast of the comfort of being covered at meal times.

When Sir Henry Smith was expelled from Cambridge for a row with a tradesman named "Hiron," Matthews solaced himself with shouting under Hiron's windows every evening,

"Ah me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with *hot Hiron*."

He was also of that band of profane scoffers who, under the auspices of — , used to rouse Lort Mansel (late Bishop of Bristol) from his slumbers in the lodge of Trinity; and when he appeared at the window foaming with wrath, and crying out, "I know you, gentlemen, I know you!" were wont to reply, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lort!" — "Good Lort deliver us!" (Lort was his Christian name.) As he was very free in his speculations upon all kinds of subjects, although by no means either dissolute or intemperate in his conduct, and as I was no less independent, our conversation and correspondence used to alarm our friend Hobhouse to a considerable degree.

You must be almost tired of my packets, which will have cost a mint of

postage.

Salute Gifford and all my friends.

Yours, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: This letter, though written twelve years later, belongs to the Cambridge period of Byron's life. It is therefore introduced here. (For John Murray, see [Foot]note to letter to R. C. Dallas [Letter 167] of August 21, 1811.)]

[Footnote 2: Charles Skinner Matthews was known at Eton as Matthews 'major', his 'minor' being his brother Henry, the author of 'The Diary of an Invalid', afterwards a Judge in the Supreme Court of Ceylon, who died in 1828. They were the sons of John Matthews of Belmont, Herefordshire, M.P. for that county (1802-6). C. S. Matthews became a Scholar of Trinity, Cambridge; Ninth Wrangler in 1805; First Members' Prizeman in 1807; Fellow of Downing in 1808. He was drowned in the Cam in August, 1811. He at the time contemplated standing as Member for the University of Cambridge. For a description of the accident, see letter from Henry Drury to Francis Hodgson ('Life of the Rev. Francis Hodgson', vol. i. pp. 182-185). In the note to 'Childe Harold', Canto I. stanza xci., Byron speaks of Matthews:

"I should have ventured a verse to the memory of the late Charles Skinner Matthews, Fellow of Downing College, Cambridge, were he not too much above all praise of mine. His powers of mind, shown in the attainment of greater honours, against the ablest candidates, than those of any graduate on record at Cambridge, have sufficiently established his fame on the spot where it was acquired; while his softer qualities live in the recollection of friends who loved him too well to envy his superiority."]

[Footnote 3: See page 120 [Letter 67], [Foot]note 1.]

[Footnote 4: See page 73 [Letter 31], [Foot]note 2.]

[Footnote 5: See page 163 [Letter 83], note 1.]

[Footnote 6: Of this visit to Newstead, Matthews wrote the following account to his sister: —

"London, May 22, 1809.

"My Dear — — , — I must begin with giving you a few particulars of the singular place which I have lately quitted.

Newstead Abbey is situate 136 miles from London, — four on this side Mansfield. It is so fine a piece of antiquity, that I should think there must be a description, and, perhaps, a picture of it in Grose. The ancestors of its present owner came into possession of it at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, — but the building itself is of a much earlier date. Though sadly fallen to decay, it is still completely an *abbey*, and most part of it is still standing

in the same state as when it was first built. There are two tiers of cloisters, with a variety of cells and rooms about them, which, though not inhabited, nor in an inhabitable state, might easily be made so; and many of the original rooms, amongst which is a fine stone hall, are still in use. Of the abbey church only one end remains; and the old kitchen, with a long range of apartments, is reduced to a heap of rubbish. Leading from the abbey to the modern part of the habitation is a noble room, seventy feet in length, and twenty-three in breadth; but every part of the house displays neglect and decay, save those which the present Lord has lately fitted up.

The house and gardens are entirely surrounded by a wall with battlements. In front is a large lake, bordered here and there with castellated buildings, the chief of which stands on an eminence at the further extremity of it. Fancy all this surrounded with bleak and barren hills, with scarce a tree to be seen for miles, except a solitary clump or two, and you will have some idea of Newstead. For the late Lord, being at enmity with his son, to whom the estate was secured by entail, resolved, out of spite to the same, that the estate should descend to him in as miserable a plight as he could possibly reduce it to; for which cause, he took no care of the mansion, and fell to lopping of every tree he could lay his hands on, so furiously, that he reduced immense tracts of woodland country to the desolate state I have just described. However, his son died before him, so that all his rage was thrown away.

So much for the place, concerning which I have thrown together these few particulars, meaning my account to be, like the place itself, without any order or connection. But if the place itself appear rather strange to you, the ways of the inhabitants will not appear much less so. Ascend, then, with me the hall steps, that I may introduce you to my Lord and his visitants. But have a care how you proceed; be mindful to go there in broad daylight, and with your eyes about you. For, should you make any blunder, — should you go to the right of the hall steps, you are laid hold of by a bear; and should you go to the left, your case is still worse, for you run full against a wolf! — Nor, when you have attained the door, is your danger over; for the hall being decayed, and therefore standing in need of repair, a bevy of inmates are very probably banging at one end of it with their pistols; so that if you enter without giving loud notice of your approach, you have only escaped the wolf and the bear to expire by the pistol-shots of the merry monks of Newstead.

Our party consisted of Lord Byron and four others, and was, now and then, increased by the presence of a neighbouring parson. As for our way of living, the order of the day was generally this: — for

breakfast we had no set hour, but each suited his own convenience, — everything remaining on the table till the whole party had done; though had one wished to breakfast at the early hour of ten, one would have been rather lucky to find any of the servants up. Our average hour of rising was one. I, who generally got up between eleven and twelve, was always, — even when an invalid, — the first of the party, and was esteemed a prodigy of early rising. It was frequently past two before the breakfast party broke up. Then, for the amusements of the morning, there was reading, fencing, single-stick, or shuttle-cock, in the great room; practising with pistols in the hall; walking — riding — cricket — sailing on the lake, playing with the bear, or teasing the wolf. Between seven and eight we dined; and our evening lasted from that time till one, two, or three in the morning. The evening diversions may be easily conceived.

I must not omit the custom of handing round, after dinner, on the removal of the cloth, a human skull filled with burgundy. After revelling on choice viands, and the finest wines of France, we adjourned to tea, where we amused ourselves with reading, or improving conversation, — each, according to his fancy, — and, after sandwiches, etc., retired to rest. A set of monkish dresses, which had been provided, with all the proper apparatus of crosses, beads, tonsures, etc., often gave a variety to our appearance, and to our pursuits.

You may easily imagine how chagrined I was at being ill nearly the first half of the time I was there. But I was led into a very different reflection from that of Dr. Swift, who left Pope's house without ceremony, and afterwards informed him, by letter, that it was impossible for two sick friends to live together; for I found my shivering and invalid frame so perpetually annoyed by the thoughtless and tumultuous health of every one about me, that I heartily wished every soul in the house to be as ill as myself.

"The journey back I performed on foot, together with another of the guests. We walked about twenty-five miles a day; but were a week on the road, from being detained by the rain. So here I close my account of an expedition which has somewhat extended my knowledge of this country. And where do you think I am going next? To Constantinople! — at least, such an excursion has been proposed to me. Lord B. and another friend of mine are going thither next month, and have asked me to join the party; but it seems to be but a wild scheme, and requires twice thinking upon.

"Addio, my dear I., yours very affectionately, C. S. MATTHEWS."]

[Footnote 7: A joke, related by Hobhouse, reminds us of the youth of the

party. In the Long Gallery at Newstead was placed a stone coffin, from which, as he passed down the Gallery at night, he heard a groan proceeding. On going nearer, a cowed figure rose from the coffin and blew out the candle. It was Matthews.]

[Footnote 8: The Rev. Thomas Jones. (See page 79 [Letter 36], [Foot]note 1.)]

[Footnote 9: The only thing remarkable about Walsh's preface is that Dr. Johnson praises it as "very judicious," but is, at the same time, silent respecting the poems to which it is prefixed (Moore).]

[Footnote 10: No "Ode" under this title is to be found in Walsh's Poems. Byron had, no doubt, in mind *The Golden Age Restored* — a composition in which, says Dr. Johnson, "there was something of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now strikes no longer."]

[Footnote 11:

" — — Granville the polite,
And *knowing Walsh*, would tell me I could write."

"About fifteen," says Pope, "I got acquainted with Mr. Walsh. He used to encourage me much, and tell me, that there was one way left of excelling: for though we had several great poets, we never had any one great poet that was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and aim" (Spence's *Anecdotes*, edit. 1820, p. 280).]

[Footnote 12: See page 165 [Letter 86], [Foot]note 2.]

[Footnote 13: Dan Dogherty, Irish champion (1806-11), came into notice as a pugilist in 1806. He was beaten by Belcher in April, 1808, near the Rubbing House on Epsom Downs, and again on the Curragh of Kildare, in 1813, in thirty-five minutes, after twenty-six rounds.]

[Footnote 14: Tom Belcher (1783-1854), younger brother of Jem Belcher the champion, fought and won his first fight in London, in 1804, against Warr. The fight took place in Tothill Fields, Westminster. Twice beaten by Dutch Sam (Elias Samuel), in 1806 and 1807, he never held the championship, which a man of his height (5 ft. 9 ins.) and weight (10 st. 12 lbs.) could scarcely hope to win. But he repeatedly established the superiority of art over strength, and was one of the most popular and respectable pugilists of the day. Under his management the Castle Tavern at Holborn, in which he succeeded Gregson (page 207 [Letter 108], [Foot]note 1), was the head-quarters of pugilism.]

[Footnote 15: Sir Henry Smyth, Baronet, of Trinity Hall, A.M. 1805, was found between eleven and twelve at night, on May 11, 1805, "inciting to a

disturbance” at the shop of a Mrs. Thrower on Market Hill. Other members of the University seem to have been equally guilty. The sentence of the Vice-Chancellor and Heads was “that he be suspended from his degree and banished from the University.” The others were admonished only; so it was clearly considered that Smyth was the ring-leader.]

85. — To Henry Drury.

Dorant’s Hotel, Jan. 13, 1808.

My Dear Sir, — Though the stupidity of my servants, or the porter of the house, in not showing you up stairs (where I should have joined you directly), prevented me the pleasure of seeing you yesterday, I hoped to meet you at some public place in the evening. However, my stars decreed otherwise, as they generally do, when I have any favour to request of them. I think you would have been surprised at my figure, for, since our last meeting, I am reduced four stone in weight. I then weighed fourteen stone seven pound, and now only *ten stone and a half*. I have disposed of my *superfluities* by means of hard exercise and abstinence.

Should your Harrow engagements allow you to visit town between this and February, I shall be most happy to see you in Albemarle Street. If I am not so fortunate, I shall endeavour to join you for an afternoon at Harrow, though, I fear, your cellar will by no means contribute to my cure. As for my worthy preceptor, Dr. B., our encounter would by no means prevent the *mutual endearments* he and I were wont to lavish on each other. We have only spoken once since my departure from Harrow in 1805, and then he politely told Tatersall I was not a proper associate for his pupils. This was long before my strictures in verse; but, in plain *prose*, had I been some years older, I should have held my tongue on his perfections. But, being laid on my back, when that schoolboy thing was written — or rather dictated — expecting to rise no more, my physician having taken his sixteenth fee, and I his prescription, I could not quit this earth without leaving a memento of my constant attachment to Butler in gratitude for his manifold good offices.

I meant to have been down in July; but thinking my appearance, immediately after the publication, would be construed into an insult, I directed my steps elsewhere. Besides, I heard that some of the boys had got hold of my *Libellus*, contrary to my wishes certainly, for I never transmitted a single copy till October, when I gave one to a boy, since gone, after repeated importunities. You will, I trust, pardon this egotism. As you had touched on the subject I thought some explanation necessary. Defence I shall not attempt, *Hic murus aheneus esto, nil conscire sibi* — and “so on” (as Lord Baltimore said on his trial for a

rape) — I have been so long at Trinity as to forget the conclusion of the line; but though I cannot finish my quotation, I will my letter, and entreat you to believe me, gratefully and affectionately, *etc.*

P.S. — I will not lay a tax on your time by requiring an answer, lest you say, as Butler said to Tatersall (when I had written his reverence an impudent epistle on the expression before mentioned), *viz.* “that I wanted to draw him into a correspondence.”

[Footnote 1: See page 12 [Letter 4], [Foot]note 1 ; and page 41 [Letter 14], [Foot] note 2 .]

[Footnote 2: Dr. Butler, Head-master of Harrow (see page 58 [Letter 22], [Foot]note 1).]

[Footnote 3: See page 59 [Letter 22], [Foot]note 1 .]

[Footnote 4: Francis Calvert, seventh Lord Baltimore (1731-1771), was charged with decoying a young milliner, named Sarah Woodcock, to his house, and with rape. On February 12, 1768, he was committed for trial at the Spring assizes, was tried at Kingston, March 26, 1768, and acquitted. The story is the subject of a romance, ‘Injured Innocence; or the Rape of Sarah Woodcock;’ A Tale, by S. J., Esq., of Magdalen College, Oxford. New York (no date).

“I thank God,” Lord Baltimore is reported to have said, “that I have had firmness and resolution to meet my accusers face to face, and provoke an enquiry into my conduct, ‘Hic murus aheneus esto, nil conscire sibi’“

(‘Ann. Register’ for 1768, p. 234). His body lay in state at Exeter Change, previous to its interment at Epsom (Leigh Hunt’s ‘The Town’, edit. 1893, p. 191).]

86. — To John Cam Hobhouse.

Newstead Abbey, Notts, January 16, 1808.

My Dear Hobhouse, — I do not know how the *dens*-descended Davies came to mention his having received a copy of my epistle to you, but I addressed him and you on the same evening, and being much incensed at the account I had received from Wallace, I communicated the contents to the Birdmore, though without any of that malice wherewith you charge me. I shall leave my card at Batts, and hope to see you in your progress to the North.

I have lately discovered Scrope’s genealogy to be ennobled by a collateral tie with the Beardmore, Chirurgeon and Dentist to Royalty, and that the town of Southwell contains cousins of Scrope’s, who disowned them (I grieve to speak it) on visiting that city in my society.

How I found this out I will disclose, the first time “we three meet again.” But why did he conceal his lineage? “Ah, my dear H., it was *cruel*, it was *insulting*, it was *unnecessary*.”

I have (notwithstanding your kind invitation to Wallace) been alone since the 8th of December; nothing of moment has occurred since our anniversary row. I shall be in London on the 19th; there are to be oxen roasted and sheep boiled on the 22nd, with ale and uproar for the mobility; a feast is also providing for the tenantry. For my own part, I shall know as little of the matter as a corpse of the funeral solemnized in its honour.

A letter addressed to Reddish’s will find me. I still intend publishing the *Bards*, but I have altered a good deal of the “Body of the Book,” added and interpolated, with some excisions; your lines still stand, and in all there will appear 624 lines.

I should like much to see your Essay upon Entrails: is there any honorary token of silver gilt? any cups, or pounds sterling attached to the prize, besides glory? I expect to see you with a medal suspended from your button-hole, like a Croix de St. Louis.

Fletcher’s father is deceased, and has left his son tway cottages, value ten pounds per annum. I know not how it is, but Fletch., though only the third brother, conceives himself entitled to all the estates of the defunct, and I have recommended him to a lawyer, who, I fear, will triumph in the spoils of this ancient family. A Birthday Ode has been addressed to me by a country schoolmaster, in which I am likened to the Sun, or Sol, as he classically saith; the people of Newstead are compared to Laplanders. I am said to be a Baron, and a Byron, the truth of which is indisputable. Feronia is again to reign (she must have some woods to govern first), but it is altogether a very pleasant performance, and the author is as superior to Pye, as George Gordon to George Guelph. To be sure some of the lines are too short, but then, to make amends, the Alexandrines have from fifteen to seventeen syllables, so we may call them Alexandrines the great.

I shall be glad to hear from you, and beg you to believe me,

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869), created in 1851 Baron Broughton de Gyfford, was the eldest son of Mr. Benjamin Hobhouse, created a baronet in 1812, and M.P. (from 1797 to 1818) successively for Bletchingley, Grampound, and Hindon. From a school at Bristol, John Cam Hobhouse was sent to Westminster, and thence to Trinity, Cambridge, where he won (1808) the

Hulsean Prize for an essay on "Sacrifices," and made acquaintance with Byron, as related in Letter 84. In 1809 he published a poetical miscellany, consisting of sixty-five pieces, under the title of 'Imitations and Translations from the Ancient and Modern Classics, together with original Poems never before published' (London, 1809, 8vo). (For Byron's nine contributions, see 'Poems', vol. i., Bibliographical Note.) In 1809-10 he was Byron's travelling companion abroad (see 'A Journey through Albania, etc.' London, 1813, 4to).

In 1813 he travelled with Douglas Kinnaird in Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Italy; in 1814 he was at Paris with the allied armies; and in April, 1815, was there again till the second Napoleonic war broke out, returning to witness the second restoration of the Bourbons (see his 'Letters — written by an Englishman resident in Paris, etc.' Anon., London, 1816, 2 vols., 8vo). During 1814 he was much with Byron in London. He notes going with him to Drury Lane, and being introduced with him to Kean (May 19); dining with him at Lord Tavistock's (June 4); dining with him at Douglas Kinnaird's, to meet Kean (December 14). He was Byron's best man at his marriage at Seaham (January 2, 1815), and it was to him that the bride said, "If I am not happy, it will be my own fault." He was the last person who shook hands with Byron on Dover pier, when the latter left England in 1816. Later in the same year he was with him at the Villa Diodati, on the Lake of Geneva, and travelled with him to Venice. To him Byron dedicated 'The Siege of Corinth', In the next year he was again with Byron in the Villa La Mira on the banks of the Brenta, and at Venice, where he prepared the commentary on the fourth canto of 'Childe Harold', which Byron dedicated to him. Part of the notes were published separately ('Historical Illustrations, etc.' London, 1818, 8vo). In 1818 Hobhouse stood for Westminster, but was defeated by George Lamb, the representative of the official Whigs. He was an original member of "The Rota Club," afterwards known as "Harrington's," to which Michael Bruce, Douglas Kinnaird, Scrope Davies, and others belonged, and which Byron, writing from Italy, expressed a wish to join. He had now embarked on political life. His pamphlet, 'A Defence of the People' (1819), was followed in the same year by 'A Trifling Mistake', which was declared by the House of Commons to be a breach of privilege. In consequence, he was committed to Newgate. The death of George III., and the dissolution of Parliament, set him free. He contested Westminster, won the seat with Sir Francis Burdett as his colleague, and represented it for thirteen years. He took the part of Queen Caroline against the Government. At the Queen's funeral (August 7, 1821) he attended the procession which escorted her body (August 13) from Brandenburg House to Harwich, and saw the coffin placed upon the vessel.

His political career was long, independent, useful, and distinguished, and he

specially associated himself with such questions as the shortening of the hours for infant labour, the opening up of metropolitan vestries, and the subject of parliamentary reform. In 1832 he was made a Privy Councillor, and became Secretary at War in Lord Grey's Ministry. This post, finding himself unable to effect essential reforms at the War Office, he exchanged for that of Secretary for Ireland (1833); but he resigned both his office and his seat a few weeks later, being opposed to the Government on a question of taxation. In 1834 he joined Lord Melbourne's Government as First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, with a seat in the Cabinet. In Lord Melbourne's second administration, and again in Lord J. Russell's Government of 1846, he was President of the Board of Control. On his retirement from public life, in 1852, he received high recognition of his official services from the Queen, who conferred on him the Grand Cross of the Bath and a peerage. Hobhouse was present at Her Majesty's first Council, and is said to have originated the phrase, "Her Majesty's Opposition."

In 1822 he travelled in Italy (see 'Italy: Remarks made in Several Visits from the Year 1816 to 1834', London, 1859, 2 vols., 8vo). There, on September 20, at Pisa, he for the last time saw Byron, whose parting words were, "Hobhouse, you should never have come, or you should never go." In July, 1824, when Byron's body was brought home, he boarded the 'Florida' in Sandgate Creek, and took charge of the funeral ceremonies from Westminster Stairs to the interment at Hucknall Torkard. He prepared an article for the 'Quarterly Review', exposing the absurdities of Medwin's 'Conversations' and of Dallas's 'Recollections'; but, owing to difficulties with Southey, it was not published. It was the substance of this article which afterwards appeared in the 'Westminster Review' in 1825. In 1830 he wrote, but, by Lord Holland's advice, withheld, a refutation of the charges made against the dead poet as to his separation from Lady Byron. He has, however, left on record that it was not fear which induced Byron to agree to the separation, but that, on the contrary, he was ready to "go into court."

The staunchest of Byron's friends, Hobhouse was also the most sensible and candid. As such Byron valued him. Talking to Lady Blessington at Genoa, in 1823, he said ('Conversations', p. 93) that Hobhouse was

"the most impartial, or perhaps," added he, "'unpartial', of my friends; he always told me my faults, but I must do him the justice to add, that he told them to 'me', and not to others."

On another occasion he said (p. 172),

"If friendship, as most people imagine, consists in telling one truth — unvarnished, unadorned truth — he is indeed a friend: yet, hang it, I must be candid, and say I have had many other, and more agreeable, proofs of

Hobhouse's friendship than the truths he always told me; but the fact is, I wanted him to sugar them over a little with flattery, as nurses do the physic given to children; and he never would, and therefore I have never felt quite content with him, though, 'au fond', I respect him the more for his candour, while I respect myself very much less for my weakness in disliking it."]

[Footnote 2: Scrope Berdmore Davies (1783-1852), born at Horsley, in Gloucestershire, was educated at Eton, and King's College, Cambridge, where he was admitted a Scholar in July, 1802, and a Fellow in July, 1805. In 1803 he was awarded by the Provost of Eton the Belham Scholarship, given to those Scholars of King's who had behaved well at Eton, and held it till 1816. A witty companion, with "a dry caustic manner, and an irresistible stammer" ('Life of Rev. F. Hodgson', vol. i. p. 204), Davies was, during the Regency and afterwards, a popular member of fashionable society. A daring gambler and shrewd calculator, he at one time won heavily at the gaming-tables. On June 10, 1814, as he told Hobhouse, he won £6065 at Watier's Club at Macao. Captain Cronow, in his 'Reminiscences' (ed. 1860, vol. i. pp. 93-96), sketches him among "Golden Ball" Hughes, "King" Allen, and other dandies. But luck turned against him, and he retired, poverty-stricken and almost dependent upon his Fellowship, to Paris, where he died, May 23, 1852. It was supposed he had for many years occupied himself with writing his recollections of his friends. But the notes, if they were ever written, have disappeared.

Byron, who hated obligations, as he himself says, counted Davies as a friend, though not on the same plane as Hobhouse. He borrowed from Davies £4800 before he left England in 1809, repaid him in 1814, and dedicated to him his 'Parisina'. In his 'MS. Journal' ('Life', pp. 129, 130) he says,

"One of the cleverest men I ever knew, in conversation, was Scrope Berdmore Davies. Hobhouse is also very good in that line, though it is of less consequence to a man who has other ways of showing his talents than in company. Scrope was always ready, and often witty — Hobhouse was witty, but not always so ready, being more diffident."

Byron appointed him one of the executors of his will of 1811. In his 'Journal' for March 28, 1814 ('Life', p. 234), occurs this entry:

"Yesterday, dined tête à tête at the Cocoa with Scrope Davies — sat from six till midnight — drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me. Offered to take Scrope home in my carriage; but he was tipsy and pious, and I was obliged to leave him on his knees

praying to I know not what purpose or pagod. No headach, nor sickness, that night, nor to-day. Got up, if anything, earlier than usual — sparred with Jackson ‘ad sudorem’, and have been much better in health than for many days. I have heard nothing more from Scrope.”

Scrope Davies visited Byron at the Villa Diodati, in 1816, and brought back with him ‘Childe Harold’, canto iii. On his return he gave evidence in the case of ‘Byron v. Johnson’, before the Lord Chancellor, November 28, 1816, when an injunction was obtained to restrain Johnson from publishing a volume containing ‘Lord Byron’s Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage to the Holy Land’, and other works, which he professed to have bought from Byron for £500.

According to Gronow (‘Reminiscences’, vol. i. p. 153, 154), Scrope Davies, asked to give his private opinion of Byron, said that he considered him

“very agreeable and clever, but vain, overbearing, suspicious, and jealous. Byron hated Palmerston, but liked Peel, and thought that the whole world ought to be constantly employed in admiring his poetry and himself.”]

[Footnote 3: For Hobhouse’s lines on Bowles, see ‘English Bards, etc.’, line 384, and note.]

87. — To Robert Charles Dallas.

Dorant’s Hotel, Albemarle Street, Jan. 20, 1808.

Sir, — Your letter was not received till this morning, I presume from being addressed to me in Notts., where I have not resided since last June; and as the date is the 6th, you will excuse the delay of my answer.

If the little volume you mention has given pleasure to the author of *Percival* and *Aubrey*, I am sufficiently repaid by his praise. Though our periodical censors have been uncommonly lenient, I confess a tribute from a man of acknowledged genius is still more flattering. But I am afraid I should forfeit all claim to candour, if I did not decline such praise as I do not deserve; and this is, I am sorry to say, the case in the present instance.

My compositions speak for themselves, and must stand or fall by their own worth or demerit: *thus far* I feel highly gratified by your favourable opinion. But my pretensions to virtue are unluckily so few, that though I should be happy to merit, I cannot accept, your applause in that respect. One passage in your letter struck me forcibly: you mention the two Lords Lyttleton in the manner they respectively deserve, and will be surprised to hear the person who is now addressing you has been frequently compared to the *latter*. I know I am injuring myself in your esteem by this avowal, but the circumstance was so remarkable from your observation, that I cannot help relating the fact. The events of my short life have been of so singular a nature, that, though the pride commonly

called honour has, and I trust ever will, prevent me from disgracing my name by a mean or cowardly action, I have been already held up as the votary of licentiousness, and the disciple of infidelity. How far justice may have dictated this accusation, I cannot pretend to say; but, like the *gentleman* to whom my religious friends, in the warmth of their charity, have already devoted me, I am made worse than I really am. However, to quit myself (the worst theme I could pitch upon), and return to my poems, I cannot sufficiently express my thanks, and I hope I shall some day have an opportunity of rendering them in person. A second edition is now in the press, with some additions and considerable omissions; you will allow me to present you with a copy. The ‘Critical’, ‘Monthly’, and ‘Anti-Jacobin Reviews’ have been very indulgent; but the ‘Eclectic’ has pronounced a furious Philippic, not against the *book* but the *author*, where you will find all I have mentioned asserted by a reverend divine who wrote the critique.

Your name and connection with our family have been long known to me, and I hope your person will be not less so: you will find me an excellent compound of a “Brainless” and a “Stanhope.” I am afraid you will hardly be able to read this, for my hand is almost as bad as my character; but you will find me, as legibly as possible,

Your obliged and obedient servant,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Robert Charles Dallas (1754-1842), born in Jamaica and educated in Scotland, read law at the Inner Temple. About 1775 he returned to Jamaica to look after his property and take up a lucrative appointment. Three years later he returned to England, married, and took his wife back with him to the West Indies. His wife’s health compelled him to return to Europe, and he lived for some time in France. At the outbreak of the Revolution he emigrated to America; but finally settled down to literary work in England. His first publication (1797) was *Miscellaneous Writings consisting of Poems; Lucretia, a Tragedy; and Moral Essays, with a Vocabulary of the Passions*. He translated a number of French books bearing on the French Revolution, by Bertrand de Moleville, Mallet du Pan, Hue, and Joseph Weber; also a work on Volcanoes by the Abbé Ordinaire, and an historical novel by Madame de Genlis, *The Siege of Rochelle*. He wrote a number of novels, among them *Percival, or Nature Vindicated* (1801); *Aubrey: a Novel* (1804); *The Morlands*; *Tales illustrative of the Simple and Surprising* (1805); *The Knights*; *Tales illustrative of the Marvellous* (1808). Later (1819 and 1823) he published two volumes of poems.

He says (preface to *Percival*, p. ix.) that his object is “to improve the heart, as well as to please the fancy, and to be the auxiliary of the Divine and the Moralist.” He is one of the writers, others being “Gleaner” Pratt and Lord Carlisle, “whose writings” (*Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Percival Stockdale*, 1809, vol. i. Preface, p. xvi.) “dart through the general fog of our literary dulness.” Stockdale further says of him that he was “a man of a most affectionate and virtuous mind. He has had the moral honour, in several novels, to exert his talents, which were worthy of their glorious cause, in the service of good conduct and religion.”

Dallas’s sister, Henrietta Charlotte, married George Anson Byron, the son of Admiral the Hon. John Byron, and was therefore Byron’s aunt by marriage. On the score of this connection, Dallas introduced himself to Byron by complimenting him, in a letter dated January 6, 1808, on his *Hours of Idleness*. A well-meaning, self-satisfied, dull, industrious man, he gave Byron excellent moral advice, to which the latter responded as the *fanfaron de ses vices*, evidently with great amusement to himself. *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* was brought out under Dallas’s auspices, as well as *Childe Harold* and *The Corsair*, the profits of which Byron made over to him. Dallas distrusted his own literary judgment in the matter of Byron’s verse, and consulted Walter Wright, the author of *Horæ Ioniæ*, about the prospects of ‘Childe Harold’.

“I have told him,” said Wright, “that I have no doubt this will succeed. Lord Byron had offered him before some translations from Horace, which I told him would never sell, and he did not take them”

(‘Diary of H. Crabb Robinson’, vol. i. pp. 29, 30).

The connection between Dallas and Byron practically ended in 1814. The publication of Dallas’s ‘Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron from the Year 1808 to the end of 1814’ was stopped by a decree obtained by Byron’s executors, in the Court of Chancery, August 23, 1824. But the book was published by the writer’s son, the Rev. A. R. C. Dallas.]

[Footnote 2: Byron refers to the following passage in Dallas’s letter of January 6, 1808:

“A spirit that brings to my mind another noble author, who was not only a fine poet, orator, and historian, but one of the closest reasoners we have on the truth of that religion, of which forgiveness is a prominent principle: the great and the good Lord Lyttelton, whose fame will never die. His son, to whom he had transmitted genius but not virtue, sparkled for a moment, and went out like a falling star, and with him the title became extinct. He was the victim of

inordinate passions, and he will be heard of in this world only by those who read the English Peerage”

(‘Correspondence of Lord Byron’, p. 20, the suppressed edition).

Dallas was, of course, aware that Byron’s predecessor in the title, William, fifth Lord Byron, was known as the “wicked Lord Byron.” George, first Lord Lyttelton (1709-1773), to whom Pope refers (‘Imitations of Horace’, bk. i. Ep. i. 1. 30) as

“Still true to virtue, and as warm as true,”

was a voluminous writer in prose and verse, but owed his political importance to his family connection with Chatham, Temple, and George Grenville. Horace Walpole calls him a “wise moppet” (‘Letters’, vol. ii. p. 28, ed. Cunningham), and repeatedly sneers at his dulness. His son Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton (1744-1779), the “wicked Lord Lyttelton,” appears in W. Combe’s ‘Diaboliad’ as the

”Peer of words,

Well known, — and honour’d in the House of Lords, —

Whose Eloquence all Parallel defies!”

who claims the throne of Hell as the worst of living men. His ‘Poems by a Young Nobleman lately deceased’ (published in 1780, after his death) may have helped Dallas in his allusion. He was the hero and the victim of the famous ghost story which Dr. Johnson was “willing to believe.”]

[Footnote 3: ‘The Critical Review’ (3rd series, vol. xii. pp. 47-53) specially praises lines “On Leaving Newstead Abbey” and “Childish Recollections.”]

[Footnote 4: In ‘Monthly Literary Recreations’ (July, 1807, pp. 67-71), “Childish Recollections” and “The Tear” are particularly commended.

“As friends to the cause of literature, we have thought proper not to disguise our opinion of his powers, that we might alter his determination, and lead him once more to the Castalian fount.”]

[Footnote 5: ‘The Anti-Jacobin Review’ (December, 1807, pp. 407, 408) says that the poems

”exhibit strong proofs of genius, accompanied by a lively but chastened imagination, a classical taste, and a benevolent heart.”]

[Footnote 6: *The Eclectic Review* (vol. iii. part ii. pp. 989-993) begins its review thus:

“The notice we take of this publication regards the author rather than the book; the book is a collection of juvenile pieces, some of very moderate merit, and others of very questionable morality; but the author is a *nobleman!*”]

[Footnote 7: Characters in the novel called *Percival*.]

88. — To Robert Charles Dallas.

Dorant’s, January 21, 1808.

Sir, — Whenever leisure and inclination permit me the pleasure of a visit, I shall feel truly gratified in a personal acquaintance with one whose mind has been long known to me in his writings.

You are so far correct in your conjecture, that I am a member of the University of Cambridge, where I shall take my degree of A.M. this term; but were reasoning, eloquence, or virtue, the objects of my search, Granta is not their metropolis, nor is the place of her situation an “El Dorado,” far less an Utopia. The intellects of her children are as stagnant as her Cam, and their pursuits limited to the church — not of Christ, but of the nearest benefice.

As to my reading, I believe I may aver, without hyperbole, it has been tolerably extensive in the historical department; so that few nations exist, or have existed, with whose records I am not in some degree acquainted, from Herodotus down to Gibbon. Of the classics, I know about as much as most schoolboys after a discipline of thirteen years; of the law of the land as much as enables me to keep “within the statute” — to use the poacher’s vocabulary. I did study the “Spirit of Laws” and the Law of Nations; but when I saw the latter violated every month, I gave up my attempts at so useless an accomplishment: — of geography, I have seen more land on maps than I should wish to traverse on foot; — of mathematics, enough to give me the headach without clearing the part affected; — of philosophy, astronomy, and metaphysics, more than I can comprehend; and of common sense so little, that I mean to leave a Byronian prize at each of our “Almæ Matres” for the first discovery, — though I rather fear that of the longitude will precede it.

I once thought myself a philosopher, and talked nonsense with great decorum: I defied pain, and preached up equanimity. For some time this did very well, for no one was in *pain* for me but my friends, and none lost their patience but my hearers. At last, a fall from my horse convinced me bodily suffering was an evil; and the worst of an argument overset my maxims and my temper at the same moment: so I quitted Zeno for Aristippus, and conceive that pleasure constitutes the [Greek (transliterated): to kalon].

In morality, I prefer Confucius to the Ten Commandments, and Socrates to St. Paul (though the two latter agree in their opinion of marriage). In religion, I favour the Catholic emancipation, but do not acknowledge the Pope; and I have refused to take the sacrament, because I do not think eating bread or drinking wine from the hand of an earthly vicar will make me an inheritor of heaven. I hold virtue, in general, or the virtues severally, to be only in the disposition, each a *feeling*, not a principle. I believe truth the prime attribute of the Deity, and death an eternal sleep, at least of the body. You have here a brief compendium of the sentiments of the *wicked* George, Lord Byron; and, till I get a new suit, you will perceive I am badly clothed.

I remain yours, etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: In Byron's "List of historical writers whose works I have perused in different languages" ('Life', pp. 46, 47), occurs the name of Montesquieu. It is to his 'Esprit des Lois' that Byron refers.]

89. — To John Hanson.

Dorant's, January 25th, 1808.

Sir, — The picture I have drawn of my finances is unfortunately a true one, and I find the colours may be heightened but not improved by time. — I have inclosed the receipt, and return my thanks for the loan, which shall be repaid the first opportunity. In the concluding part of my last I gave my reasons for not troubling you with my society at present, but when I can either communicate or receive pleasure, I shall not be long absent.

Yrs., etc.,

BYRON.

P.S. — I have received a letter from Whitehead, of course you know the contents, and must act as you think proper.

90. — To John Hanson.

Dorant's, January 25th, 1808.

Dear Sir, — Some time ago I gave Mitchell the sadler [*sic*] a letter for you, requesting his bill might be paid from the Balance of the Quarter you obliged me by advancing. If he has received this you will further oblige me by paying what remains, I believe somewhere about five pounds, if so much.

You will confer a favour upon me by the loan of twenty. I will endeavour to repay it next week, as I have immediate occasion for that sum, and I should not require it if you could I obtain it elsewhere.

I am now in my one and twentieth year, and cannot command as many

pounds. To Cambridge I cannot go without paying my bills, and at present I could as soon compass the National Debt; in London I must not remain, nor shall I, when I can procure a trifle to take me out of it. Home I have none; and if there was a possibility of getting out of the Country, I would gladly avail myself of it. But even that is denied me, my Debts amount to three thousand, three hundred to Jews, eight hundred to Mrs. B. of Nottingham, to coachmaker and other tradesmen a thousand more, and these must be much increased, before they are lessened.

Such is the prospect before me, which is by no means brightened by ill-health. I would have called on you, but I have neither spirits to enliven myself or others, or inclination to bring a gloomy face to spoil a group of happy ones. I remain,

Your obliged and obedt. sert.,
BYRON.

P.S. — Your answer to the former part will oblige, as I shall be reduced to a most unpleasant dilemma if it does not arrive.

91. — To James De Bathe.

Dorant's Hotel, February 2d, 1808.

My Dear De Bathe, — Last Night I saw your Father and Brother, the former I have not the pleasure of knowing, but the latter informed me *you* came to Town on *Saturday* and returned *yesterday*.

I have received a pressing Invitation from Henry Drury to pay him a visit; in his Letter he mentions a very old *Friend* of yours, who told him he would join my party, if I could inform him on what day I meant to go over. This Friend you will readily conclude to be a Lord *B.*; but not the one who now addresses you. Shall I bring him to you? and insure a welcome for myself which perhaps might not otherwise be the case. This will not be for a Fortnight to come. I am waiting for Long, who is now at Chatham, when he arrives we shall probably drive down and dine with Drury.

I confess Harrow has lost most of its charms for me. I do not know if Delawarr is still there; but, with the exception of yourself and the Earl, I shall find myself among Strangers. Long has a Brother at Butler's, and all his predilections remain in full force; mine are weakened, if not destroyed, and though I can safely say, I never knew a Friend out of Harrow, I question whether I have one left in it. You leave Harrow in July; may I ask what is your future Destination?

In January 1809 I shall be twenty one & in the Spring of the same year

proceed abroad, not on the usual Tour, but a route of a more extensive Description. What say you? are you disposed for a view of the Peloponnesus and a voyage through the Archipelago? I am merely in jest with regard to you, but very serious with regard to my own Intention which is fixed on the *Pilgrimage*, unless some political view or accident induce me to postpone it. Adieu! if you have Leisure, I shall be as happy to hear from you, as I would have been to have *seen* you. Believe me,

Yours very truly,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Sir James Wynne De Bathe (1792-1828) succeeded his father as second baronet, February 22, 1808. "Clare, Dorset, Charles Gordon, De Bathe, Claridge, and John Wingfield, were my juniors and favourites, whom I spoil by indulgence" ('Life', p. 21). De Bathe's name does not appear in the Harrow School lists. A Captain De Bathe interested himself in the case of Medora Leigh in 1843 (see Charles Mackay's 'Medora Leigh', pp. 92, 93, and elsewhere in the volume).]

92. — To William Harness.

Dorant's Hotel, Albemarle Street, Feb. II, 1808.

My Dear Harness, — As I had no opportunity of returning my verbal thanks, I trust you will accept my written acknowledgments for the compliment you were pleased to pay some production of my unlucky muse last November, — I am induced to do this not less from the pleasure I feel in the praise of an old schoolfellow, than from justice to you, for I had heard the story with some slight variations. Indeed, when we met this morning, Wingfield had not undeceived me; but he will tell you that I displayed no resentment in mentioning what I had heard, though I was not sorry to discover the truth. Perhaps you hardly recollect, some years ago, a short, though, for the time, a warm friendship between us. Why it was not of longer duration I know not. I have still a gift of yours in my possession, that must always prevent me from forgetting it. I also remember being favoured with the perusal of many of your compositions, and several other circumstances very pleasant in their day, which I will not force upon your memory, but entreat you to believe me, with much regret at their short continuance, and a hope they are not irrevocable,

Yours very sincerely, etc.,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: William Harness (1790-1869), son of Dr. J. Harness,

Commissioner of the Transport Board, was educated at Harrow and Christ's College, Cambridge. Ordained in 1812, he was, from 1823 to 1826, Curate at Hampstead.

"I could quiz you heartily," writes Mrs. Franklin to Miss Mitford (September 6, 1824), "for having told me in three successive letters of Mr. Harness's chapel at Hampstead. I understand he now lives a very retired life"

('The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford', vol. i. p. 61). From 1826 to 1844 he was Incumbent of Regent Square Chapel; Minister of Brompton Chapel (1844-47); Perpetual Curate (1849-69) of All Saints', Knightsbridge, which he built from subscriptions raised by himself. He is described by Crabb Robinson ('Diary', vol. iii. p. 212) as

"a clergyman with Oxford propensities, and a worshipper of the heathen Muses as well as of the Christian Graces;"

and again (iii. 326), as

"a man of taste, of High Church principles and liberal in spirit."

Miss Mitford ('The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford', vol. ii. p. 289) writes that

"he has neither Catholic nor Puseyite tendencies, — only it is a large and liberal mind like Bishop Stanley's, believing good men and good Christians may exist among Papists, and will be as safe there as if they were Protestants."

Again (vol. ii. p. 295) she says of him:

"Besides his varied accomplishments, and his admirable goodness and kindness, he has all sorts of amusing peculiarities. With a temper never known to fail, an indulgence the largest, a tenderness as of a woman, he has the habit of talking like a cynic! and with more learning, ancient and modern, and a wider grasp of literature than almost any one I know, professes to read nothing and care for nothing but 'Shakespeare and the Bible.' He is the finest reader of both that I ever heard. His preaching, which has been so much admired, is too rapid, but his reading the prayers is perfection. The best parish priest in London, and the truest Christian."

Miss Mitford's praise may be exaggerated; but she had known Harness for a lifetime.

Harness edited 'Shakespeare' (1825, 8 vols.), as well as 'Massinger' (1830) and 'Ford' (1831); wrote for the 'Quarterly' and 'Blackwood'; and published a number of sermons, including 'The Wrath of Cain', 'A Boyle Lecture' (1822). He wrote 'The Life of Mary Russell Mitford' (1870), in collaboration with the

Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, whose 'Life of the Rev. W. Harness' is the chief authority for his career.

His friendship with Byron began at Harrow ('Life', pp. 23, 24), where Byron, who was older than Harness, took pity upon his lameness and weakness, and protected him from the bullies of the school. At a later period they became estranged, as is shown by the following letter from Byron to Harness ('Life', pp. 24, 25): —

"We both seem perfectly to recollect, with a mixture of pleasure and regret, the hours we once passed together, and I assure you, most sincerely, they are numbered among the happiest of my brief chronicle of enjoyment. I am now 'getting into years', that is to say, I was 'twenty' a month ago, and another year will send me into the world to run my career of folly with the rest. I was then just fourteen, — you were almost the first of my Harrow friends, certainly the 'first' in my esteem, if not in date; but an absence from Harrow for some time, shortly after, and new connections on your side, and the difference in our conduct (an advantage decidedly in your favour) from that turbulent and riotous disposition of mine, which impelled me into every species of mischief, — all these circumstances combined to destroy an intimacy, which affection urged me to continue, and memory compels me to regret. But there is not a circumstance attending that period, hardly a sentence we exchanged, which is not impressed on my mind at this moment. I need not say more, — this assurance alone must convince you, had I considered them as trivial, they would have been less indelible. How well I recollect the perusal of your 'first flights'! There is another circumstance you do not know; — the 'first lines' I ever attempted at Harrow were addressed to 'you'. You were to have seen them; but Sinclair had the copy in his possession when we went home; — and, on our return, we were 'strangers'. They were destroyed, and certainly no great loss; but you will perceive from this circumstance my opinions at an age when we cannot be hypocrites.

I have dwelt longer on this theme than I intended, and I shall now conclude with what I ought to have begun. We were once friends, — nay, we have always been so, for our separation was the effect of chance, not of dissension. I do not know how far our destinations in life may throw us together, but if opportunity and inclination allow you to waste a thought on such a hare-brained being as myself, you will find me at least sincere, and not so bigoted to my faults as to involve others in the consequences. Will you sometimes write to me? I do not ask it often; and, if we meet, let us be what we 'should' be, and what we 'were'."

The following is Harness's own account of the circumstances in which

Letter 92 was written: —

“A coolness afterwards arose, which Byron alludes to in the first of the accompanying letters, and we never spoke during the last year of his remaining at school, nor till after the publication of his ‘Hours of Idleness’. Lord Byron was then at Cambridge; I, in one of the upper forms, at Harrow. In an English theme I happened to quote from the volume, and mention it with praise. It was reported to Byron that I had, on the contrary, spoken slightly of his work and of himself, for the purpose of conciliating the favour of Dr. Butler, the master, who had been severely satirised in one of the poems. Wingfield, who was afterwards Lord Powerscourt, a mutual friend of Byron and myself, disabused him of the error into which he had been led, and this was the occasion of the first letter of the collection. Our intimacy was renewed, and continued from that time till his going abroad. Whatever faults Lord Byron might have had towards others, to myself he was always uniformly affectionate. I have many slights and neglects towards him to reproach myself with; but I cannot call to mind a single instance of caprice or unkindness, in the whole course of our friendship, to allege against him.”

In December, 1811, Harness paid Byron a visit at Newstead, the only other guest being Francis Hodgson, who, like Harness, was not then ordained. He thus describes the visit (‘Life of the Rev. Francis Hodgson’, vol. i. pp. 219-221): —

“When Byron returned, with the MS. of the first two cantos of ‘Childe Harold’ in his portmanteau, I paid him a visit at Newstead. It was winter — dark, dreary weather — the snow upon the ground; and a straggling, gloomy, depressive, partially inhabited place the Abbey was. Those rooms, however, which had been fitted up for residence were so comfortably appointed, glowing with crimson hangings, and cheerful with capacious fires, that one soon lost the melancholy feeling of being domiciled in the wing of an extensive ruin. Many tales are related or fabled of the orgies which, in the poet’s early youth, had made clamorous these ancient halls of the Byrons. I can only say that nothing in the shape of riot or excess occurred when I was there. The only other visitor was Dr. Hodgson, the translator of ‘Juvenal’, and nothing could be more quiet and regular than the course of our days. Byron was retouching, as the sheets passed through the press, the stanzas of ‘Childe Harold’. Hodgson was at work in getting out the ensuing number of the ‘Monthly Review’, of which he was principal editor. I was reading for my degree. When we met, our general talk was of poets and poetry — of who could or who could not write; but it occasionally rose into very serious discussions on religion. Byron, from his early education in Scotland, had been taught to identify the principles of Christianity

with the extreme dogmas of Calvinism. His mind had thus imbibed a most miserable prejudice, which appeared to be the only obstacle to his hearty acceptance of the Gospel. Of this error we were most anxious to disabuse him. The chief weight of the argument rested with Hodgson, who was older, a good deal, than myself. I cannot even now — at a distance of more than fifty years — recall those conversations without a deep feeling of admiration for the judicious zeal and affectionate earnestness (often speaking with tears in his eyes) which Dr. Hodgson evinced in his advocacy of the truth. The only difference, except perhaps in the subjects talked about, between our life at Newstead Abbey and that of the great families around us, was the hours we kept. It was, as I have said, winter, and the days were cold; and, as nothing tempted us to rise early, we got up late. This flung the routine of the day rather backward, and we did not go early to bed. My visit to Newstead lasted about three weeks, when I returned to Cambridge to take my degree.”

To Harness Byron intended to dedicate ‘Childe Harold’, but feared to do so, “lest it should injure him in his profession.”]

[Footnote 2: Three Wingfields, sons of Lord Powerscourt, entered Harrow in February, 1801. The Hon. Richard Wingfield succeeded his father as fifth Viscount Powerscourt in 1809, and died in 1823. Edward became a clergyman and died of cholera in 1825; John, Byron’s friend, the “Alonzo” of “Childish Recollections” entered the Coldstream Guards, and died of fever at Coimbra, May 14, 1811.

”Of all human beings, I was perhaps at one time most attached to poor Wingfield, who died at Coimbra, 1811, before I returned to England”

(‘Life’, p. 21). To his memory Byron wrote the lines in ‘Childe Harold’, Canto I. stanza xci.]

93. — To J. Ridge.

[Mr. Ridge, Newark.]

Dorant’s Hotel, February 21st, 1808.

Mr. Ridge, — Something has occurred which will make considerable alteration in my new volume. You must *go back* and *cut out* the whole *poem* of ‘Childish Recollections’. Of course you will be surprized at this, and perhaps displeased, but it must be *done*. I cannot help its detaining you a *month* longer, but there will be enough in the volume without it, and as I am now reconciled to Dr. Butler I cannot allow my satire to appear against him, nor can I alter that part relating to him without spoiling the whole. You will therefore omit the whole

poem. Send me an *immediate* answer to this letter but *obey* the directions. It is better that my reputation should suffer as a poet by the omission than as a man of honour by the insertion.

Etc., etc.,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: For “Childish Recollections,” see ‘Poems’, vol.i. p.101. A previous letter, written to Ridge from Dorant’s Hotel, January 9, 1808, illustrates the rapidity with which Byron’s moods changed. In this case, the lines on “Euryalus” (Lord Delawarr: see page 41 [Letter 13], [Foot]note 1) were to be omitted: —

“Mr. Ridge, — In Childish Recollections omit the whole character of ‘Euryalus’, and insert instead the lines to ‘Florio’ as a part of the poem, and send me a proof in due course.

“Etc. etc.,
“BYRON.

”P.S. — The first line of the passage to be omitted begins ‘Shall fair Euryalus,’ etc., and ends at ‘Toil for more;’ omit the *whole*.”]

CHAPTER III. 1808-1809.

‘ENGLISH BARDS, AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS.’

94. — To the Rev. John Becher.

Dorant’s Hotel, Feb. 26, 1808.

MY DEAR BECHER, — Now for Apollo. I am happy that you still retain your predilection, and that the public allow me some share of praise. I am of so much importance that a most violent attack is preparing for me in the next number of the ‘Edinburgh Review’. This I had from the authority of a friend who has seen the proof and manuscript of the critique. You know the system of the Edinburgh gentlemen is universal attack. They praise none; and neither the public nor the author expects praise from them. It is, however, something to be noticed, as they profess to pass judgment only on works requiring the public attention. You will see this when it comes out; — it is, I understand, of the most unmerciful description; but I am aware of it, and hope ‘you’ will not be hurt by its severity.

Tell Mrs. Byron not to be out of humour with them, and to prepare her mind for the greatest hostility on their part. It will do no injury whatever, and I trust her mind will not be ruffled. They defeat their object by indiscriminate abuse, and they never praise except the partisans of Lord Holland and Co. It is nothing to be abused when Southey, Moore, Lauderdale, Strangford, and Payne Knight, share the same fate.

I am sorry — but “Childish Recollections” must be suppressed during this edition. I have altered, at your suggestion, the *obnoxious allusions* in the sixth stanza of my last ode.

And now, my dear Becher, I must return my best acknowledgments for the interest you have taken in me and my poetical bantlings, and I shall ever be proud to show how much I esteem the *advice* and the *adviser*.

Believe me, most truly, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: The Rev. John Thomas Becher (1770-1848), educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford, was appointed Vicar of Rumpton, Notts., and Midsomer Norton, 1801; Prebendary of Southwell in 1818; and chairman of Newark Quarter Sessions in 1816. In all matters relating to the condition of the poor he made himself an acknowledged authority. He was the originator of a house of correction, a Friendly Society, and a workhouse at Southwell. He was one of the “supervisors” appointed to organize the Milbank Penitentiary, which was opened in June, 1816. On Friendly Societies he

published three works (1824, 1825, and 1826), in which, 'inter alia', he sought to prove that labourers, paying sixpence a week from the time they were twenty, could secure not only sick-pay, but an annuity of five shillings a week at the age of sixty-five. His 'Anti-Pauper System' (1828) pointed to indoor relief as the true cure to pauperism. It was by Becher's advice that Byron destroyed his 'Fugitive Pieces'. No one who has read the silly verses which Becher condemned, can doubt that the counsel was wise (see Byron's Lines to Becher, 'Poems', vol. i. pp. 112-114, 114-116, 247-251). The following are the lines in which Becher expostulated with Byron on the mischievous tendency of his verses: —

"Say, Byron! why compel me to deplore
Talents designed for choice poetic lore,
Deigning to varnish scenes, that shun the day,
With guilty lustre, and with amorous lay?
Forbear to taint the Virgin's spotless mind,
In Power though mighty, be in Mercy kind,
Bid the chaste Muse diffuse her hallowed light,
So shall thy Page enkindle pure delight,
Enhance thy native worth, and proudly twine,
With Britain's Honors, those that are divine."

[Footnote 2: See, for the Review itself, Appendix II.

"As an author," writes Byron to Hobhouse, February 27, 1808, "I am cut to atoms by the E — — -'Review;' it is just out, and has completely demolished my little fabric of fame. This is rather scurvy treatment for a Whig Review; but politics and poetry are different things, and I am no adept in either. I therefore submit in silence."

Among the less sentimental effects of this Review upon Byron's mind, he used to mention that, on the day he read it, he drank three bottles of claret to his own share after dinner; that nothing, however, relieved him till he had given vent to his indignation in rhyme, and that "after the first twenty lines, he felt himself considerably better" (Moore, 'Life', p. 69).

"I was sitting with Charles Lamb," H. Crabb Robinson told De Morgan, "when Wordsworth came in, with fume in his countenance and the 'Edinburgh Review' in his hand.

'I have no patience with these Reviewers,' he said; 'here is a young man, a lord, and a minor, it appears, who publishes a little volume of poetry; and these fellows attack him, as if no one may write poetry unless he lives in a garret. The

young man will do something, if he goes on.'

When I became acquainted with Lady Byron, I told her this story, and she said,

'Ah! if Byron had known that, he would never have attacked Wordsworth. He once went out to dinner where Wordsworth was to be; when he came home, I said,

"Well, how did the young poet get on with the old one?"

"To tell you the truth," said he, "I had but one feeling from the beginning of the visit to the end — 'reverence!'"

('Diary,' iii. 488.)]

[Footnote 3: That is to say, the 'Edinburgh Review' praised only Whigs. Henry Richard Vassall Fox, third Lord Holland (1773-1840), the "nephew of Fox, and friend of Grey," married, in 1797, Elizabeth Vassall, the divorced wife of Sir Godfrey Webster. He held the office of Lord Privy Seal in the Ministry of All the Talents (October, 1806, to March, 1807). During the long exclusion of the Whigs from office (1807-32), when there seemed as little chance of a Whig Administration as of "a thaw in Nova Zembla," Holland, in the House of Lords, supported Catholic Emancipation, advocated the emancipation of slaves, opposed the detention of Napoleon as a prisoner of war, and moved the abolition of capital punishment for minor offences. From November, 1830, to his death, with brief intervals, he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in the administrations of Lord Grey and of Lord Melbourne. Outside the House he kept the party together by his great social gifts. An admirable talker, 'raconteur', and mimic, with a wit's relish for wit, the charm of his good temper was irresistible.

"In my whole experience of our race," said Lord Brougham, "I never saw such a temper, nor anything that at all resembled it"

('Statesmen of the Time of George III.', ed. 1843, 3rd series, p. 341).
Greville speaks of

"his imperturbable temper, unflagging vivacity and spirit, his inexhaustible fund of anecdote, extensive information, sprightly wit"

('Memoirs', iii. 446). Leslie, in his 'Autobiographical Recollections' (vol. i. p. 100), adds the tribute that

"he was, without any exception, the very best-tempered man I have ever known."

Lord John Russell (preface to vol. vi. of the 'Life of Thomas Moore') says that

"he won without seeming to court, instructed without seeming to teach, and he amused without labouring to be witty."

George Ticknor ('Life', vol. i. p. 264)

"never met a man who so disarms opposition in discussion, as I have often seen him, without yielding an iota, merely by the unpretending simplicity and sincerity of his manner."

Sydney Smith ('Memoir of the Rev. Sydney Smith', chap. x. p. 187) considered that his

"career was one great, incessant, and unrewarded effort to resist oppression, promote justice, and restrain the abuse of power. He had an invincible hatred of tyranny and oppression, and the most ardent love of public happiness and attachment to public rights."

A lover of art, a scholar, a linguist, he wrote memoirs, satires, and verses, collected materials for a life of his uncle, Charles James Fox, and translated both from the Spanish and Italian. His 'Account of the Life and Writings of Lope Felix de Vega Carpio' (1806) was reviewed favourably by the 'Edinburgh Review' for October, 1806. Byron attacked him in 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers' (lines 540-559, and 'notes'), on the supposition that Lord Holland had instigated the article in the 'Edinburgh Review' on 'Hours of Idleness' (January, 1808). In 1812, learning his mistake, and hearing from Rogers that Lord and Lady Holland desired the satire to be withdrawn, he gave orders that the whole impression should be burned (see 'Introduction to English Sardes, and Scotch Reviewers, Poems,' vol. i. p. 294). In his 'Journal' (November 17, 1813) he writes,

"I have had a most kind letter from Lord Holland on 'The Bride of Abydos,' which he likes, and so does Lady H. This is very good-natured in both, from whom I do not deserve any quarter. Yet I 'did' think at the time, that my cause of enmity proceeded from Holland House, and am glad I was wrong, and wish I had not been in such a hurry with that confounded Satire, of which I would suppress even the memory; but people, now they can't get it, make a fuss, I verily believe out of contradiction."]

[Footnote 4: In the early numbers of the 'Edinburgh Review' reviews were published of Southey's 'Thalaba' and 'Madoc;' of Moore's 'Odes of Anacreon' and 'Poems;' of Lord Lauderdale's 'Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth;' of Lord Strangford's 'Translations from Camoëns;' of Payne Knight's 'Principles of Taste.']

95. — To the Rev. John Becher.

Dorant's, March 28, 1808.

I have lately received a copy of the new edition from Ridge, and it is high time for me to return my best thanks to you for the trouble you have taken in the superintendence. This I do most sincerely, and only regret that Ridge has not seconded you as I could wish, — at least, in the bindings, paper, etc., of the copy he sent to me. Perhaps those for the public may be more respectable in such articles.

You have seen the 'Edinburgh Review', of course. I regret that Mrs. Byron is so much annoyed. For my own part, these "paper bullets of the brain" have only taught me to stand fire; and, as I have been lucky enough upon the whole, my repose and appetite are not discomposed. Pratt, the gleaner, author, poet, etc., etc., addressed a long rhyming epistle to me on the subject, by way of consolation; but it was not well done, so I do not send it, though the name of the man might make it go down. The E. Rs. have not performed their task well; at least the literati tell me this; and I think *I* could write a more sarcastic critique on *myself* than any yet published. For instance, instead of the remark, — ill-natured enough, but not keen, — about Macpherson, I (quoad reviewers) could have said, "Alas, this imitation only proves the assertion of Dr. Johnson, that many men, women, and *children*, could write such poetry as Ossian's."

I am *thin* and in exercise. During the spring or summer I trust we shall meet. I hear Lord Ruthyn leaves Newstead in April. As soon as he quits it for ever, I wish much you would take a ride over, survey the mansion, and give me your candid opinion on the most advisable mode of proceeding with regard to the *house*. *Entre nous*, I am cursedly dipped; my debts, *every* thing inclusive, will be nine or ten thousand before I am twenty-one. But I have reason to think my property will turn out better than general expectation may conceive. Of Newstead I have little hope or care; but Hanson, my agent, intimated my Lancashire property was worth three Newsteads. I believe we have it hollow; though the defendants are protracting the surrender, if possible, till after my majority, for the purpose of forming some arrangement with me, thinking I shall probably prefer a sum in hand to a reversion. Newstead I may *sell*; — perhaps I will not, — though of that more anon. I will come down in May or June.

Yours most truly, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814), actor, itinerant lecturer, poet of the Cruscan school, tragedian, and novelist, published a large number of volumes. His 'Gleanings' in England, Holland, Wales, and Westphalia attained some reputation. His 'Sympathy, a Poem' (1788) passed through several

editions. His stage-name, as well as his ‘nom de plume’, was Courtney Melmoth. He was the discoverer and patron of the cobbler-poet, Blacket (see also ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’, line 319, note 2).]

[Footnote 2: “Dr. Johnson’s reply to the friend who asked him if any man ‘living’ could have written such a book, is well known: ‘Yes, sir; many men, many women, and many children.’ I inquired of him myself if this story was authentic, and he said it was” (Mrs. Piozzi, ‘Johnsoniana’, p. 84). — [Moore.]]

96. — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.

[Six Mile Bottom, Newmarket, Cambridge.]

Dorant’s, [Tuesday], April 26th, 1808.

My dear Augusta, — I regret being compelled to trouble you again, but it is necessary I should request you will inform Col. Leigh, if the P’s consent is not obtained in a few days, it will be of little service to Mr. Wallace, who is ordered to join the 17th in ten days, the Regiment is stationed in the East Indies, and, as he has already served there nine years, he is unwilling to return. I shall feel particularly obliged by Col. Leigh’s interference, as I think from his influence the Prince’s consent might be obtained. I am not much in the habit of asking favours, or pressing exertion, but, on this occasion, my wish to save Wallace must plead my excuse.

I have been introduced to Julia Byron by Trevannion at the Opera; she is pretty, but I do not admire her; there is too much Byron in her countenance, I hear she is clever, a very great defect in a woman, who becomes conceited in course; altogether I have not much inclination to improve the acquaintance.

I have seen my old friend George, who will prove the best of the family, and will one day be Lord B. I do not much care how soon.

Pray name my nephew after his uncle; it must be a nephew, (I *won’t* have a *niece*,) I will make him my *heir*, for I shall never marry, unless I am ruined, and then his *inheritance* would not be great.

George will have the title and his *laurels*; my property, (if any is left in five years time,) I can leave to whom I please, and your son shall be the legatee. Adieu.

Yours ever,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: George Anson Byron, R.N. (1758-1793), second son of Admiral the Hon. John Byron, by his wife Sophia Trevanion, and brother of Byron’s father, married Henrietta Charlotte Dallas, by whom he had a son, George, who was at this time in the Royal Navy, and in 1824 succeeded as seventh Lord

Byron; and a daughter, Julia Byron, who married, in 1817, the Rev. Robert Heath. Of his cousin George, Byron writes in his 'Journal' for November 30, 1813 ('Life,' p. 209):

"I like George much more than most people like their heirs. He is a fine fellow, and every inch a sailor."

Again on December 1, 1813, he says,

"I hope he will be an admiral, and, perhaps, Lord Byron into the bargain. If he would but marry, I would engage never to marry myself, or cut him out of the heirship."

George Anson Byron and his wife both died in 1793.]

97. — To the Rev. John Becher.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Sept. 14, 1808.

My dear Becher, — I am much obliged to you for your inquiries, and shall profit by them accordingly. I am going to get up a play here; the hall will constitute a most admirable theatre. I have settled the 'dram. pers.,' and can do without ladies, as I have some young friends who will make tolerable substitutes for females, and we only want three male characters, beside Mr. Hobhouse and myself, for the play we have fixed on, which will be the 'Revenge.' Pray direct Nicholson the carpenter to come over to me immediately, and inform me what day you will dine and pass the night here.

Believe me, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Young's tragedy (1721), from which one of Byron's Harrow speeches in the character of "Zanga" was taken (see page 27 [Letter 10], [Foot]note 1).]

98. — To John Jackson.

N. A., Notts., September 18, 1808.

Dear Jack, — I wish you would inform me what has been done by Jekyll, at No. 40, Sloane Square, concerning the pony I returned as unsound.

I have also to request you will call on Louch at Brompton, and inquire what the devil he meant by sending such an insolent letter to me at Brighton; and at the same time tell him I by no means can comply with the charge he has made for things pretended to be damaged.

Ambrose behaved most scandalously about the pony. You may tell Jekyll if he does not refund the money, I shall put the affair into my lawyer's hands. Five and twenty guineas is a sound price for a pony, and by God, if it costs me five hundred pounds, I will make an example of Mr. Jekyll, and that immediately, unless the cash is returned.

Believe me, dear Jack, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: John Jackson (1769-1845), better known as "Gentleman"]

Jackson, was champion of England from 1795 to 1803. His three fights were against Fewterel (1788), George Ingleston (1789), and Mendoza (1795). In his fight at Ingatestone with "George the Brewer," he slipped on the wet stage, and, falling, dislocated his ankle and broke his leg. His fight with Mendoza at Hornchurch, Essex, was decided in nine rounds. At the end of the third round "the odds rose two to one on Mendoza." In the fifth, Jackson "seized hold of his opponent by the hair, and served him out in that defenceless state till he fell to the ground." The fight was practically over, and the odds at once turned in favour of Jackson, who thenceforward had matters all his own way. Even if Mendoza had worn a wig, he probably would have succumbed to Jackson, who was a more powerful man with a longer reach, and as scientific, though not so ornamental, a boxer. In 1803 Jackson retired from the ring.

"I can see him now" ('Pugilistica,' vol. i. 98), "as I saw him in '84, walking down Holborn Hill towards Smithfield. He had on a scarlet coat worked in gold at the button-holes, ruffles, and frill of fine lace, a small white stock, no collar (they were not then invented), a looped hat with a broad black band, buff knee-breeches, and long silk strings, striped white silk stockings, pumps, and paste buckles; his waistcoat was pale blue satin, sprigged with white. It was impossible to look on his fine ample chest, his noble shoulders, his waist, (if anything too small,) his large, but not too large hips, ... his limbs, his balustrade calf and beautifully turned, but not over delicate ankle, his firm foot, and peculiarly small hand, without thinking that nature had sent him on earth as a model. On he went at a good five miles and a half an hour, the envy of all men, and the admiration of all women."

His rooms at 13, Bond Street, became the head-quarters of the Pugilistic Club, with whose initials, P.C., the ropes and stakes at prize-rings were marked (see page 99 [Letter 51], [Foot]note 1; and Pierce Egan's 'Life in London,' pp. 252-254). From 1803 to 1824, when he retired from the profession, he was, as Pierce Egan says of him (p. 254), unrivalled as "a teacher of the Art of 'self-defence.'" His character stood high. "From the highest to the lowest person in the Sporting World, his 'decision' is law."

"This gentleman," says Moore, in a note to 'Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress' (p. 13), "as he well deserves to be called, from the correctness of his conduct and the peculiar urbanity of his manners, forms that useful link between the amateurs and the professors of pugilism, which, when broken, it will be difficult, if not wholly impossible, to replace."

He was Byron's guest at Cambridge, Newstead, and Brighton; received from him many letters; and is described by him, in a note to 'Don Juan' (Canto XI. stanza xix.), as "my old friend and corporeal pastor and master." Jackson's

monument in Brompton Cemetery, a couchant lion and a mourning athlete, was subscribed for “by several noblemen and gentlemen, to record their admiration of one whose excellence of heart and incorruptible worth endeared him to all who knew him.”]

99. — To John Jackson.

N. A., Notts., October 4, 1808.

You will make as good a bargain as possible with this Master Jekyll, if he is not a gentleman. If he is a *gentleman*, inform me, for I shall take very different steps. If he is not, you must get what you can of the money, for I have too much business on hand at present to commence an action. Besides, Ambrose is the man who ought to refund, — but I have done with him. You can settle with L. out of the balance, and dispose of the bidets, etc., as you best can.

I should be very glad to see you here; but the house is filled with workmen, and undergoing a thorough repair. I hope, however, to be more fortunate before many months have elapsed.

If you see Bold Webster, remember me to him, and tell him I have to regret Sydney, who has perished, I fear, in my rabbit warren, for we have seen nothing of him for the last fortnight. Adieu.

Believe me, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster (1788-1836).]

[Footnote 2: A third letter to Jackson, written from Newstead, December 12, 1808, runs as follows: —

“My Dear Jack, — You will get the greyhound from the owner at any price, and as many more of the same breed (male or female) as you can collect.

“Tell D’Egville his dress shall be returned — I am obliged to him for the pattern. I am sorry you should have so much trouble, but I was not aware of the difficulty of procuring the animals in question. I shall have finished part of my mansion in a few weeks, and, if you can pay me a visit at Christmas, I shall be very glad to see you.

Believe me, *etc.*”

In a bill, for 1808, sent in to Byron by Messrs. Finn and Johnson, tailors, of Nottingham, appears the following item: “Masquerade Jackett with belt and rich Turban, £11:9:6.” This is probably the dress made from d’Egville’s pattern.

James d’Egville learned dancing from Gaetano Vestris, well known at the Court of Frederick the Great, and from Gardel, the Court teacher of Marie Antoinette. He, his brother Louis, and his sister Madame Michau, were the most famous teachers of the day in England. The real name of the family was Hervey; that of d’Egville was assumed for professional purposes. James d’Egville enjoyed a great reputation, both as an actor and a dancer, in Paris and London.

He was Acting-Manager and Director of the King's Theatre (October, 1807, to January, 1808), but was dismissed, owing to a disagreement between the managers, in the course of which he was accused of French proclivities and republican principles (see Waters's 'Opera-Glass', pp. 133-145). A man of taste and cultivation, he produced some musical extravaganzas and ballets; 'e.g. Don Quichotte ou les Noces de Gamache, L'Elèvement d'Adonis, The Rape of Dejanira', *etc.*

A coloured print, in the possession of his great-nephew, Mr. Louis d'Egville, represents him, with Deshayes, in one of his most successful appearances, the ballet-pantomime of 'Achille et Deidamie'. He was an enthusiastic sportsman.]

100. — To his Mother.

Newstead Abbey, Notts, October 7, 1808.

Dear Madam, — I have no beds for the Hansons or any body else at present. The Hansons sleep at Mansfield. I do not know that I resemble Jean Jacques Rousseau. I have no ambition to be like so illustrious a madman — but this I know, that I shall live in my own manner, and as much alone as possible. When my rooms are ready I shall be glad to see you: at present it would be improper, and uncomfortable to both parties. You can hardly object to my rendering my mansion habitable, notwithstanding my departure for Persia in March (or May at farthest), since *you* will be *tenant* till my return; and in case of any accident (for I have already arranged my will to be drawn up the moment I am twenty-one), I have taken care you shall have the house and manor for *life*, besides a sufficient income. So you see my improvements are not entirely selfish. As I have a friend here, we will go to the Infirmary Ball on the 12th; we will drink tea with Mrs. Byron at eight o'clock, and expect to see you at the ball. If that lady will allow us a couple of rooms to dress in, we shall be highly obliged: — if we are at the ball by ten or eleven, it will be time enough, and we shall return to Newstead about three or four. Adieu.

Believe me, yours very truly,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: In Byron's 'Detached Thoughts', quoted by Moore ('Life', p. 72), he thus refers to the comparison with Rousseau: —

"My mother, before I was twenty, would have it that I was like Rousseau, and Madame de Stael used to say so too in 1813, and the 'Edinburgh Review' has something of the sort in its critique on the fourth canto of 'Childe Harold'. I can't see any point of resemblance: — he wrote prose, I verse: he was of the people; I of the aristocracy: he was a philosopher; I am none: he published his first work at forty; I mine at eighteen: his first essay brought him universal

applause; mine the contrary: he married his housekeeper; I could not keep house with my wife: he thought all the world in a plot against him; my little world seems to think me in a plot against it, if I may judge by their abuse in print and coterie: he liked botany; I like flowers, herbs, and trees, but know nothing of their pedigrees: he wrote music; I limit my knowledge of it to what I catch by *ear* — I never could learn any thing by *study*, not even a *language* — it was all by rote and ear, and memory: he had a *bad* memory; I *had*, at least, an excellent one (ask Hodgson the poet — a good judge, for he has an astonishing one): he wrote with hesitation and care; I with rapidity, and rarely with pains: *he* could never ride, nor swim, nor ‘was cunning of fence;’ *I* am an excellent swimmer, a decent, though not at all a dashing, rider, (having staved in a rib at eighteen, in the course of scampering,) and was sufficient of fence, particularly of the Highland broadsword, — not a bad boxer, when I could keep my temper, which was difficult, but which I strove to do ever since I knocked down Mr. Purling, and put his knee-pan out (with the gloves on), in Angelo’s and Jackson’s rooms in 1806, during the sparring, — and I was, besides, a very fair cricketer, — one of the Harrow eleven, when we played against Eton in 1805. Besides, Rousseau’s way of life, his country, his manners, his whole character, were so very different, that I am at a loss to conceive how such a comparison could have arisen, as it has done three several times, and all in rather a remarkable manner. I forgot to say that *he* was also short-sighted, and that hitherto my eyes have been the contrary, to such a degree that, in the largest theatre of Bologna, I distinguished and read some busts and inscriptions, painted near the stage, from a box so distant and so *darkly* lighted, that none of the company (composed of young and very bright-eyed people, some of them in the same box,) could make out a letter, and thought it was a trick, though I had never been in that theatre before.

“Altogether, I think myself justified in thinking the comparison not well founded. I don’t say this out of pique, for Rousseau was a great man; and the thing, if true, were flattering enough; — but I have no idea of being pleased with the chimera.”]

[Footnote 2: The Hon. Mrs. George Byron, ‘née’ Frances Levett, Byron’s great-aunt, widow of the Hon. George Byron, fourth brother of William, fifth Lord Byron.]

101. — To his Mother.

Newstead Abbey, November 2, 1808.

DEAR MOTHER, — If you please, we will forget the things you mention. I have no desire to remember them. When my rooms are finished, I shall be happy

to see you; as I tell but the truth, you will not suspect me of evasion. I am furnishing the house more for you than myself, and I shall establish you in it before I sail for India, which I expect to do in March, if nothing particularly obstructive occurs. I am now fitting up the *green* drawing-room; the red for a bed-room, and the rooms over as sleeping-rooms. They will be soon completed; — at least I hope so.

I wish you would inquire of Major Watson (who is an old Indian) what things will be necessary to provide for my voyage. I have already procured a friend to write to the Arabic Professor at Cambridge, for some information I am anxious to procure. I can easily get letters from government to the ambassadors, consuls, etc., and also to the governors at Calcutta and Madras. I shall place my property and my will in the hands of trustees till my return, and I mean to appoint you one. From Hanson I have heard nothing — when I do, you shall have the particulars.

After all, you must own my project is not a bad one. If I do not travel now, I never shall, and all men should one day or other. I have at present no connections to keep me at home; no wife, or unprovided sisters, brothers, *etc.* I shall take care of you, and when I return I may possibly become a politician. A few years' knowledge of other countries than our own will not incapacitate me for that part. If we see no nation but our own, we do not give mankind a fair chance; — it is from *experience*, not books, we ought to judge of them. There is nothing like inspection, and trusting to our own senses.

Yours, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: The Rev. John Palmer, Fellow of St. John's, Adam's Professor of Arabic (1804-19).]

102. — To Francis Hodgson.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Nov. 3, 1808.

My Dear Hodgson, — I expected to have heard ere this the event of your interview with the mysterious Mr. Haynes, my volunteer correspondent; however, as I had no business to trouble you with the adjustment of my concerns with that illustrious stranger, I have no right to complain of your silence.

You have of course seen Drury, in all the pleasing palpitations of anticipated wedlock. Well! he has still something to look forward to, and his present extacies are certainly enviable. "Peace be with him and with his spirit," and his flesh also, at least just now ...

Hobhouse and your humble are still here. Hobhouse hunts, etc., and I do nothing; we dined the other day with a neighbouring Esquire (not Collet of

Staines), and regretted your absence, as the Bouquet of Staines was scarcely to be compared to our last “feast of reason.” You know, laughing is the sign of a rational animal; so says Dr. Smollett. I think so, too, but unluckily my spirits don’t always keep pace with my opinions. I had not so much scope for risibility the other day as I could have wished, for I was seated near a woman, to whom, when a boy, I was as much attached as boys generally are, and more than a man should be. I knew this before I went, and was determined to be valiant, and converse with *sang froid*; but instead I forgot my valour and my nonchalance, and never opened my lips even to laugh, far less to speak, and the lady was almost as absurd as myself, which made both the object of more observation than if we had conducted ourselves with easy indifference. You will think all this great nonsense; if you had seen it, you would have thought it still more ridiculous. What fools we are! We cry for a plaything, which, like children, we are never satisfied with till we break open, though like them we cannot get rid of it by putting it in the fire.

I have tried for Gifford’s *Epistle to Pindar*, and the bookseller says the copies were cut up for *waste paper*; if you can procure me a copy I shall be much obliged. Adieu!

Believe me, my dear Sir, yours ever sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Francis Hodgson (1781-1852), educated at Eton (1794-99) and at King’s College, Cambridge, Scholar (1799), Fellow (1802), hesitated between literature and the bar as his profession. For three years he was a private tutor, for one (1806) a master at Eton. In 1807 he became a resident tutor at King’s. It was not till 1812 that he decided to take orders. Two years later he married Miss Tayler, a sister of Mrs. Henry Drury, and took a country curacy. In 1816 he was given the Eton living of Bakewell, in Derbyshire, became Archdeacon of Derby in 1836, and in 1840 Provost of Eton. At Eton he died December 29, 1852.

Hodgson’s literary facility was extraordinary. He rhymed with an ease which almost rivals that of Byron, and from 1807 to 1818 he poured out quantities of verse, English and Latin, original and translated, besides writing articles for the ‘Quarterly’, the ‘Monthly’, and the ‘Critical’ Reviews. He published his ‘Translation of Juvenal’ in 1807, in which he was assisted by Drury and Merivale; ‘Lady Jane Grey’, a Tale; and other Poems (1809); ‘Sir Edgar, a Tale’ (1810); ‘Leaves of Laurel’ (1812); ‘Charlemagne, an Epic Poem’ (1815), translated from the original of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, by S. Butler and Francis Hodgson; ‘The Friends, a Poem in Four Books; Mythology for Versification’ (1831); ‘A Charge, as Archdeacon of Derby’ (1837); ‘Sermons’

(1846); and other works.

His acquaintance with Byron began in 1807, when Byron was meditating 'British Bards', and Hodgson, provoked by a review of his 'Juvenal' in the 'Edinburgh Review', was composing his 'Gentle Alterative prepared for the Reviewers', which appears on pp. 56, 57 of 'Lady Jane Grey'. There are some curious points of resemblance between the two poems, though Hodgson's lines can hardly be compared for force and sting to 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers'. Like Byron (see 'English Bards, etc'., line 513, note 7), he makes merry over the blunder of the 'Edinburgh' reviewer, who, in an article on Payne Knight's 'Principles of Taste', severely criticized some Greek lines which he attributed to Knight, but which, in fact, were by Pindar: —

"And when he frown'd on Kn — 's erroneous Greek,
Bad him in Pindar's page that error seek."

Like Byron also, he attributes the blunder to Hallam, and speaks of "Hallam's baffled art." The article was written by Lord Holland's physician, Dr. Allen, who, according to Sydney Smith, had "the creed of a philosopher and the legs of a clergyman." Like Byron also (see 'English Bards, etc'., line 820), he appeals to Gifford, who was an old family friend, to return to the fray: —

"Oh! for that voice, whose cadence loud and strong
Drove Delia Crusca from the field of song —
And with a force that guiltier fools should feel,
Rack'd a vain butterfly on Satire's wheel."

In a note appended to the words in his satire — "Like clowns detest nobility" — he refers to the 'Edinburgh's' treatment of Byron's verse.

The link thus established between Byron and Hodgson grew stronger for the next few years. Hodgson suppressed Moore's challenge to the author of 'English Bards'; was Byron's guest at Newstead (see page 179 [Letter 92], in [Foot]note [further down]); pleaded with him on the subject of religion; translated his lines, "I would I were a careless child," into Latin verse ('Lady Jane Grey', p. 94); addressed him in poetry, as, for instance, in the "Lines to a Friend going abroad" ('Sir Edgar', p. 173). Byron, on his side, seems to have been sincerely attached to Hodgson, to whom he left, by his first will (1811), one-third of his personal goods, and in 1813 gave £1000 to enable him to marry. Hodgson corresponded with Mrs. Leigh and with Miss Milbanke, afterwards Lady Byron, endeavoured to heal the breach between husband and wife, and was one of the mourners at

Hucknall Torkard Church.

In Haydon's 'Table-Talk' (vol. ii. pp. 367-8) is recorded a conversation with Hobhouse on the subject of Hodgson. Haydon's account of Hobhouse's words is confused; but he definitely asserts that Hodgson's life was dissipated, and insinuates that he perverted Byron's character. Part of the explanation is probably this: Hodgson's friend, the Rev. Robert Bland, kept a mistress, described as a woman of great personal and mental attraction. He asked Hodgson, during his absence on the Continent, to visit the lady and send him frequent news of her. Hodgson did so, with the result that, at Bland's return, the lady refused to see him. When Byron came back from his Eastern tour, he received a frantic letter from Bland, telling him that Hodgson had stolen her love. To this Byron refers in his letter to Harness, December 15, 1811, and probably told an embellished story to Hobhouse. But Hodgson himself warmly repudiated the charge; and there is no reason to think that his version of the affair is not the truth.]

[Footnote 2: The Rev. Henry Drury married, December 20, 1808, Ann Caroline, daughter of Archdale Wilson Tayler, of Boreham Wood, Herts. Their five sons were all educated at Harrow: Henry, Archdeacon of Wilts and editor of 'Arundines Cami' (1841); Byron, Vice-Admiral R.N.; Benjamin Heath, Vice-President of Caius College, Cambridge; Heber, Colonel in the Madras Army; Charles Curtis, General of the Bengal Staff Corps (see also page 41 [Letter 14], [Foot]note 2).]

[Footnote 3: Mrs. Chaworth Musters (see Byron's lines, "Well! thou art happy," 'Poems', vol. i. pp. 277-279).]

[Footnote 4: William Gifford (1756-1826), a self-taught scholar, first a ploughboy, then boy on board a Brixham coaster, afterwards shoemaker's apprentice, was sent by friends to Exeter College, Oxford (1779-81). In the 'Baviad' (1794) and the 'Maeviad' (1795) he attacked many of the smaller writers of the day, who were either silly, like the Delia Cruscan school, or discreditable, like Williams, who wrote as "Anthony Pasquin." In his 'Epistle to Peter Pindar' (1800) he succeeds in laying bare the true character of John Wolcot. As editor of the 'Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner' (November, 1797, to July, 1798), he supported the political views of Canning and his friends. As editor of the 'Quarterly Review', from its foundation (February, 1809) to his resignation in September, 1824, he did yeoman's service to sound literature by his good sense and adherence to the best models. It was a period when all criticism was narrow, and, to some degree, warped by political prejudice. In

these respects, Gifford's work may not have risen above — it certainly did not fall below — the highest standard of contemporary criticism. His editions of 'Massinger' (1805), which superseded that of Monck Mason and Davies (1765), of 'Ben Jonson' (1816), of 'Ford' (1827), are valuable. To his translation of 'Juvenal' (1802) is prefixed his autobiography. His translation of 'Persius' appeared in 1821. To Gifford, Byron usually paid the utmost deference.

"Any suggestion of yours, even if it were conveyed," he writes to him, in 1813, "in the less tender text of the 'Baviad,' or a Monk Mason note to Massinger, would be obeyed."

See also his letter (September 7, 1811), in which he calls Gifford his "Magnus Apollo," and values his praise above the gems of Samarcand.

"He was," says Sir Walter Scott ('Diary,' January 18, 1827), "a little man, dumbled up together, and so ill-made as to seem almost deformed, but with a singular expression of talent in his countenance."

Byron was attracted to Gifford, partly by his devotion to the classical models of literature, partly by the outspoken frankness of his literary criticism, partly also, perhaps, by his physical deformity.

103. — To John Hanson.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., November 18th, 1808.

Dear Sir, — I am truly glad to hear your health is reinstated. As for my affairs I am sure you will do your best, and, though I should be glad to get rid of my Lancashire property for an equivalent in money, I shall not take any steps of that nature without good advice and mature consideration.

I am (as I have already told you) going abroad in the spring; for this I have many reasons. In the first place, I wish to study India and Asiatic policy and manners. I am young, tolerably vigorous, abstemious in my way of living; I have no pleasure in fashionable dissipation, and I am determined to take a wider field than is customary with travellers. If I return, my judgment will be more mature, and I shall still be young enough for politics. With regard to expence, travelling through the East is rather inconvenient than expensive: it is not like the tour of Europe, you undergo hardship, but incur little hazard of spending money. If I live here I must have my house in town, a separate house for Mrs. Byron; I must keep horses, etc., etc. When I go abroad I place Mrs. Byron at Newstead (there is one great expence saved), I have no horses to keep. A voyage to India will take me six months, and if I had a dozen attendants cannot cost me five hundred pounds; and you will agree with me that a like term of months in England would

lead me into four times that expenditure. I have written to Government for letters and permission of the Company, so you see I am *serious*.

You honour my debts; they amount to perhaps twelve thousand pounds, and I shall require perhaps three or four thousand at setting out, with credit on a Bengal agent. This you must manage for me. If my resources are not adequate to the supply I must *sell*, but *not Newstead*. I will at least transmit that to the next Lord. My debts must be paid, if possible, in February. I shall leave my affairs to the care of *trustees*, of whom, with your acquiescence, I shall *name you* one, Mr. Parker another, and two more, on whom I am not yet determined.

Pray let me hear from you soon. Remember me to Mrs. Hanson, whom I hope to see on her return. Present my best respects to the young lady, and believe me, etc.,

BYRON.

104. — To Francis Hodgson.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Nov. 27, 1808.

My Dear Sir, — Boatswain is to be buried in a vault waiting for myself. I have also written an epitaph, which I would send, were it not for two reasons: one is, that it is too long for a letter; and the other, that I hope you will some day read it on the spot where it will be engraved.

You discomfort me with the intelligence of the real orthodoxy of the Arch-fiend's name, but alas! it must stand with me at present; if ever I have an opportunity of correcting, I shall liken him to Geoffrey of Monmouth, a noted liar in his way, and perhaps a more correct prototype than the Carnifex of James II.

I do not think the composition of your poem "a sufficing reason" for not keeping your promise of a Christmas visit. Why not come? I will never disturb you in your moments of inspiration; and if you wish to collect any materials for the *scenery*?, Hardwicke (where Mary was confined for several years) is not eight miles distant, and, independent of the interest you must take in it as her vindicator, is a most beautiful and venerable object of curiosity. I shall take it very ill if you do not come; my mansion is improving in comfort, and, when you require solitude, I shall have an apartment devoted to the purpose of receiving your poetical reveries.

I have heard from our Drury; he says little of the Row, which I regret: indeed I would have sacrificed much to have contributed in any way (as a schoolboy) to its consummation; but Butler survives, and thirteen boys have been expelled in

vain. Davies is not here, but Hobhouse hunts as usual, and your humble servant “drags at each remove a lengthened chain.” I have heard from his Grace of Portland on the subject of my expedition: he talks of difficulties; by the gods! if he throws any in my way I will next session ring such a peal in his ears,

That he shall wish the fiery
Dane Had rather been his guest again.

You do not tell me if Gifford is really my commentator: it is too good to be true, for I know nothing would gratify my vanity so much as the reality; even the idea is too precious to part with.

I shall expect you here; let me have no more excuses. Hobhouse desires his best remembrance. We are now lingering over our evening potations. I have extended my letter further than I ought, and beg you will excuse it; on the opposite page I send you some stanzas I wrote off on being questioned by a former flame as to my motives for quitting this country. You are the first reader. Hobhouse hates everything of the kind, therefore I do not show them to him. Adieu!

Believe me, yours very sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Boatswain, the Newfoundland dog, died November 18, 1808. (For Byron’s inscriptions in prose and verse, see ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 280.)]

[Footnote 2: Byron at first thought that Jeffrey, the editor of the ‘Edinburgh Review’, spelt his name in the same way as the Judge Jeffreys of the Bloody Assizes. He probably writes “orthodoxy” for “orthography” as a joke. (See the lines quoted from ‘British Bards’ in notes to ‘English. Bards, etc.’, line 439, note 2.)]

[Footnote 3: It is stated that Hodgson was writing a poem on Mary Queen of Scots (‘Life of Rev. Francis Hodgson’, vol. i. p. 107). No such poem was apparently ever published. In Hodgson’s ‘Lady Jane Grey’, Queen Mary of England plays a part; hence, possibly, the mistake.]

[Footnote 4: Byron asked the Duke of Portland to procure him “permission from the E.I. Directors to pass through their settlements.” The duke replied, in effect, that Byron trespassed on his time and patience. So Byron at least took his answer (see ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers,’ line 1016 and note 2).]

[Footnote 5: ‘Marmion’, Canto II. stanza xxxi.]

[Footnote 6: See stanzas “To a Lady on being asked my Reason for Quitting England in the Spring” (‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 282) 1

105. — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.

[Ld. Chichester's, Stratton Street, London.]

Newstead Abbey, Notts., [Wednesday], Novr. 30th, 1808.

My Dearest Augusta, — I return you my best thanks for making me an uncle, and forgive the sex this time; but the next *must* be a nephew. You will be happy to hear my Lancashire property is likely to prove extremely valuable; indeed my pecuniary affairs are altogether far superior to my expectations or any other person's. If I would *sell*, my income would probably be six thousand per annum; but I will not part at least with Newstead, or indeed with the other, which is of a nature to increase in value yearly. I am living here *alone*, which suits my inclinations better than society of any kind. Mrs. Byron I have shaken off for two years, and I shall not resume her yoke in future, I am afraid my disposition will suffer in your estimation; but I never can forgive that woman, or breathe in comfort under the same roof.

I am a very unlucky fellow, for I think I had naturally not a bad heart; but it has been so bent, twisted, and trampled on, that it has now become as hard as a Highlander's heelpiece.

I do not know that much alteration has taken place in my person, except that I am grown much thinner, and somewhat taller! I saw Col. Leigh at Brighton in July, where I should have been glad to have seen you; I only know your husband by sight, though I am acquainted with many of the Tenth. Indeed my relations are those whom I know the least, and in most instances, I am not very anxious to improve the acquaintance. I hope you are quite recovered, I shall be in town in January to take my seat, and will call, if convenient; let me hear from you before.

[Signature cut off, and over the page is, in Mrs. Leigh's writing, this endorsement: "Sent to Miss Alderson to go to Germany, May 29th, 1843."]

106. — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.

[Ld. Chichester's, Stratton Street, London.]

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Decr. 14th, 1808.

My Dearest Augusta, — When I stated in my last, that my intercourse with the world had hardened my heart, I did not mean from any matrimonial disappointment, no, I have been guilty of many absurdities, but I hope in God I shall always escape that worst of evils, Marriage. I have no doubt there are exceptions, and of course include you amongst them, but you will recollect, that "*exceptions only prove the Rule.*"

I live here much in my own manner, that is, *alone*, for I could not bear the

company of my best friend, above a month; there is such a sameness in mankind upon the whole, and they grow so much more disgusting every day, that, were it not for a portion of Ambition, and a conviction that in times like the present we ought to perform our respective duties, I should live here all my life, in unvaried Solitude. I have been visited by all our Nobility and Gentry; but I return no visits. Joseph Murray is at the head of my household, poor honest fellow! I should be a great Brute, if I had not provided for him in the manner most congenial to his own feelings, and to mine. I have several horses, and a considerable establishment, but I am not addicted to hunting or shooting. I hate all field sports, though a few years since I was a tolerable adept in the *polite* arts of Foxhunting, Hawking, Boxing, etc., etc. My Library is rather extensive, (and as you perhaps know) I am a mighty Scribbler; I flatter myself I have made some improvements in Newstead, and, as I am independent, I am happy, as far as any person unfortunate enough to be born into this world, can be said to be so.

I shall be glad to hear from you when convenient, and beg you to believe me,
Very sincerely yours,
BYRON.

107. — To John Hanson.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Dec. 17, 1808.

My Dear Sir, — I regret the contents of your letter as I think we shall be thrown on our backs from the delay. I do not know if our best method would not be to compromise if possible, as you know the state of my affairs will not be much bettered by a protracted and possibly unsuccessful litigation. However, I am and have been so much in the dark during the whole transaction that I am not a competent judge of the most expedient measures. I suppose it will end in my marrying a *Golden Dolly* or blowing my brains out; it does not much matter which, the remedies are nearly alike. I shall be glad to hear from you further on the business. I suppose now it will be still more difficult to come to any terms. Have you seen Mrs. Massingberd, and have you arranged my Israelitish accounts? Pray remember me to Mrs. Hanson, to Harriet, and all the family, female and male.

Believe me also, yours very sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Byron also advised his marriage with an heiress. The following passage is taken from her letter to Hanson, January 30, 1809: —

“I was sorry I could not see you here. Byron told me he intended to put his servants on Board Wages at Newstead. I was very sorry to hear of the great

expend the Newstead *fête* would put him to. I can see nothing but the Road to Ruin in all this, which grieves me to the heart and makes me still worse than I would otherwise be (unless, indeed, Coal Mines turn to Gold Mines), or that he mends his fortune in the old and usual way by marrying a Woman with two or three hundred thousand pounds. I have no doubt of his being a great speaker and a celebrated public character, and *all* that; but that *won't add* to his fortune, but bring on more expenses on him, and there is nothing to be had in this country to make a man rich in his line of life."

In another letter to Hanson, dated March 4, 1809, she returns to the same subject: —

"I have had a very dismal letter from my son, informing me that he is *ruined*. He wishes to borrow my money. This I shall be very ready to oblige him in, on such security as you approve. As it is my *all*, this is very necessary, and I am sure he would not wish to have it on any other terms. It cannot be paid up, however, under six months' notice. I wish he would take the debt of a thousand pounds, that I have been security for, on himself, and pay about eighty pounds he owes here.

I wish to God he would exert himself and retrieve his affairs. He must marry a Woman of *fortune* this spring; love matches is all nonsense. Let him make use of the Talents God has given him. He is an English Peer, and has all the privileges of that situation. What is this about proving his grandfather's marriage? I thought it had been in Lancashire. If it was not, it surely easily can be proved. Is nothing going forward concerning the Rochdale Property? I am sure, if I was Lord Byron, I would sell no estates to pay Jews; I only would pay what was lawful. Pray answer the note immediately, and answer all my questions concerning lending the money, the Rochdale property, and why B. don't or can't take his seat, which is very hard, and very provoking.

I am, Dear Sir, yours sincerely,

C. G. BYRON."]

108. — To Francis Hodgson.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Dec. 17, 1808.

My Dear Hodgson, — I have just received your letter, and one from B. Drury, which I would send, were it not too bulky to despatch within a sheet of paper; but I must impart the contents and consign the answer to your care. In the first place, I cannot address the answer to him, because the epistle is without date or direction; and in the next, the contents are so singular that I can scarce believe my optics, "which are made the fools of the other senses, or else worth all the

rest.”

A few weeks ago, I wrote to our friend Harry Drury of facetious memory, to request he would prevail on his brother at Eton to receive the son of a citizen in London well known unto me as a pupil; the family having been particularly polite during the short time I was with them, induced me to this application. “Now mark what follows,” as somebody or Southey sublimely saith: on this day, the 17th December, arrives an epistle signed B. Drury, containing not the smallest reference to tuition or *intuition*, but a *petition* for *Robert Gregson*, of pugilistic notoriety, now in bondage for certain paltry pounds sterling, and liable to take up his everlasting abode in Banco Regis. Had this letter been from any of my *lay* acquaintance, or, in short, from anyone but the gentleman whose signature it bears, I should have marvelled not. If Drury is serious, I congratulate pugilism on the acquisition of such a patron, and shall be happy to advance any sum necessary for the liberation of the captive Gregson; but I certainly hope to be certified from you or some reputable housekeeper of the fact, before I write to Drury on the subject. When I say the *fact*, I mean of the *letter* being written by *Drury*, not having any doubt as to the authenticity of the statement. The letter is now before me, and I keep it for your perusal. When I hear from you I shall address my answer to him, under *your care*; for as it is now the vacation at Eton, and the letter is without *time* or *place*, I cannot venture to consign my sentiments on so *momentous a concern* to chance.

To you, my dear Hodgson, I have not much to say. If you can make it convenient or pleasant to trust yourself here, be assured it will be both to me.

[Footnote 1: Benjamin Heath Drury (1782-1835), second son of the Headmaster of Harrow (see page 41 [Letter 14], [Foot]note 2), was a Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge, and Assistant-master at Eton. Gronow (‘Reminiscences’, vol. i. pp. 209 and 233) says that Drury was “passionately devoted to theatricals,” and, with his friend Knapp, frequently drove up to London after school-hours to sup with Edmund Kean and Arnold at Drury Lane or the Hummums in Covent Garden. On one occasion they took with them Lord Eldon’s son, then a schoolboy at Eton. After supper the party were “run in” by the watchmen, and bailed out at Bow Street by the Lord Chancellor’s secretary.]

[Footnote 2: Bob Gregson (1778-1824), the big-boned, burly landlord of the Castle, Holborn, known as “Bob’s Chop-house,” was a familiar figure in the sporting world. When captain of the Liverpool and Wigan Packet, he established his reputation in Lancashire as a fighter. He stood 6 feet 1-1/2 inches in height,

and weighed 15 stone 6 pounds. But, in spite of the eulogies of Pierce Egan — a low-caste Irishman, who was first a compositor, then a comedian, and afterwards a newspaper reporter (see Grantley Berkeley's 'My Life and Recollections', vol. i. pp. 107, 108) — Gregson had no science, and depended only on his strength, courage, and endurance. He was beaten by Gully at Six Mile Bottom in 1807, and again in 1808 at Markyate Street; also by Tom Cribb at Moulsey Hurst in 1808 ('Pugilistica', vol. i. pp. 237-241). Failing as landlord of the Castle, he set up a school of boxing at Dublin, where he afterwards kept "the Punch House," in Moor Street. He died at Liverpool in 1824. According to Egan ('Boxiana', vol. i. pp. 357, 358), Gregson "united Pugilism with Poetry." On this claim he adopted the letters "P.P." after his name. Egan gives some of his doggerel among "Prime Chaunts for the Fancy" ('ibid'., p. 358). Moore, in 'Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress', attributes to him his "Lines to Miss Grace Maddox" (pp. 75-77); "Ya-Hip, my Hearties!" (pp. 80-83); and "The Annual Pill" (pp. 84-86).]

109. — To John Hanson.

Newstead Abbey, Jan. 15th, 1809.

My Dear Sir, — I am much obliged by your kind invitation, but I wish you, if possible, to be here on the 22nd. Your presence will be of great service, everything is prepared for your reception exactly as if I remained, and I think Hargreaves will be gratified by the appearance of the place, and the humours of the day. I shall on the first opportunity pay my respects to your family, and though I will not trespass on your hospitality on the 22nd, my obligation is not less for your agreeable offer, which on any other occasion would be immediately accepted, but I wish you much to be present at the festivities, and I hope you will add Charles to the party. Consider, as the Courtier says in the tragedy of *Tom Thumb* —

"This is a day; your Majesties may boast of it,
And since it never can come o'er, 'tis fit you make the most of it."

I shall take my seat as soon as circumstances will admit. I have not yet chosen my side in politics, nor shall I hastily commit myself with professions, or pledge my support to any men or measures, but though I shall not run headlong into opposition, I will studiously avoid a connection with ministry. I cannot say that my opinion is strongly in favour of either party; on the one side we have the late underlings of Pitt, possessing all his ill fortune, without his talents; this may render their failure more excusable, but will not diminish the public contempt; on the other, we have the ill-assorted fragments of a worn-out minority; Mr. Windham with his coat *twice* turned, and my Lord Grenville who perhaps has

more sense than he can make good use of; between the two and the shuttlecock of both, a Sidmouth, and the general *football* Sir F. Burdett, kicked at by all, and owned by none.

I shall stand aloof, speak what I think, but not often, nor too soon. I will preserve my independence, if possible, but if involved with a party, I will take care not to be the *last* or *least* in the ranks. As to *patriotism*, the word is obsolete, perhaps improperly, so, for all men in the Country are patriots, knowing that their own existence must stand or fall with the Constitution, yet everybody thinks he could alter it for the better, and govern a people, who are in fact easily governed, but always claim the privilege of grumbling. So much for Politics, of which I at present know little and care less; bye and bye, I shall use the senatorial privilege of talking, and indeed in such times, and in such a crew, it must be difficult to hold one's tongue.

Believe me, etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Byron's coming of age was celebrated at Newstead on January 22, 1809.]

[Footnote 2: See O'Hara's acting version of Fielding's *Tom Thumb the Great*, act i. sc. I —

"Doodle. A Day we never saw before;
A Day of fun and drollery.

Noodle. That you may say,
Their Majesties may boast of it;
And since it never can come more,
'Tis fit they make the most of it."]

[Footnote 3: Lord Grenville (1759-1834) became First Lord of the Treasury; Lord Sidmouth, Lord Privy Seal; and William Windham, Secretary for War, in February, 1806. They, with Fox and his friends, formed the administration of "All the Talents," which in March, 1807, fell over the Roman Catholic question. They were succeeded by the Duke of Portland's Ministry, which included the "late underlings of Pitt," — Perceval, Canning, Dundas, *etc.* "Weathercock" Windham, in the Ministry of "All the Talents," was responsible for the conduct of a war which, as leader of the so-called "New Opposition," he had vigorously opposed. Sir Francis Burdett's zeal for Parliamentary Reform involved him in

hostility to both Whigs and Tories, who had combined to exclude him from Parliament after his election for Middlesex (1802-6). In 1807 he had been elected for Westminster.]

110. — To R. C. Dallas.

Reddish's Hotel, Jan. 25, 1809.

My Dear Sir, — My only reason for not adopting your lines is because they are *your* lines. You will recollect that Lady Wortley Montague said to Pope: "No touching, for the good will be given to you, and the bad attributed to me." I am determined it shall be all my own, except such alterations as may be absolutely required; but I am much obliged by the trouble you have taken, and your good opinion.

The couplet on Lord C. may be scratched out and the following inserted:

Roscommon! Sheffield! with your spirits fled,
No future laurels deck a noble head.
Nor e'en a hackney'd Muse will deign to smile
On minor Byron, nor mature Carlisle.

This will answer the purpose of concealment. Now for some couplets on Mr. Crabbe, which you may place after "Gifford, Sotheby, M'Niel:"

There be who say, in these enlightened days,
That splendid lies are all the Poet's praise;
That strained invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern Bard to sing.
'Tis true that all who rhyme, nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to genius, trite:
Yet Truth will sometimes lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires.
This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe attest;
Though Nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

I am sorry to differ with you with regard to the title, but I mean to retain it with this addition: *The British [the word "British" is struck through] English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*; and if we call it a *Satire*, it will obviate the objection, as the Bards also were Welch. Your title is too humorous; — and as I know a little of — — , I wish not to embroil myself with him, though I do not

commend his treatment of — — . I shall be glad to hear from you or see you,
and beg you to believe me,

Yours very sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Dallas (January 24, 1809) takes “the liberty of sending you some two dozen lines,” etc.]

[Footnote 2: The couplet on Lord Carlisle, as it stood in ‘British Bards’, was —

”On one alone Apollo deigns to smile,
And crowns a new Roscommon in Carlisle.”

(See ‘English Bards, etc.’, lines 723, ‘et seqq.’; see also line 927, note 2. For Lord Carlisle, see page 36, note 2.)]

[Footnote 3: For “Gifford, Sotheby, Macneil,” see ‘English Bards, etc.’, line 818, and ‘notes’. Dallas had written (January 24, 1809),

“I am sorry you have not found a place among the genuine sons of Apollo for Crabbe, who, in spite of something bordering on servility in his dedication, may surely rank with some you have admitted to his temple”

(see ‘English Bards, etc.’, lines 849-858).]

[Footnote 4: Dallas suggested as a title, ‘The Parish Poor of Parnassus’.]

111. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 7, 1809.

My Dear Sir, — Suppose we have this couplet —

Though sweet the sound, disdain a borrow’d tone,
Resign Achaia’s lyre, and strike your own:

or,

Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow’d tone,
Resign Achaia’s lyre, and strike your own.

So much for your admonition; but my note of notes, my solitary pun,
must not be given up — no, rather

"Let mightiest of all the beasts of chace
That roam in woody Caledon"

come against me; my annotation must stand.

We shall never sell a thousand; then why print so many? Did you receive my yesterday's note? I am troubling you, but I am apprehensive some of the lines are omitted by your young amanuensis, to whom, however, I am infinitely obliged.

Believe me, yours very truly,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Dallas (February 6, 1809) objected to the rhyme in the couplet:
—

"Translation's servile work at length disown,
And quit Achaia's Muse to court your own."

(For the corrected couplet, see 'English Bards, etc'., lines 889, 890.)]

[Footnote 2: See 'English Bards, etc.', line 1016, note 2.]

112. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 11, 1809.

I wish you to call, if possible, as I have some alterations to suggest as to the part about Brougham.

B.

[Footnote 1: See 'ibid.', line 524, note 2.]

113. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 12, 1809.

Excuse the trouble, but I have added two lines which are necessary to complete the poetical character of Lord Carlisle.

.....in his age
His scenes alone had damn'd our singing stage;
But Managers for once cried, "hold, enough!"
Nor drugg'd their audience with the tragic stuff!

Yours, etc.,

B.

[Footnote 1: See 'ibid.', lines 733-736. Another letter, written February 15, 1809, runs as follows: —

"I wish you much to call on me, about *One*, not later, if convenient, as I have some thirty or forty lines for addition.

Believe me, etc.,

B.”]

114. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 16, 1809.

Ecce iterum Crispinus! — I send you some lines to be placed after “Gifford, Sotheby, M’Niel.” Pray call tomorrow any time before two, and Believe me, etc.,

B.

P.S. — Print soon, or I shall overflow with more rhyme.

[Footnote 1: See ‘English Bards, etc.’, lines 819-830.]

115. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 19, 1809.

I enclose some lines to be inserted, the first six after “Lords too are bards,” etc., or rather immediately following the line:

“Ah! who would take their titles with their rhymes.”

The four next will wind up the panegyric on Lord Carlisle, and come after “tragic stuff.”

Yours truly.

In these our times with daily wonders big,
A letter’d Peer is like a letter’d Pig:
Both know their alphabet, but who from thence
Infers that Peers or Pigs have manly sense?
Still less that such should woo the graceful Nine?
Parnassus was not made for Lords and Swine.
Roscommon, Sheffield, etc., etc.

...

... tragic stuff.

Yet at their judgment let his Lordship laugh,
And case his volumes in congenial calf:
Yes, doff that covering where morocco shines,
"And hang a calf-skin on those recreant" lines.

[Footnote 1: See 'ibid.', lines 736-740.]

116. — To R. C. Dallas.

February 22, 1809.

A cut at the opera. — *Ecce signum!* from last night's observation,
and inuendos against the Society for the Suppression of Vice.
The lines will come well in after the couplets concerning Naldi and
Catalani!

Yours truly,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: See 'English Bards, etc.', lines 618-631, note 1, for the "cut at the opera." The piece which provoked the outburst was 'I Villegiatori Rezzani', at the King's Theatre, February 21, 1809. Guiseppe Naldi (1770-1820) made his 'début' in London, at the King's Theatre, in April, 1806. (For further details, see 'English Bards, etc.', line 613, note 2.) Angelica Catalani, born at Sinigaglia, in 1779, or, according to some authorities, 1785, came out at Venice, in an opera by Nasolini. She sang in many capitals of Europe, married at Lisbon a French officer named Vallabrègue, and came to London in October, 1806. The salary paid her was a cause of the O. P. riots at Covent Garden in 1809, when one of the cries was, "No foreigners! No Catalani!" A series of caricatures, one set by Isaac Cruikshank, and several medals, commemorate the riots. Madame Catalani died at Paris in 1849.]

[Footnote 2: See 'English Bards, etc.', lines 632-637.]

117. — To his Mother.

8, St. James's Street, March 6, 1809.

Dear Mother, — My last letter was written under great depression of spirits from poor Falkland's death, who has left without a shilling four children and his wife. I have been endeavouring to assist them, which, God knows, I cannot do as I could wish, for my own embarrassments and the many claims upon me from other quarters.

What you say is all very true: come what may, *Newstead* and I *stand* or fall

together. I have now lived on the spot, I have fixed my heart upon it, and no pressure, present or future, shall induce me to barter the last vestige of our inheritance. I have that pride within me which will enable me to support difficulties. I can endure privations; but could I obtain in exchange for Newstead Abbey the first fortune in the country, I would reject the proposition. Set your mind at ease on that score; Mr. Hanson talks like a man of business on the subject, — I feel like a man of honour, and I will not sell Newstead.

I shall get my seat on the return of the affidavits from Carhais, in Cornwall, and will do something in the House soon: I must dash, or it is all over. My Satire must be kept secret for a *month*; after that you may say what you please on the subject. Lord Carlisle has used me infamously, and refused to state any particulars of my family to the Chancellor. I have *lashed* him in my rhymes, and perhaps his lordship may regret not being more conciliatory. They tell me it will have a sale; I hope so, for the bookseller has behaved well, as far as publishing well goes.

Believe me, *etc.*

P.S. — You shall have a mortgage on one of the farms.

[Footnote 1: Captain Charles John Cary, R.N., succeeded his brother Thomas in 1796 as ninth Lord Falkland. He married, in 1803, Miss Anton, the daughter of a West India merchant. He had been recently dismissed from his ship “on account of some irregularities arising from too free a circulation of the bottle.” But he had received a promise of being reinstated, and, in high spirits at the prospect, dined one evening in March, 1809, at Stevens’s Coffeehouse, in Bond Street. There he applied to Mr. Powell an offensive nickname. “He lost his life for a joke, and one too he did not make himself” (Medwin, ‘Conversations’, ed. 1825, p. 66). A challenge resulted. The parties met on Goldar’s Green, and Falkland, mortally wounded, died two days later in Powell’s house in Devonshire Place, on March 7, 1809. (‘Annual Register’, vol. li. pp. 449, 450.) For a more detailed account, see ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ for March, 1809. Both accounts give March 7 as the date of Falkland’s death. A posthumous child was born to Lady Falkland. Byron stood godfather, and gave £500 at the christening.

[Footnote 2: Byron took his seat in the House of Lords, March 13, 1809. The delay was caused by the difficulty of proving the marriage of Admiral the Hon. John Byron with Miss Sophia Trevanion in the private chapel of Carhais. Probably Carlisle neither possessed nor withheld any information.]

[Footnote 3: Byron had borrowed £1000 for his return to Cambridge in 1807: £200 from Messrs. Wylde and Co., bankers, of Southwell; and the remainder from the Misses Parkyns, and his great-aunt, the Hon. Mrs. George Byron. For this debt his mother made herself liable. No mortgage was given (see page 221

[Letter 121], [Foot]note 2).]

118. — To William Harness.

8, St. James's Street, March 18, 1809.

There was no necessity for your excuses: if you have time and inclination to write, "for what we receive, the Lord make us thankful," — if I do not hear from you, I console myself with the idea that you are much more agreeably employed.

I send down to you by this post a certain Satire lately published, and in return for the three and sixpence expenditure upon it, only beg that if you should guess the author, you will keep his name secret; at least for the present. London is full of the Duke's business. The Commons have been at it these last three nights, and are not yet come to a decision. I do not know if the affair will be brought before our House, unless in the shape of an impeachment. If it makes its appearance in a debatable form, I believe I shall be tempted to say something on the subject. — I am glad to hear you like Cambridge: firstly, because, to know that you are happy is pleasant to one who wishes you all possible sublunary enjoyment; and, secondly, I admire the morality of the sentiment. *Alma Mater* was to me *injusta noverca*; and the old beldam only gave me my M.A. degree because she could not avoid it. — You know what a farce a noble Cantab. must perform.

I am going abroad, if possible, in the spring, and before I depart I am collecting the pictures of my most intimate school-fellows; I have already a few, and shall want yours, or my cabinet will be incomplete. I have employed one of the first miniature painters of the day to take them, of course, at my own expense, as I never allow my acquaintance to incur the least expenditure to gratify a whim of mine. To mention this may seem indelicate; but when I tell you a friend of ours first refused to sit, under the idea that he was to disburse on the occasion, you will see that it is necessary to state these preliminaries to prevent the recurrence of any similar mistake. I shall see you in time, and will carry you to the 'limner'. It will be a tax on your patience for a week; but pray excuse it, as it is possible the resemblance may be the sole trace I shall be able to preserve of our past friendship and acquaintance. Just now it seems foolish enough; but in a few years, when some of us are dead, and others are separated by inevitable circumstances, it will be a kind of satisfaction to retain in these images of the living the idea of our former selves, and, to contemplate, in the resemblances of the dead, all that remains of judgment, feeling, and a host of passions. But all this will be dull enough for you, and so good night; and, to end my chapter, or rather my homily,

Believe me, my dear H., yours most affectionately,

[Footnote 1: This was the inquiry into the charges made by Colonel Gwyllym

Wardle, M.P. for Okehampton (1807-12), against the Duke of York and his mistress, Mary Ann Clarke. The inquiry began January 27, 1809, and ended March 20, 1809, with the duke's resignation, the Commons having previously (March 17) acquitted him of "personal connivance and corruption."

The case has passed into literature. Wardle, the valorous Dowler, and Lowten, Mr. Perker's clerk, had all figured in the trial before they played their parts in 'Pickwick'. Wardle, who was a colonel of the Welsh Fusiliers ("Wynne's Lambs") had fought at Vinegar Hill. After losing his seat, he took a farm between Tunbridge Wells and Rochester, from which he fled to escape his creditors, and died at Florence, November 30, 1834, aged seventy-two.]

[Footnote 2: Byron took his M.A. degree, July 4, 1808. In another letter to Harness, dated February, 1809, he says,

"I do not know how you and Alma Mater agree. I was but an untoward child myself, and I believe the good lady and her brat were equally rejoiced when I was weaned, and if I obtained her benediction at parting, it was, at best, equivocal."]

[Footnote 3: George Sanders (1774-1846) painted miniatures, made watercolour copies of continental master-pieces, and afterwards became a portrait-painter in oils. He painted several portraits of Byron, two of which have been often engraved.]

119. — To William Bankes.

Twelve o'clock, Friday night.

My Dear Bankes, — I have just received your note; believe me I regret most sincerely that I was not fortunate enough to see it before, as I need not repeat to you that your conversation for half an hour would have been much more agreeable to me than gambling or drinking, or any other fashionable mode of passing an evening abroad or at home. — I really am very sorry that I went out previous to the arrival of your despatch: in future pray let me hear from you before six, and whatever my engagements may be, I will always postpone them. — Believe me, with that deference which I have always from my childhood paid to your *talents*, and with somewhat a better opinion of your heart than I have hitherto entertained,

Yours ever, *etc.*

[Footnote 1:

"I learn with delight," writes Hobhouse from Cambridge, May 12, 1808, "from Scrope Davies, that you have totally given up dice. To be sure you must give it up; for you to be seen every night in the very vilest company in town — could anything be more shocking, anything more unfit? I speak feelingly on this occasion, 'non ignara mali miseris, &c'. I know of nothing that should bribe me

to be present once more at such horrible scenes. Perhaps 'tis as well that we are both acquainted with the extent of the evil, that we may be the more earnest in abstaining from it. You shall henceforth be 'Diis animosus hostis'."

Moore quotes ('Life', p. 86) the following extract from Byron's 'Journal': —

"I have a notion that gamblers are as happy as many people, being always *excited*. Women, wine, fame, the table, — even ambition, *sate* now and then; but every turn of the card and cast of the dice keeps the gamester alive: besides, one can game ten times longer than one can do any thing else. I was very fond of it when young, that is to say, of hazard, for I hate all *card* games, — even faro. When macco (or whatever they spell it) was introduced, I gave up the whole thing, for I loved and missed the *rattle* and *dash* of the box and dice, and the glorious uncertainty, not only of good luck or bad luck, but of *any luck at all*, as one had sometimes to throw *often* to decide at all. I have thrown as many as fourteen mains running, and carried off all the cash upon the table occasionally; but I had no coolness, or judgment, or calculation. It was the delight of the thing that pleased me. Upon the whole, I left off in time, without being much a winner or loser. Since one-and-twenty years of age I played but little, and then never above a hundred, or two, or three."]

120. — To R. C. Dallas.

April 25, 1809.

Dear Sir, — I am just arrived at Batt's Hotel, Jermyn Street, St. James's, from Newstead, and shall be very glad to see you when convenient or agreeable. Hobhouse is on his way up to town, full of printing resolution, and proof against criticism. — Believe me, with great sincerity,

Yours truly,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: See page 163 [Letter 86], [Foot]note 1. Hobhouse's miscellany was published in 1809, under the title of 'Imitations and Translations from the Antient and Modern Classics: Together with Original Poems never before published'.]

121. — To John Hanson.

Batt's Hotel, Jermyn Street, April 26th, 1809.

DEAR SIR, — I wish to know before I make my final effort elsewhere, if you

can or cannot assist me in raising a sum of money on fair and equitable terms and immediately. I called twice this morning, and beg you will favour me with an answer when convenient. I hope all your family are well. I should like to see them together before my departure.

The Court of Chancery it seems will not pay the money, of which indeed I do not know the precise amount; the Duke of Portland will not pay his debt, and with the Rochdale property nothing is done. — My debts are daily increasing, and it is with difficulty I can command a shilling. As soon as possible I shall get quit of this country, but I wish to do justice to my creditors (though I do not like their importunity), and particularly to my securities, for their annuities must be paid off soon, or the interest will swallow up everything. Come what may, in every shape and in any shape, I can meet ruin, but I will never sell Newstead; the Abbey and I shall stand or fall together, and, were my head as grey and defenceless as the Arch of the Priory, I would abide by this resolution. The whole of my wishes are summed up in this; procure me, either of my own or borrowed of others, three thousand pounds, and place two in Hammersley's hands for letters of credit at Constantinople; if possible sell Rochdale in my absence, pay off these annuities and my debts, and with the little that remains do as you will, but allow me to depart from this cursed country, and I promise to turn Mussulman, rather than return to it. Believe me to be,

Yours truly, BYRON.

P.S. — Is my will finished? I should like to sign it while I have anything to leave.

[Footnote 1: Money was obtained, partly by means of a life insurance effected with the Provident Institution. The medical report, signed by Benjamin Hutchinson, F.R.C.S., London, states that Hutchinson had attended Byron for the last four or five years; that he was, when last seen by Hutchinson, in very good health; that he never was afflicted with any serious malady; that he was sober and temperate; that he "sometimes used much exercise, and at others was of a studious and sedentary turn;" and thus concludes: "I do believe that he possesses an unimpaired, healthy constitution, and I am not aware of any circumstance which may be considered as tending to shorten his life."

Mrs. Byron (April 9, 1809) begs Hanson to see that Byron gave some security for the thousand pounds for which she was bound. She adds: "There is some Trades People at Nottingham that will be completely ruined if he does not pay them, which I would not have happen for the whole world." No security seems to have been given, and the tradesmen remained unpaid. Mrs. Byron's death was doubtless accelerated by anxiety from these causes.]

122.-To the Rev. R. Lowe.

8, St. James Street, May 15, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have just been informed that a report is circulating in Notts of an intention on my part to sell Newstead, which is rather unfortunate, as I have just tied the property up in such a manner as to prevent the practicability, even if my inclination led me to dispose of it. But as such a report may render my tenants uncomfortable, I will feel very much obliged if you will be good enough to contradict the rumour, should it come to your ears, on my authority. I rather conjecture it has arisen from the sale of some copyholds of mine in Norfolk. I sail for Gibraltar in June, and thence to Malta when, of course, you shall have the promised detail. I saw your friend Thornhill last night, who spoke of you as a friend ought to do. Excuse this trouble, and believe me to be, with great sincerity,

Yours affectionately, BYRON.

[Footnote 1. The Rev. Robert Lowe was some years older than Byron, and had known him intimately at Southwell in his early youth. Miss Pigot was a cousin of Mr. Lowe, as was also the Rev. J. T. Becher of Southwell. Mrs. Chaworth Musters, who contributed this letter to 'The Life and Letters of Viscount Sherbrooke' (vol. i. p. 46), adds that her grandfather was, naturally, excessively annoyed at having been made the mouthpiece of an untruth, and that the coolness which arose in consequence lasted up to the end of Byron's life. There can, however, be no doubt that Byron made the statement in all sincerity.]

[Footnote 2: At Wymondham.]

CHAPTER IV.

TRAVELS IN ALBANIA, GREECE, ETC. — DEATH OF MRS. BYRON.

1809-1811.

123. — To his Mother.

Falmouth, June 22, 1809.

DEAR MOTHER, — I am about to sail in a few days; probably before this reaches you. Fletcher begged so hard, that I have continued him in my service. If he does not behave well abroad, I will send him back in a *transport*. I have a German servant (who has been with Mr. Wilbraham in Persia before, and was strongly recommended to me by Dr. Butler, of Harrow), Robert and William; they constitute my whole suite. I have letters in plenty: — you shall hear from me at the different ports I touch upon; but you must not be alarmed if my letters miscarry. The Continent is in a fine state — an insurrection has broken out at Paris, and the Austrians are beating Buonaparte — the Tyrolese have risen.

There is a picture of me in oil, to be sent down to Newstead soon. — I wish the Miss Pigots had something better to do than carry my miniatures to Nottingham to copy. Now they have done it, you may ask them to copy the others, which are greater favourites than my own. As to money matters, I am ruined — at least till Rochdale is sold; and if that does not turn out well, I shall enter into the Austrian or Russian service — perhaps the Turkish, if I like their manners. The world is all before me, and I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit any thing it contains, except *yourself*, and your present residence.

Believe me, yours ever sincerely.

P.S. — Pray tell Mr. Rushton his son is well, and doing well; so is Murray, indeed better than I ever saw him; he will be back in about a month. I ought to add the leaving Murray to my few regrets, as his age perhaps will prevent my seeing him again. Robert I take with me; I like him, because, like myself, he seems a friendless animal.

[Footnote 1: Robert Rushton and William Fletcher, the “little page” and “staunch yeoman” of Childe Harold’s “Good Night,” Canto I. stanza xiii.]

[Footnote 2: By George Sanders.]

[Footnote 3: “Joe” Murray was sent back from Gibraltar, and with him returned the homesick Robert Rushton.]

124. — To the Rev. Henry Drury.

Falmouth, June 28, 1809.

MY DEAR DRURY, — We sail tomorrow in the Lisbon packet, having been detained till now by the lack of wind, and other necessities. These being at last procured, by this time tomorrow evening we shall be embarked on the wide world of waters, for all the world like Robinson Crusoe. The Malta vessel not sailing for some weeks, we have determined to go by way of Lisbon, and, as my servants term it, to see “that there “Portingale” — thence to Cadiz and Gibraltar, and so on our old route to Malta and Constantinople, if so be that Captain Kidd, our gallant, or rather gallows, commander, understands plain sailing and Mercator, and takes us on a voyage all according to the chart.

Will you tell Dr. Butler that I have taken the treasure of a servant, Friese, the native of Prussia Proper, into my service from his recommendation? He has been all among the Worshippers of Fire in Persia, and has seen Persepolis and all that.

Hobhouse has made wondrous preparations for a book on his return; 100 pens, two gallons of Japan Ink, and several volumes of best blank, is no bad provision for a discerning public. I have laid down my pen, but have promised to contribute a chapter on the state of morals, and a further treatise on the same to be intitled “..., ‘Simplified,... or Proved to be Praiseworthy from Ancient Authors and Modern Practice.’“

Hobhouse further hopes to indemnify himself in Turkey for a life of exemplary chastity at home. Pray buy his ‘Missellingany’, as the Printer’s Devil calls it. I suppose it is in print by this time. Providence has interposed in our favour with a fair wind to carry us out of its reach, or he would have hired a Faqui to translate it into the Turcoman lingo.

”The cock is crowing,
I must be going,
And can no more.”

’Ghost of Gaffer Thumb’.
Adieu. — Believe me, etc., etc.

[Footnote 1: In Fielding’s burlesque tragedy, ‘The Tragedy of Tragedies; or

the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great'(1730), occur the lines —

”Arthur, beware; I must this moment hence,
Not frightened by your voice, but by the cock’s.”

The burlesque was altered by Kane O’Hara, and published as performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, in 1805. In this prompt-book version (act i.) appear the lines quoted by Byron.

”‘Ghost’. Grizzle’s Rebellion,
What need I tell you on?
Or by a red cow
Tom Thumb devoured?
(‘cock crows’) Hark the cock crowing!
I must be going:
I can no more { ‘vanishes’ }.”]

125. — To Francis Hodgson.

Falmouth, June 25, 1809.

MY DEAR HODGSON, — Before this reaches you, Hobhouse, two officers’ wives, three children, two waiting-maids, ditto subalterns for the troops, three Portuguese esquires and domestics, in all nineteen souls, will have sailed in the Lisbon packet, with the noble Captain Kidd, a gallant commander as ever smuggled an anker of right Nantz.

We are going to Lisbon first, because the Malta packet has sailed, d’ye see? — from Lisbon to Gibraltar, Malta, Constantinople, and “all that,” as Orator Henley said, when he put the Church, and “all that,” in danger.

This town of Falmouth, as you will partly conjecture, is no great ways from the sea. It is defended on the sea-side by tway castles, St. Maws and Pendennis, extremely well calculated for annoying every body except an enemy. St. Maws is garrisoned by an able-bodied person of fourscore, a widower. He has the whole command and sole management of six most unmanageable pieces of ordnance, admirably adapted for the destruction of Pendennis, a like tower of strength on the opposite side of the Channel. We have seen St. Maws, but Pendennis they will not let us behold, save at a distance, because Hobhouse and I are suspected of having already taken St. Maws by a coup de main.

The town contains many Quakers and salt fish — the oysters have a taste of copper, owing to the soil of a mining country — the women (blessed be the Corporation therefor!) are flogged at the cart’s tail when they pick and steal, as

happened to one of the fair sex yesterday noon. She was pertinacious in her behaviour, and damned the mayor.

This is all I know of Falmouth. Nothing occurred of note in our way down, except that on Hartford Bridge we changed horses at an inn, where the great — , Beckford, sojourned for the night. We tried in vain to see the martyr of prejudice, but could not. What we thought singular, though you perhaps will not, was that Ld Courtney travelled the same night on the same road, only one stage *behind* him.

Hodgson, remember me to the Drury, and remember me to yourself when drunk. I am not worth a sober thought. Look to my satire at Cawthorn's, Cockspur Street, and look to the 'Miscellany' of the Hobhouse. It has pleased Providence to interfere in behalf of a suffering public by giving him a sprained wrist, so that he cannot write, and there is a cessation of ink-shed.

I don't know when I can write again, because it depends on that experienced navigator, Captain Kidd, and the "stormy winds that (don't) blow" at this season. I leave England without regret — I shall return to it without pleasure. I am like Adam, the first convict sentenced to transportation, but I have no Eve, and have eaten no apple but what was sour as a crab; — and thus ends my first chapter. Adieu.

Yours, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Henley, in one of his publications entitled 'Oratory Transactions', engaged

"to execute singly what would sprain a dozen of modern doctors of the tribe of Issachar — to write, read, and study twelve hours a day, and yet appear as untouched by the yoke as if he never wore it — to teach in one year what schools or universities teach in five;" and he furthermore pledged himself to persevere in his bold scheme until he had "put the church, — and all that — , in danger."

(Moore).]

[Footnote 2: William Beckford (1760-1844), son of Chatham's friend who was twice Lord Mayor of London, at the age of eleven succeeded it is said, to a million of ready money and a hundred thousand a year. Before he was seventeen he wrote his 'Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters', designed as a satire on the 'Vies des Peintres Flamands', ('Memoirs of William Beckford', by Cyrus Redding, vol. i. p. 96.) His travels (1777-82) in Switzerland, the Low Countries, and Italy are described in his 'Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents, in a series of letters from various parts of Europe', published

anonymously in 1783, and reprinted, with additions and omissions, in 1834 and 1840. In the previous year he had written 'Vathek' in French, in "three days and two nights," without, as he says, taking off his clothes; "the severe application made me very ill." This statement, if made by Beckford, as Redding implies, is untrue. Evidence exists to prove that 'Vathek' was a careful and elaborate composition. The book was published with his name in 1787; but a translation, made and printed without his leave, had already (1784) appeared, and was often mistaken for the original. In 1783 he married Lady Margaret Gordon, with whom he lived in Switzerland till her death in 1786. One of his two daughters — he had no son — became Mrs. Orde, the other the Duchess of Hamilton. From 1787 to 1791, and again from 1794 to 1796, he visited Portugal and Spain, and to this period belong his 'Sketches of Spain and Portugal' (1834), and his 'Recollections of an Excursion to the 'Monasteries of Alobaca and Batalha' (1835). Between his two visits to Portugal, on the last of which he occupied the retreat at Cintra celebrated by Byron ('Childe Harold', Canto I. stanzas xviii.-xxii.), he saw the destruction of the Bastille, bought Gibbon's library at Lausanne (in 1796), and, shutting himself up in it "for six weeks, from early in the morning until night, only now and then taking "a ride," read himself "nearly blind" (Cyrus Redding's "Recollections of the Author of Vathek," 'New Monthly Magazine', vol. lxxi. p. 307). He also wrote two burlesque novels, to ridicule, it is said, those written by his sister, Mrs. Henry: 'Azemia; a Descriptive and Sentimental Novel. By Jacquetta Agneta Mariana Jenks of Bellgrove Priory in Wales' (1796); and 'Modern Novel-Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast. By the Rt. Hon. Lady Harriet Marlow' (1797). He represented Wells from 1784 to 1790, and Hindon from 1806 to 1820; but took no part in political life. He was now settled at Fonthill (1796-1822), absorbed in collecting books, pictures, and engravings, laying out the grounds, indulging his architectural extravagances, and shutting himself and his palace out from the world by a gigantic wall. When Rogers visited him at Fonthill, and arrived at the gate, he was told that neither his servant nor his horses could be admitted, but that Mr. Beckford's attendants and horses would be at his service ('Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers', p. 217). Beckford had been taught music by Mozart, and Rogers says ('ibid'.) that "in the evening Beckford would amuse us by reading one of his unpublished works; or he would extemporize on the pianoforte, producing the most novel and charming melodies."

In 1822 his gigantic fortune had dwindled; he was in embarrassed circumstances; Fonthill and most of its contents were sold, and Beckford settled in Lansdowne Terrace, Bath, where he still collected books and works of art, laid out the grounds, and built the tower on Lansdowne Hill, which are now the

property of the city. At Bath he died in 1844.

‘Vathek’ is a masterpiece, which, as an Eastern tale, is unrivalled in European literature.

“For correctness of costume,” says Byron, in one of his diaries, “beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations; and bears such marks of originality, that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be a translation. As an Eastern tale, even ‘Rasselas’ must bow before it: his ‘Happy Valley’ will not bear a comparison with the Hall of Eblis.”

Beckford’s letters are, in their way, equally masterpieces, and, like ‘Vathek’, have the appearance of being struck off without labour. Reprinted, as their writer says (Preface to the edition of 1840), because “some justly admired Authors... condescended to glean a few stray thoughts from these letters,” they suggest, in some respects, comparison with Byron’s own work. There is the same prodigality of power, the same simple nervous style, the same vein of melancholy, the same cynical contempt for mankind. In both writers there is a passionate feeling for the grander aspects of nature, though Beckford was also thrilled, as Byron was not, by the beauties of art. In both there are similar inconsistencies and incongruities of temperament, and the same vein of reckless self-indulgence appears to run by the side of nobler enthusiasms. In both there is a taste for Oriental magnificence, which, in Beckford, was to some degree corrected by his artistic perceptions. Both, finally, described not so much the objects they saw, as the impression which those objects produced on themselves, and thus steeped their pictures, clear and vivid though they are, in an atmosphere of their own personality.]

[Footnote 3: William, third Viscount Courtenay, died unmarried in 1835, and with him the viscountcy became extinct. In 1831 he proved before Parliament his title to the earldom of Devon, which passed at his death to a cousin, William, tenth Earl of Devon (1777-1859).]

[Footnote 4: In this letter the following verses were enclosed: —
“Falmouth Roads, June 30, 1809.

”Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo’s off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvass o’er the mast.

From aloft the signal's streaming,
Hark! the farewell gun is fired,
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time's expired.
Here's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the Custom-house;
Trunks unpacking,
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We're impatient — push from shore.
'Have a care! that case holds liquor —
Stop the boat — I'm sick — oh Lord!'
'Sick, ma'am, damme, you'll be sicker
Ere you've been an hour on board.'
Thus are screaming
Men and women,
Gemmen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,
Stuck together close as wax.
Such the general noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we've reach'd her, lo! the captain,
Gallant Kidd, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapt in,
Some to grumble, some to spew.
'Hey day! call you that a cabin?
Why 'tis hardly three feet square;
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in —
Who the deuce can harbour there?'
'Who, sir? plenty —

Nobles twenty —
Did at once my vessel fill' —
'Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us!
Would to God they did so still:
Then I'd 'scape the heat and racket,
Of the good ship, Lisbon Packet.'

Fletcher! Murray! Bob! where are you?
Stretch'd along the deck like logs —
Bear a hand, you jolly tar you!
Here's a rope's end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
As the hatchway down he rolls;
Now his breakfast, now his verses,
Vomits forth — and damns our souls.
'Here's a stanza
On Braganza —
Help!' — 'A couplet?' — 'No, a cup
Of warm water.' —
'What's the matter?'
'Zounds! my liver's coming up;
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet.'

Now at length we're off for Turkey,
Lord knows when we shall come back!
Breezes foul and tempests murky
May unship us in a crack.
But, since life at most a jest is,
As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is,
Then laugh on — as I do now.
Laugh at all things,
Great and small things,
Sick or well, at sea or shore;
While we're quaffing,
Let's have laughing —
Who the devil cares for more? —

Some good wine! and who would lack it,
Ev'n on board the Lisbon Packet?

“BYRON.”

126. — To Francis Hodgson.

Lisbon, July 16, 1809.

Thus far have we pursued our route, and seen all sorts of marvellous sights, palaces, convents, etc.; — which, being to be heard in my friend Hobhouse's forthcoming Book of Travels, I shall not anticipate by smuggling any account whatsoever to you in a private and clandestine manner. I must just observe, that the village of Cintra in Estremadura is the most beautiful, perhaps, in the world.

I am very happy here, because I loves oranges, and talks bad Latin to the monks, who understand it, as it is like their own, — and I goes into society (with my pocket-pistols), and I swims in the Tagus all across at once, and I rides on an ass or a mule, and swears Portuguese, and have got a diarrhoea and bites from the mosquitoes. But what of that? Comfort must not be expected by folks that go a pleasuring.

When the Portuguese are pertinacious, I say 'Carracho!' — the great oath of the grandees, that very well supplies the place of "Damme," — and, when dissatisfied with my neighbour, I pronounce him 'Ambra di merdo'. With these two phrases, and a third, 'Avra louro', which signifieth "Get an ass," I am universally understood to be a person of degree and a master of languages. How merrily we lives that travellers be! — if we had food and raiment. But, in sober sadness, any thing is better than England, and I am infinitely amused with my pilgrimage as far as it has gone.

Tomorrow we start to ride post near 400 miles as far as Gibraltar, where we embark for Melita and Byzantium. A letter to Malta will find me, or to be forwarded, if I am absent. Pray embrace the Drury and Dwyer, and all the Ephesians you encounter. I am writing with Butler's donative pencil, which makes my bad hand worse. Excuse illegibility.

Hodgson! send me the news, and the deaths and defeats and capital crimes and the misfortunes of one's friends; and let us hear of literary matters, and the controversies and the criticisms. All this will be pleasant — 'Suave mari magno', etc. Talking of that, I have been sea-sick, and sick of the sea. Adieu.

Yours faithfully, etc.

127. — To Francis Hodgson.

Gibraltar, August 6, 1809.

I have just arrived at this place after a journey through Portugal, and a part of

Spain, of nearly 500 miles. We left Lisbon and travelled on horseback to Seville and Cadiz, and thence in the 'Hyperion' frigate to Gibraltar. The horses are excellent — we rode seventy miles a day. Eggs and wine, and hard beds, are all the accommodation we found, and, in such torrid weather, quite enough. My health is better than in England.

Seville is a fine town, and the Sierra Morena, part of which we crossed, a very sufficient mountain; but damn description, it is always disgusting. Cadiz, sweet Cadiz! — it is the first spot in the creation. The beauty of its streets and mansions is only excelled by the loveliness of its inhabitants. For, with all national prejudice, I must confess the women of Cadiz are as far superior to the English women in beauty as the Spaniards are inferior to the English in every quality that dignifies the name of man. Just as I began to know the principal persons of the city, I was obliged to sail.

You will not expect a long letter after my riding so far "on hollow pampered jades of Asia." Talking of Asia puts me in mind of Africa, which is within five miles of my present residence. I am going over before I go on to Constantinople.

Cadiz is a complete Cythera. Many of the *grandees* who have left Madrid during the troubles reside there, and I do believe it is the prettiest and cleanest town in Europe. London is filthy in the comparison. The Spanish women are all alike, their education the same. The wife of a duke is, in information, as the wife of a peasant, — the wife of peasant, in manner, equal to a duchess. Certainly they are fascinating; but their minds have only one idea, and the business of their lives is intrigue.

I have seen Sir John Carr at Seville and Cadiz, and, like Swift's barber, have been down on my knees to beg he would not put me into black and white. Pray remember me to the Drurys and the Davies, and all of that stamp who are yet extant. Send me a letter and news to Malta. My next epistle shall be from Mount Caucasus or Mount Sion. I shall return to Spain before I see England, for I am enamoured of the country. Adieu, and believe me, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: In 'Childe Harold' (Canto I., after stanza lxxxiv.), instead of the song "To Inez," Byron originally wrote the song beginning

"Oh never talk again to me
Of northern climes and British ladies,
It has not been your lot to see,
Like me, the lovely girl of Cadiz."]

[Footnote 2: Sir John Carr (1772-1832), a native of Devonshire, and a barrister of the Middle Temple, was knighted by the Duke of Bedford as Viceroy

of Ireland about 1807. He published 'The Fury of Discord, a Poem' (1803); 'The Sea-side Hero, a Drama in 3 Acts' (1804); and 'Poems'(1809). But he is best known by his travels, which gained him the nickname of "Jaunting Carr," and considerable profit. 'The Stranger in France' (1803) was bought by Johnson for £100. 'A Northern Summer, or Travels round the Baltic, etc.(1805), 'The Stranger in Ireland' (1806), and 'A Tour through Holland(1807), were bought for £500, £700, and £600 respectively by Sir Richard Phillips, who, but for the ridicule cast upon Carr by Edward Dubois (in 'My Pocket Book; or Hints for a Ryhte Merrie and Conceited Tour in Quarto, to be called "The Stranger in Ireland in 1805," by a Knight Errant'), would have given £600 for his 'Caledonian Sketches' (1808). In spite, however, of this proof of damages, the jury found, in Carr's action against Messrs. Hood and Sharpe, the publishers of 'My Pocket Book', that the criticism was fair and justifiable (1808). Carr published, in 1811, his 'Descriptive Travels in the Southern and Eastern Parts of Spain', without mentioning Byron's name. Byron concluded his MS. of 'Childe Harold', Canto I. with three stanzas on "Green Erin's Knight and Europe's Wandering Star" (see, for the lines, 'Childe Harold', at the end of Canto I.). In letter vii. of 'Intercepted Letters; or the Twopenny Post-bag', by Thomas Brown the Younger (1813), occur the following lines: —

"Since the Chevalier C — rr took to marrying lately,
The Trade is in want of a 'Traveller' greatly —
No job, Sir, more easy — your 'Country' once plann'd,
A month aboard ship and a fortnight on land
Puts your Quarto of Travels, Sir, clean out of hand."]

[Footnote 3:

"Once stopping at an inn at Dundalk, the Dean was so much amused with a prating barber, that rather than be alone he invited him to dinner. The fellow was rejoiced at this unexpected honour, and being dressed out in his best apparel came to the inn, first inquiring of the groom what the clergyman's name was who had so kindly invited him. 'What the vengeance!' said the servant, 'don't you know Dean Swift?' At which the barber turned pale, and, running into the house, fell upon his knees and intreated the Dean 'not to put him into print; for that he was a poor barber, had a large family to maintain, and if his reverence put him into black and white he should lose all his customers.' Swift laughed heartily at the poor fellow's simplicity, bade him sit down and eat his dinner in peace, for he assured him he would neither put him nor his wife in print."

Sheridan's 'Life of Swift'. — (Moore).]

[Footnote 4:

“This sort of passage,” says the Rev. Francis Hodgson, in a note on his copy of this letter, “constantly occurs in his correspondence. Nor was his interest confined to mere remembrances and inquiries after health. Were it possible to state ‘all’ he has done for numerous friends, he would appear amiable indeed. For myself, I am bound to acknowledge, in the fullest and warmest manner, his most generous and well-timed aid; and, were my poor friend Bland alive, he would as gladly bear the like testimony; — though I have most reason, of all men, to do so.”

(Moore).]

128. — To his Mother.

Gibraltar, August 11th, 1809.

Dear Mother,—I have been so much occupied since my departure from England, that till I could address you at length I have forborne writing altogether. As I have now passed through Portugal, and a considerable part of Spain, and have leisure at this place, I shall endeavour to give you a short detail of my movements.

We sailed from Falmouth on the 2nd of July, reached Lisbon after a very favourable passage of four days and a half, and took up our abode in that city. It has been often described without being worthy of description; for, except the view from the Tagus, which is beautiful, and some fine churches and convents, it contains little but filthy streets, and more filthy inhabitants. To make amends for this, the village of Cintra, about fifteen miles from the capital, is, perhaps in every respect, the most delightful in Europe; it contains beauties of every description, natural and artificial. Palaces and gardens rising in the midst of rocks, cataracts, and precipices; convents on stupendous heights — a distant view of the sea and the Tagus; and, besides (though that is a secondary consideration), is remarkable as the scene of Sir Hew Dalrymple’s Convention. It unites in itself all the wildness of the western highlands, with the verdure of the south of France. Near this place, about ten miles to the right, is the palace of Mafra, the boast of Portugal, as it might be of any other country, in point of magnificence without elegance. There is a convent annexed; the monks, who possess large revenues, are courteous enough, and understand Latin, so that we had a long conversation: they have a large library, and asked me if the *English* had *any books* in their country?

I sent my baggage, and part of the servants, by sea to Gibraltar, and travelled on horseback from Aldea Galbega (the first stage from Lisbon, which is only accessible by water) to Seville (one of the most famous cities in Spain), where the Government called the Junta is now held. The distance to Seville is nearly

four hundred miles, and to Cadiz almost ninety farther towards the coast. I had orders from the governments, and every possible accommodation on the road, as an English nobleman, in an English uniform, is a very respectable personage in Spain at present. The horses are remarkably good, and the roads (I assure you upon my honour, for you will hardly believe it) very far superior to the best English roads, without the smallest toll or turnpike. You will suppose this when I rode post to Seville, in four days, through this parching country in the midst of summer, without fatigue or annoyance.

Seville is a beautiful town; though the streets are narrow, they are clean. We lodged in the house of two Spanish unmarried ladies, who possess *six* houses in Seville, and gave me a curious specimen of Spanish manners. They are women of character, and the eldest a fine woman, the youngest pretty, but not so good a figure as Donna Josepha. The freedom of manner, which is general here, astonished me not a little; and in the course of further observation, I find that reserve is not the characteristic of the Spanish belles, who are, in general, very handsome, with large black eyes, and very fine forms. The eldest honoured your *unworthy* son with very particular attention, embracing him with great tenderness at parting (I was there but three days), after cutting off a lock of his hair, and presenting him with one of her own, about three feet in length, which I send, and beg you will retain till my return. Her last words were, *Adios, tu hermoso! me gusto mucho* — "Adieu, you pretty fellow! you please me much." She offered me a share of her apartment, which my *virtue* induced me to decline; she laughed, and said I had some English *amante* (lover), and added that she was going to be married to an officer in the Spanish army.

I left Seville, and rode on to Cadiz, through a beautiful country. At *Xeres*, where the sherry we drink is made, I met a great merchant — a Mr. Gordon of Scotland — who was extremely polite, and favoured me with the inspection of his vaults and cellars, so that I quaffed at the fountain head.

Cadiz, sweet Cadiz, is the most delightful town I ever beheld, very different from our English cities in every respect except cleanliness (and it is as clean as London), but still beautiful, and full of the finest women in Spain, the Cadiz belles being the Lancashire witches of their land. Just as I was introduced and began to like the grandees, I was forced to leave it for this cursed place; but before I return to England I will visit it again. The night before I left it, I sat in the box at the opera with Admiral Cordova's family; he is the commander whom Lord St. Vincent defeated in 1797, and has an aged wife and a fine daughter, Sennorita Cordova. The girl is very pretty, in the Spanish style; in my opinion, by no means inferior to the English in charms, and certainly superior in

fascination. Long black hair, dark languishing eyes, *clear* olive complexions, and forms more graceful in motion than can be conceived by an Englishman used to the drowsy, listless air of his countrywomen, added to the most becoming dress, and, at the same time, the most decent in the world, render a Spanish beauty irresistible.

I beg leave to observe that intrigue here is the business of life; when a woman marries she throws off all restraint, but I believe their conduct is chaste enough before. If you make a proposal, which in England will bring a box on the ear from the meekest of virgins, to a Spanish girl, she thanks you for the honour you intend her, and replies, "Wait till I am married, and I shall be too happy." This is literally and strictly true.

Miss Cordova and her little brother understood a little French, and, after regretting my ignorance of the Spanish, she proposed to become my preceptress in that language. I could only reply by a low bow, and express my regret that I quitted Cadiz too soon to permit me to make the progress which would doubtless attend my studies under so charming a directress. I was standing at the back of the box, which resembles our Opera boxes, (the theatre is large and finely decorated, the music admirable,) in the manner which Englishmen generally adopt, for fear of incommoding the ladies in front, when this fair Spaniard dispossessed an old woman (an aunt or a duenna) of her chair, and commanded me to be seated next herself, at a tolerable distance from her mamma. At the close of the performance I withdrew, and was lounging with a party of men in the passage, when, *en passant*, the lady turned round and called me, and I had the honour of attending her to the admiral's mansion. I have an invitation on my return to Cadiz, which I shall accept if I repass through the country on my return from Asia.

I have met Sir John Carr, Knight Errant, at Seville and Cadiz. He is a pleasant man. I like the Spaniards much. You have heard of the battle near Madrid, and in England they would call it a victory — a pretty victory! Two hundred officers and five thousand men killed, all English, and the French in as great force as ever. I should have joined the army, but we have no time to lose before we get up the Mediterranean and Archipelago. I am going over to Africa tomorrow; it is only six miles from this fortress. My next stage is Cagliari in Sardinia, where I shall be presented to His Majesty. I have a most superb uniform as a court dress, indispensable in travelling.

August 13. — I have not yet been to Africa — the wind is contrary — but I dined yesterday at Algesiras, with Lady Westmorland, where I met General Castanos, the celebrated Spanish leader in the late and present war. To-day I dine with him. He has offered me letters to Tetuan in Barbary, for the principal

Moors, and I am to have the house for a few days of one of the great men, which was intended for Lady W., whose health will not permit her to cross the Straits.

August 15. — I could not dine with Castanos yesterday, but this afternoon I had that honour. He is pleasant and, for aught I know to the contrary, clever. I cannot go to Barbary. The Malta packet sails tomorrow, and myself in it. Admiral Purvis, with whom I dined at Cadiz, gave me a passage in a frigate to Gibraltar, but we have no ship of war destined for Malta at present. The packets sail fast, and have good accommodation. You shall hear from me on our route.

Joe Murray delivers this; I have sent him and the boy back. Pray show the lad kindness, as he is my great favourite; I would have taken him on. And say this to his father, who may otherwise think he has behaved ill. I hope this will find you well. Believe me,

Yours ever sincerely,
BYRON.

P.S. — So Lord G — — is married to a rustic. Well done! If I wed, I will bring home a Sultana, with half a dozen cities for a dowry, and reconcile you to an Ottoman daughter-in-law, with a bushel of pearls not larger than ostrich eggs, or smaller than walnuts.

[Footnote 1: Sir Hew Whitefoord Dalrymple (1750-1830) took command of the British forces in the Peninsular War, August 22, 1808, and signed the Convention of Cintra (August 31), by which Junot, whom Sir Arthur Wellesley had defeated at Vimeira, evacuated Portugal, and surrendered Elvas and Lisbon. The Convention was approved by a court of general officers ordered to sit at Chelsea Hospital; but Dalrymple never again obtained a command.

The so-called Convention of Cintra was signed at the palace of the Marquis de Marialva, thirty miles distant.]

[Footnote 2: Admiral Cordova commanded the Spanish Fleet, defeated, February 14, 1797, off Cape St. Vincent, by Sir John Jervis, afterwards Earl St. Vincent.]

[Footnote 3: To these adventures in his hasty passage through Spain Byron briefly alludes in the early part of his *Memoranda*.

“For some time,” he said, “I went on prosperously both as a linguist and a lover, till at length the lady took a fancy to a ring which I wore, and set her heart on my giving it to her, as a pledge of my sincerity. This, however, could not be:

— any thing but the ring, I declared, was at her service, and much more than its value, — but the ring itself I had made a vow never to give away.” The young Spaniard grew angry as the contention went on, and it was not long before the lover became angry also; till, at length, the affair ended by their separating. “Soon after this,” said he, “I sailed for Malta, and there parted with both my heart and ring.”

(‘Life’, p.93). He also alludes to the incident in ‘Don Juan’, Canto II, stanza clxiv. —

”‘Tis pleasing to be school’d in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes — that is, I mean,
When both the teacher and the taught are young,
As was the case, at least, where I have been,”

etc.]

[Footnote 4: The battle of Talavera, July 27 and 28, 1809, in which Sir Arthur Wellesley defeated Marshal Victor. In Cuesta’s despatch to the Spanish Government, dated Seville, August 7, the British loss is mentioned as 260 officers and 5000 men.]

[Footnote 5: Lady Westmorland, *nee* Jane Saunders, daughter of Dr. R. H. Saunders, married, in 1800, as his second wife, John, tenth Earl of Westmorland (1759-1841). At her house Lady Caroline Lamb refused to be introduced to Byron (*Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p.103).

[Footnote 6: General Francisco de Castanos, Duke of Baylen (1758-1852) defeated General Dupont at Baylen in 1808, and distinguished himself at Vittoria in 1813. He was guardian to Queen Isabella in 1843.]

[Footnote 7: Lord Grey de Ruthyn. (See page 23 [Letter 8], [Foot]note 1.)]
129. — To Mr. Rushton.

Gibraltar, August 15, 1809.

Mr. Rushton, — I have sent Robert home with Mr. Murray, because the country which I am about to travel through is in a state which renders it unsafe, particularly for one so young. I allow you to deduct five-and-twenty pounds a year for his education for three years, provided I do not return before that time, and I desire he may be considered as in my service. Let every care be taken of him, and let him be sent to school. In case of my death I have provided enough in my will to render him independent. He has behaved extremely well, and has

travelled a great deal for the time of his absence. Deduct the expense of his education from your rent.

BYRON.

130. — To his Mother.

Malta, September 15, 1809.

Dear Mother, — Though I have a very short time to spare, being to sail immediately for Greece, I cannot avoid taking an opportunity of telling you that I am well. I have been in Malta a short time, and have found the inhabitants hospitable and pleasant.

This letter is committed to the charge of a very extraordinary woman, whom you have doubtless heard of, Mrs. Spencer Smith, of whose escape the Marquis de Salvo published a narrative a few years ago. She has since been shipwrecked, and her life has been from its commencement so fertile in remarkable incidents, that in a romance they would appear improbable. She was born at Constantinople, where her father, Baron Herbert, was Austrian Ambassador; married unhappily, yet has never been impeached in point of character; excited the vengeance of Buonaparte by a part in some conspiracy; several times risked her life; and is not yet twenty-five. She is here on her way to England, to join her husband, being obliged to leave Trieste, where she was paying a visit to her mother, by the approach of the French, and embarks soon in a ship of war. Since my arrival here, I have had scarcely any other companion. I have found her very pretty, very accomplished, and extremely eccentric. Buonaparte is even now so incensed against her, that her life would be in some danger if she were taken prisoner a second time.

You have seen Murray and Robert by this time, and received my letter. Little has happened since that date. I have touched at Cagliari in Sardinia, and at Girgenti in Sicily, and embark tomorrow for Patras, from whence I proceed to Yanina, where Ali Pacha holds his court. So I shall soon be among the Mussulmans. Adieu. Believe me, with sincerity, yours ever,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: At Gibraltar, John Galt, who was travelling for his health, met Byron, whom he did not know by sight, but by whose appearance he was attracted.

“His dress indicated a Londoner of some fashion, partly by its neatness and simplicity, with just so much of a peculiarity of style as served to show that, although he belonged to the order of metropolitan beaux, he was not altogether a common one ... His physiognomy was prepossessing and intelligent, but ever

and anon his brows lowered and gathered — a habit, as I then thought, with a degree of affectation in it, probably first assumed for picturesque effect and energetic expression, but which I afterwards discovered was undoubtedly the scowl of some unpleasant reminiscence; it was certainly disagreeable, forbidding, but still the general cast of his features was impressed with elegance and character.”

Afterwards Galt was a fellow-passenger on board the packet from Gibraltar to Malta.

“In the little bustle and process of embarking their luggage, his Lordship affected, as it seemed to me, more aristocracy than befitted his years, or the occasion; and then I thought of his singular scowl, and suspected him of pride and irascibility. The impression that evening was not agreeable, but it was interesting; and that forehead mark, the frown, was calculated to awaken curiosity, and beget conjectures ... Byron held himself aloof, and sat on the rail, leaning on the mizzen shrouds, inhaling, as it were, poetical sympathy from the gloomy rock, then dark and stern in the twilight. There was, in all about him that evening, much waywardness. He spoke petulantly to Fletcher, his valet, and was evidently ill at ease with himself, and fretful towards others. I thought he would turn out an unsatisfactory shipmate; yet there was something redeeming in the tones of his voice, and when, some time after having indulged his sullen meditation he again addressed Fletcher; so that, instead of finding him ill-natured, I was soon convinced he was only capricious.”

On the voyage,

“about the third day, Byron relented from his rapt mood, as if he felt it was out of place, and became playful, and disposed to contribute his fair proportion to the general endeavour to while away the tediousness of the dull voyage.”

But yet throughout the whole passage,

“if,” says Galt, “my remembrance is not treacherous, he only spent one evening in the cabin with us — the evening before we came to anchor at Cagliari; for, when the lights were placed, he made himself a man forbid, took his station on the railing, between the pegs on which the sheets are belayed and the shrouds, and there, for hours, sat in silence, enamoured, it may be, of the moon. All these peculiarities, with his caprices, and something inexplicable in the cast of his metaphysics, while they served to awaken interest, contributed little to conciliate esteem. He was often strangely rapt — it may have been from his genius; and, had its grandeur and darkness been then divulged, susceptible of explanation; but, at the time, it threw, as it were, around him the sackcloth of

penitence. Sitting amid the shrouds and rattlings, in the tranquillity of the moonlight, churning an inarticulate melody, he seemed almost apparitional, suggesting dim reminiscences of him who shot the albatross”

(Galt’s ‘Life of Byron’, pp. 57-61).]

[Footnote 2: Byron’s “new Calypso.” Mrs. Spencer Smith (born about 1785) was the daughter of Baron Herbert, Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople, wife of Spencer Smith, the British Minister at Stuttgart, and sister-in-law of Sir Sidney Smith, the hero of Acre. In 1805 she was staying, for her health, at the baths of Valdagno, near Vicenza, when the Napoleonic wars overspread Northern Italy, and she took refuge with her sister, the Countess Attems, at Venice. In 1806 General Lauriston took over the government of the city in the name of Napoleon, and M. de La Garde was appointed Prefect of the Police. A few days after their arrival, on April 18, Mrs. Smith was arrested, and, guarded by ‘gendarmes’, conveyed towards the Italian frontier, to be confined, as La Garde told a Sicilian nobleman, the Marquis de Salvo, at Valenciennes. Mrs. Smith’s beauty and impending fate deeply impressed the marquis, who determined to rescue her. The prisoner and her guard had reached Brescia, and were lodged at the ‘Albergo delle due Torre’, The opportunity seemed favourable. Once across the Guarda Lake, and in the passes of Tyrol, it would be easy to reach Styria. The marquis made his arrangements — hired two boats, one for the fugitives, the other for their post-chaise and horses; procured for Mrs. Smith a boy’s dress, as a disguise; made a ladder long enough to reach her window in the inn, and succeeded in making known his plan to the prisoner. The escape was effected; but all along the road the danger continued, for their way lay through a country which was practically French territory. It was not till they reached Gratz, and Mrs. Smith was under the roof of her sister, the Countess Strassoldo, that she was safe. The story is told in detail by the Marquis de Salvo, in his ‘Travels in the Year 1806 from Italy to England’ (1807), and by the Duchesse d’Abrantes (‘Memoires,’ vol. xv. pp. 1-74).

To Mrs. Spencer Smith are addressed the “Lines to Florence,” the “Stanzas composed during a Thunderstorm” (near Zitz, in October, 1809), and stanzas xxx.-xxxii. of the second canto of ‘Childe Harold.’ The Duchesse d’Abrantés (‘Mémoires’, vol. xv. pp. 4, 5) thus describes her:

“Une jeune femme, dont la délicate et élégante tournure, la peau blanche et diaphane, les cheveux blonds, les mouvemens onduleux, toute une tournure impossible à décrire autrement qu’en disant qu’elle était de toutes les créatures la plus gracieuse, lui donnaient l’aspect d’une de ces apparitions amenées par un

rêve heureux... il y avait de la Sylphide en elle. Sa vue excessivement basse n'était qu'un charme de plus."

Moore ('Life,' p. 95) thinks that Byron was less in love with Mrs. Smith than with his recollection of her. According to Gait ('Life of Byron,' p. 66),

"he affected a passion for her, but it was only Platonic. She, however, beguiled him of his valuable yellow diamond ring."]

131. — To his Mother.

Prevesa, November 12, 1809.

My Dear Mother, — I have now been some time in Turkey: this place is on the coast, but I have traversed the interior of the province of Albania on a visit to the Pacha. I left Malta in the *Spider*, a brig of war, on the 21st of September, and arrived in eight days at Prevesa. I thence have been about 150 miles, as far as Tepaleen, his Highness's country palace, where I stayed three days. The name of the Pacha is *Ali* and he is considered a man of the first abilities: he governs the whole of Albania (the ancient Illyricum), Epirus, and part of Macedonia. His son, Vely Pacha, to whom he has given me letters, governs the Morea, and has great influence in Egypt; in short, he is one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman empire. When I reached Yanina, the capital, after a journey of three days over the mountains, through a country of the most picturesque beauty, I found that Ali Pacha was with his army in Illyricum, besieging Ibrahim Pacha in the castle of Berat. He had heard that an Englishman of rank was in his dominions, and had left orders in Yanina with the commandant to provide a house, and supply me with every kind of necessary *gratis*; and, though I have been allowed to make presents to the slaves, etc., I have not been permitted to pay for a single article of household consumption.

I rode out on the vizier's horses, and saw the palaces of himself and grandsons: they are splendid, but too much ornamented with silk and gold. I then went over the mountains through Zitza, a village with a Greek monastery (where I slept on my return), in the most beautiful situation (always excepting Cintra, in Portugal) I ever beheld. In nine days I reached Tepaleen. Our journey was much prolonged by the torrents that had fallen from the mountains, and intersected the roads. I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tepaleen at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down. It brought to my mind (with some change of *dress*, however) Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his *Lay*, and the feudal system. The Albanians, in their dresses, (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long *white kilt*, gold-worked cloak,

crimson velvet gold-laced jacket and waistcoat, silver-mounted pistols and daggers,) the Tartars with their high caps, the Turks in their vast pelisses and turbans, the soldiers and black slaves with the horses, the former in groups in an immense large open gallery in front of the palace, the latter placed in a kind of cloister below it, two hundred steeds ready caparisoned to move in a moment, couriers entering or passing out with the despatches, the kettle-drums beating, boys calling the hour from the minaret of the mosque, altogether, with the singular appearance of the building itself, formed a new and delightful spectacle to a stranger. I was conducted to a very handsome apartment, and my health inquired after by the vizier's secretary, 'à-la-mode Turque'!

The next day I was introduced to Ali Pacha. I was dressed in a full suit of staff uniform, with a very magnificent sabre, *etc.* The vizier received me in a large room paved with marble; a fountain was playing in the centre; the apartment was surrounded by scarlet ottomans. He received me standing, a wonderful compliment from a Mussulman, and made me sit down on his right hand. I have a Greek interpreter for general use, but a physician of Ali's named Femlario, who understands Latin, acted for me on this occasion. His first question was, why, at so early an age, I left my country? — (the Turks have no idea of travelling for amusement). He then said, the English minister, Captain Leake, had told him I was of a great family, and desired his respects to my mother; which I now, in the name of Ali Pacha, present to you. He said he was certain I was a man of birth, because I had small ears, curling hair, and little white hands, and expressed himself pleased with my appearance and garb. He told me to consider him as a father whilst I was in Turkey, and said he looked on me as his son. Indeed, he treated me like a child, sending me almonds and sugared sherbet, fruit and sweetmeats, twenty times a day. He begged me to visit him often, and at night, when he was at leisure. I then, after coffee and pipes, retired for the first time. I saw him thrice afterwards. It is singular that the Turks, who have no hereditary dignities, and few great families, except the Sultans, pay so much respect to birth; for I found my pedigree more regarded than my title.

To-day I saw the remains of the town of Actium, near which Antony lost the world, in a small bay, where two frigates could hardly manoeuvre: a broken wall is the sole remnant. On another part of the gulf stand the ruins of Nicopolis, built by Augustus in honour of his victory. Last night I was at a Greek marriage; but this and a thousand things more I have neither time nor *space* to describe.

His highness is sixty years old, very fat, and not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes, and a white beard; his manner is very kind, and at the same time he possesses that dignity which I find universal amongst the Turks. He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant,

guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave, and so good a general that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte. Napoleon has twice offered to make him King of Epirus, but he prefers the English interest, and abhors the French, as he himself told me. He is of so much consequence, that he is much courted by both, the Albanians being the most warlike subjects of the Sultan, though Ali is only nominally dependent on the Porte; he has been a mighty warrior, but is as barbarous as he is successful, roasting rebels, etc., etc. Buonaparte sent him a snuff-box with his picture. He said the snuff-box was very well, but the picture he could excuse, as he neither liked it nor the original. His ideas of judging of a man's birth from ears, hands, etc., were curious enough. To me he was, indeed, a father, giving me letters, guards, and every possible accommodation. Our next conversations were of war and travelling, politics and England. He called my Albanian soldier, who attends me, and told him to protect me at all hazard; his name is Viseillie, and, like all the Albanians, he is brave, rigidly honest, and faithful; but they are cruel, though not treacherous, and have several vices but no meannesses. They are, perhaps, the most beautiful race, in point of countenance, in the world; their women are sometimes handsome also, but they are treated like slaves, *beaten*, and, in short, complete beasts of burden; they plough, dig, and sow. I found them carrying wood, and actually repairing the highways. The men are all soldiers, and war and the chase their sole occupations. The women are the labourers, which after all is no great hardship in so delightful a climate. Yesterday, the 11th of November, I bathed in the sea; to-day is so hot that I am writing in a shady room of the English consul's, with three doors wide open, no fire, or even *fireplace*, in the house, except for culinary purposes.

I am going tomorrow, with a guard of fifty men, to Patras in the Morea, and thence to Athens, where I shall winter. Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war, owing to the ignorance of the captain and crew, though the storm was not violent. Fletcher yelled after his wife, the Greeks called on all the saints, the Mussulmans on Alla; the captain burst into tears and ran below deck, telling us to call on God; the sails were split, the main-yard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, and all our chance was to make Corfu, which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher pathetically termed it) "a watery grave." I did what I could to console Fletcher, but finding him incorrigible, wrapped myself up in my Albanian capote (an immense cloak), and lay down on deck to wait the worst. I have learnt to philosophise in my travels; and if I had not, complaint was useless. Luckily the wind abated, and only drove us on the coast of Suli, on the main land, where we landed, and proceeded, by the help of the natives, to Prevesa again; but I shall not trust Turkish sailors in future, though the Pacha had ordered one of his own galliots to take me to Patras. I am

therefore going as far as Missolonghi by land, and there have only to cross a small gulf to get to Patras.

Fletcher's next epistle will be full of marvels. We were one night lost for nine hours in the mountains in a thunder-storm, and since nearly wrecked. In both cases Fletcher was sorely bewildered, from apprehensions of famine and banditti in the first, and drowning in the second instance. His eyes were a little hurt by the lightning, or crying (I don't know which), but are now recovered. When you write, address to me at Mr. Strané's, English consul, Patras, Morea.

I could tell you I know not how many incidents that I think would amuse you, but they crowd on my mind as much as they would swell my paper, and I can neither arrange them in the one, nor put them down on the other, except in the greatest confusion. I like the Albanians much; they are not all Turks; some tribes are Christians. But their religion makes little difference in their manner or conduct. They are esteemed the best troops in the Turkish service. I lived on my route, two days at once, and three days again, in a barrack at Salora, and never found soldiers so tolerable, though I have been in the garrisons of Gibraltar and Malta, and seen Spanish, French, Sicilian, and British troops in abundance. I have had nothing stolen, and was always welcome to their provision and milk. Not a week ago an Albanian chief, (every village has its chief, who is called Primate,) after helping us out of the Turkish galley in her distress, feeding us, and lodging my suite, consisting of Fletcher, a Greek, two Athenians, a Greek priest, and my companion, Mr. Hobhouse, refused any compensation but a written paper stating that I was well received; and when I pressed him to accept a few sequins, "No," he replied; "I wish you to love me, not to pay me." These are his words.

It is astonishing how far money goes in this country. While I was in the capital I had nothing to pay by the vizier's order; but since, though I have generally had sixteen horses, and generally six or seven men, the expense has not been *half* as much as staying only three weeks in Malta, though Sir A. Ball, the governor, gave me a house for nothing, and I had only *one servant*. By the by, I expect Hanson to remit regularly; for I am not about to stay in this province for ever. Let him write to me at Mr. Strané's, English consul, Patras. The fact is, the fertility of the plains is wonderful, and specie is scarce, which makes this remarkable cheapness. I am going to Athens, to study modern Greek, which differs much from the ancient, though radically similar. I have no desire to return to England, nor shall I, unless compelled by absolute want, and Hanson's neglect; but I shall not enter into Asia for a year or two, as I have much to see in Greece, and I may perhaps cross into Africa, at least the Egyptian part. Fletcher, like all Englishmen, is very much dissatisfied, though a little reconciled to the

Turks by a present of eighty piastres from the vizier, which, if you consider every thing, and the value of specie here, is nearly worth ten guineas English. He has suffered nothing but from cold, heat, and vermin, which those who lie in cottages and cross mountains in a cold country must undergo, and of which I have equally partaken with himself; but he is not valiant, and is afraid of robbers and tempests. I have no one to be remembered to in England, and wish to hear nothing from it, but that you are well, and a letter or two on business from Hanson, whom you may tell to write. I will write when I can, and beg you to believe me,

Your affectionate son,
BYRON.

P.S. — I have some very “magnifiques” Albanian dresses, the only expensive articles in this country. They cost fifty guineas each, and have so much gold, they would cost in England two hundred. I have been introduced to Hussein Bey, and Mahmout Pacha, both little boys, grandchildren of Ali, at Yanina; they are totally unlike our lads, have painted complexions like rouged dowagers, large black eyes, and features perfectly regular. They are the prettiest little animals I ever saw, and are broken into the court ceremonies already. The Turkish salute is a slight inclination of the head, with the hand on the heart; intimates always kiss. Mahmout is ten years old, and hopes to see me again; we are friends without understanding each other, like many other folks, though from a different cause. He has given me a letter to his father in the Morea, to whom I have also letters from Ali Pacha.

[Footnote 1: Ali Pasha (1741-1822) was born in Albania, at Tepeleni, a town 75 miles north of Janina, of which his father was governor. This “Mahometan Buonaparte,” or “Rob Roy of Albania,” made himself the supreme ruler of Epirus and Albania, acquired a predominance over the Agas of Thessaly, and pushed his troops to the frontiers of ancient Attica (see Raumer’s ‘*Historisches Taschenbuch*,’ pp. 87-175). A merciless and unscrupulous tyrant, he was also a fine soldier and a born administrator. Intriguing now with the Porte, now with Buonaparte, now with the English, using the rival despots of the country against each other, hand in glove with the brigands while commanding the police for their suppression, he extended his power by using conflicting interests to aggrandize himself. The Venetian possessions on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, which had passed in 1797 to France, by the treaty of Campo Formio, were wrested from the French by Ali, who defeated General La Salsette (1798) in the plains of Nicopolis, and, with the exception of Parga, seized and held the principal towns in the name of the Sultan. Byron speaks of his “aged venerable

face" in 'Childe Harold' (Canto II. stanza lxii.; see also stanza xlvii.), and of the delicacy of his hand in 'Don Juan' (Canto IV. stanza xlv.), and finds in his treatment of "Giaffir, Pacha of Argyro Castro or Scutari (I am not sure which)," the material for stanzas xiv., xv. of Canto II. of 'The Bride of Abydos'. Hobhouse ('Journey through Albania', edit. 1854, vol. i. pp. 96, 97) describes Ali as

"a short man, about five feet five inches in height, and very fat, though not particularly corpulent. He had a very pleasing face, fair and round, with blue quick eyes, not at all settled into a Turkish gravity. His beard was long and white, and such a one as any other Turk would have been proud of; though he, who was more taken up with his guests than himself, did not continue looking at it, nor smelling and stroking it, as is usually the custom of his country-men, to fill up the pauses of conversation."

Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Holland, in his 'Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, and Greece in 1812-13', pp. 125, 126 (1815), gives an account of his first interview with Ali:

"Were I to attempt a description of Ali, I should speak of his face as large and full; the forehead remarkably broad and open, and traced by many deep furrows; the eye penetrating, yet not expressive of ferocity; the nose handsome and well formed; the mouth and lower part of the face concealed, except when speaking, by his mustachios and the long beard which flows over his breast. His complexion is somewhat lighter than that usual among the Turks, and his general appearance does not indicate more than his actual age ... The neck is short and thick, the figure corpulent and unwieldy; his stature I had afterwards the means of ascertaining to be about five feet nine inches. The general character and expression of the countenance are unquestionably fine, and the forehead especially is a striking and majestic feature. Much of the talent of the man may be inferred from his exterior; the moral qualities, however, may not equally be determined in this way; and to the casual observation of the stranger I can conceive from my own experience, that nothing may appear but what is open, placid, and alluring. Opportunities were afterwards afforded me of looking beneath this exterior of expression; it is the fire of a stove burning fiercely under a smooth and polished surface.... The inquiries he made respecting our journey to Joannina, gave us the opportunity of complimenting him on the excellent police of his dominions, and the attention he has paid to his roads. I mentioned to him generally Lord Byron's poetical description of Albania, the interest it had excited in England, and Mr. Hobhouse's intended publication of his travels in the same country. He seemed pleased with these circumstances, and stated his recollection of Lord Byron."

Dr. Holland brought back to England a letter to Byron from Ali (see Letter to Moore, September 8, 1813).

A further account of Ali, together with a portrait, will be found in Hughes's 'Travels in Sicily, etc.' (pp. 446-449). He again (1813) "asked with much apparent interest respecting Lord Byron." At the close of the Napoleonic struggle, the interest of this country was excited by the resistance of Parga to his arms, especially as, during the late war, the Pargiotes had received the protection of Great Britain. After the fall of Parga (1819), Ali's power roused the jealousy of the Sultan, and it was partly in consequence of his open defiance of the Porte, that insurrections broke out in Wallachia, and that Ypsilanti proclaimed himself the liberator of Greece. The Turkish troops, under Kurchid Pasha, gradually overpowered Ali, and, at the end of 1821, shut him up in his citadel of Janina. In the following January he surrendered, and was at first treated with respect. But on February 5, 1822, Ali was informed that the Sultan demanded his head. His answer was to fire his pistol at the messenger. In the fray that followed he was killed. Another and better account (Walsh's 'Narrative of a Journey from Constantinople to England', p. 62) says that he was stabbed in the back as he was bowing to the departing messenger, who had solemnly assured him of the Sultan's pardon and favour. His head was cut off, sent to Constantinople, and fixed on the grand gate of the Seraglio, with the sentence of death by its side. Recently fresh interest has been aroused in Ali by the publication of Mr. Bain's translation of Maurus Jókai's semi-historical novel 'Janicsárok végnapjai', under the title of 'The Lion of Janina' (1897).]

[Footnote 2: Veli Pasha was the son of Ali by a daughter of Coul Pasha, the governor of Berat, in whose army Ali had served as a young man. He was married (1798) to a daughter of Ibrahim Pasha, who had succeeded Coul Pasha in the pashalik of Berat. The war with Ibrahim, to which Byron alludes, ended in his defeat, and the transference of his pashalik to Ali. Veli, at this time Vizier of the Morea, resided at Tripolizza, when he was visited by Galt, who describes him as sitting

"on a crimson velvet cushion, wrapped in a superb pelisse; on his head was a vast turban, in his belt a dagger encrusted with jewels, and on the little finger of his right hand he wore a solitaire which was said to have cost two thousand five hundred pounds sterling. In his left hand he held a string of small coral beads, a comboloio which he twisted backwards and forwards during the greater part of the visit." "In his manners," says Galt, "I found him free and urbane, with a considerable tincture of humour and drollery"

('Life of Byron', p. 83). Hobhouse ('Journey through Albania, etc.', vol. i. p.

193) says,

“The Vizier, for he is a Pasha of three tails, is a lively young man; and besides the Albanian, Greek, and Turkish languages, speaks Italian — an accomplishment not possessed, I should think, by any other man of his high rank in Turkey. It is reported that he, as well as his father, is preparing, in case of the overthrow of the Ottoman power, to establish an independent sovereignty.”

Veli, in his father’s struggle with the Sultan, betrayed Prevesa to the Turks. He was executed in 1822, and is buried at the Silivria Gate of Constantinople.

[Footnote 3: For “monastic Zitza,” see ‘Childe Harold’, Canto II. stanza xlviii., and Byron’s note.]

[Footnote 4: See ‘Lay of the Last Minstrel’, canto i.]

[Footnote 5: William Martin Leake (1777-1860) received his commission as second lieutenant in the artillery in 1794, became a captain in 1799, major in 1809, and lieutenant-colonel in 1813. His professional life, up to 1815, was spent abroad, chiefly at Constantinople, in Egypt, or in various parts of European Turkey. In 1808 he had been sent by the British Government with stores of artillery, ammunition, and Congreve rockets, to Ali, Pasha of Albania, and he remained at Preveza, or Janina, as the representative of Great Britain, till 1810. During his travels he collected the vases, gems, bronzes, marbles, and coins now placed in the British Museum, and in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. At the same time, he accumulated the materials which, during his literary life (1815-59), he embodied in numerous books. Of these the more important are — ‘The Topography of Athens’ (1821); ‘Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor’ (1824); ‘An Historical Outline of the Greek Revolution’ (1825); ‘Travels in the Morea’ (1830); ‘Travels in Northern Greece’ (1835); ‘Numismata Hellenica’ (1854-59). As a diplomatist he was remarkably successful; but his reputation mainly rests on his topographical works. With his antiquarian labours Byron would have had little sympathy; but Leake was also a warm-hearted advocate of the Christian population of Greece against their Turkish rulers.]

[Footnote 6: The battle of Actium (B.C. 31) was fought at the entrance of the Gulf of Arta, and Nicopolis, the city of victory, the ‘Palaio-Kastro’ of the modern Greek, was founded by Augustus on an isthmus connecting Prevesa with the mainland to commemorate his triumph. Leake (‘Travels in Northern Greece’, vol. i. p. 175) identifies Actium with Punda ([Greek (transliterated: aktae], “the head of a promontory”) on the headland opposite Prevesa (see ‘Childe Harold’, Canto II. stanza xlv.).]

[Footnote 7: “Upon Parnassus going to the fountain of Delphi (Castrì) in 1809,” writes Byron, in his ‘Diary’ for 1821 (‘Life’, pp. 99, 100),

“I saw a flight of twelve eagles (H. says they were vultures — at least in conversation), and I seized the omen. On the day before I composed the lines to Parnassus (in ‘Childe Harold’), and, on beholding the birds, had a hope that Apollo had accepted my homage. I have at least had the name and fame of a poet during the poetical part of life (from twenty to thirty); — whether it will ‘last’ is another matter.”

(For the lines to Parnassus, see ‘Childe Harold’, Canto I. stanzas lx.-lxii.) To this journey belongs another incident, recorded by Byron.

“The last bird I ever fired at was an eaglet, on the shore of the Gulf of Lepanto, near Vostizza. It was only wounded, and I tried to save it, — the eye was so bright. But it pined, and died in a few days; and I never did since, and never will, attempt the death of another bird.”]

[Footnote 8: Rear-Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball (1757-1809), who belonged to a Gloucestershire family, entered the navy, inspired by ‘Robinson Crusoe’. A lieutenant in 1778, he distinguished himself with Rodney in 1782 (post-captain, 1783; rear-admiral, 1805), and at the battle of the Nile, when he commanded the ‘Alexander’. Nelson had no liking for Ball until the latter saved the dismasted ‘Vanguard’ from going on shore by taking her in tow. Henceforward they were friends, and Nelson spoke of him as one of his “three right arms.” By his skill in blockading Valetta (1798-1800), Ball was the hero of the siege of Malta, and (June 6, 1801) was created a baronet for his services, and received the Order of Merit from Ferdinand IV of Naples. When Byron met him, Ball was “His Majesty’s Civil Commissioner for the Island of Malta and its Dependencies, and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Order of St. John.” S.T. Coleridge, who was with him as secretary from May, 1804, to October, 1805, wrote enthusiastically of him in his letters, and in ‘The Friend’ (3rd edit., vol. i. essay i., and vol. iii. pp. 226-301). But his picture of the admiral would have been more definite had he remembered the spirit of the remark (quoted in ‘The Friend’) which Ball once made to him:

“The distinction is just, and, now I understand you, abundantly obvious; but hardly worth the trouble of your inventing a puzzle of words to make it appear otherwise.”]

[Footnote 9: Hussein Bey, then a boy of ten years old, son of Mouctar Pasha, the eldest son of Ali, in after years (1820-22) remained faithful to his grandfather, when his father, uncles, and cousin had gone over to the Sultan, and held Tepeleni for Ali in his last struggle against the Turks. Mahomet Pasha, son of Veli Pasha, second son of Ali, though only twelve years old, was already in

possession of a pashalik. In Ali's contest with Turkey, he betrayed Parga to the Sultan, and persuaded his father to surrender Prevesa. He was, however, rewarded for his treachery by execution, and is among the five members of his family who lie buried at the Silivria Gate at Constantinople (Walsh's 'Narrative', p. 67).]

132. — To his Mother.

Smyrna, March 19, 1810.

DEAR MOTHER, — I cannot write you a long letter; but as I know you will not be sorry to receive any intelligence of my movements, pray accept what I can give. I have traversed the greatest part of Greece, besides Epirus, etc., etc., resided ten weeks at Athens, and am now on the Asiatic side on my way to Constantinople. I have just returned from viewing the ruins of Ephesus, a day's journey from Smyrna. I presume you have received a long letter I wrote from Albania, with an account of my reception by the Pacha of the Province.

When I arrive at Constantinople, I shall determine whether to proceed into Persia or return, which latter I do not wish, if I can avoid it. But I have no intelligence from Mr. Hanson, and but one letter from yourself. I shall stand in need of remittances whether I proceed or return. I have written to him repeatedly, that he may not plead ignorance of my situation for neglect. I can give you no account of any thing, for I have not time or opportunity, the frigate sailing immediately. Indeed the further I go the more my laziness increases, and my aversion to letter-writing becomes more confirmed. I have written to no one but to yourself and Mr. Hanson, and these are communications of business and duty rather than of inclination.

Fletcher is very much disgusted with his fatigues, though he has undergone nothing that I have not shared. He is a poor creature; indeed English servants are detestable travellers. I have, besides him, two Albanian soldiers and a Greek interpreter; all excellent in their way. Greece, particularly in the vicinity of Athens, is delightful; — cloudless skies and lovely landscapes. But I must reserve all account of my adventures till we meet. I keep no journal, but my friend Hobhouse scribbles incessantly. Pray take care of Murray and Robert, and tell the boy it is the most fortunate thing for him that he did not accompany me to Turkey. Consider this as merely a notice of my safety, and believe me,

Yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: It was at Smyrna that the two first cantos of 'Childe Harold' were completed. To his original MS. of the poem is prefixed the following memorandum: —

"Byron, Ioannina in Albania.
Begun October 31st, 1809;
Concluded Canto 2d, Smyrna,
March 28th, 1810.

— BYRON."]

133. — To his Mother.
Smyrna, April 9, 1810.

Dear Mother, — I know you will be glad to hear from me: I wish I could say I am equally delighted to write. However, there is no great loss in my scribbles, except to the portmanteau-makers, who, I suppose, will get all by and by.

Nobody but yourself asks me about my creed, — what I am, am not, etc., etc. If I were to begin *explaining*, God knows where I should leave off; so we will say no more about that, if you please.

I am no "good soul," and not an atheist, but an English gentleman, I hope, who loves his mother, mankind, and his country. I have not time to write more at present, and beg you to believe me,

Ever yours, etc.,
BYRON.

P.S.-Are the Miss — — anxiously expecting my arrival and contributions to their gossip and *rhymes*, which are about as bad as they can be?

B.

134. — To his Mother.
Smyrna, April 10, 1810.

Dear Mother, — Tomorrow, or this evening, I sail for Constantinople in the 'Salsette' frigate, of thirty-six guns. She returns to England with our ambassador, whom she is going up on purpose to receive. I have written to you short letters from Athens, Smyrna, and a long one from Albania. I have not yet mustered courage for a second large epistle, and you must not be angry, since I take all opportunities of apprizing you of my safety; but even that is an effort, writing is so irksome.

I have been traversing Greece, and Epirus, Illyria, etc., etc., and you see by my date, have got into Asia. I have made but one excursion lately to the ruins of Ephesus. Malta is the rendez-vous of my letters, so address to that island. Mr. Hanson has not written, though I wished to hear of the Norfolk sale, the

Lancashire law-suit, etc., etc., I am anxiously expecting fresh remittances. I believe you will like Nottinghamshire, at least my share of it. Pray accept my good wishes in lieu of a long letter, and believe me,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Robert (afterwards the Right Hon. Sir Robert) Adair (1763-1855), son of Sergeant-Surgeon Adair and Lady Caroline Keppel, described by an Austrian aristocrat as “le fils du plus grand ‘Seigneur’ d’Angleterre,” was educated at Westminster and the University of Gottingen.” At the latter place Adair, always, as his kinsman Lord Albemarle said of him, “an enthusiastic admirer of the fair sex” (‘Recollections’, vol. i. p. 229), fell in love with his tutor’s daughter. He did not, however, marry “Sweet Matilda Pottingen,” but Angélique Gabrielle, daughter of the Marquis d’Hazincourt. He is supposed to have contributed to the ‘Rolliad’; and the “Dedication to Sir Lloyd Kenyon,” “Margaret Nicholson” (‘Political Eclogues’, p. 207), and the “Song of Scrutina” (‘Probationary Odes’, p. 285), have been attributed to him. He, however, denied (Moore’s ‘Journal and Correspondence’, vol. ii. p. 304) that he wrote any part of the ‘Rolliad’. A Whig, and an intimate friend and follower of Fox, he was in 1791 at St. Petersburg, where the Tories believed that he had been sent by his chief on “half a mission” to intrigue with Russia against Pitt. The charge was published by Dr. Pretymann, Bishop of Winchester, in his ‘Life of Pitt’ (1821), who may have wished to pay off old scores, and to retaliate on one of the reputed authors of the ‘Rolliad’ for the “Pretymanniana,” and was answered in ‘Two Letters from Mr. Adair to the Bishop of Winchester’. It is to this accusation that Ellis and Frere, in the ‘Anti-Jacobin’, refer in “A Bit of an Ode to Mr. Fox” (‘Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin’, edit. 1854, pp. 71-73): —

”I mount, I mount into the sky,
Sweet bird, to ‘Petersburg’ I’ll fly,
Or, if you bid, to ‘Paris’.
Fresh missions of the ‘Fox’ and ‘Goose’
Successful ‘Treaties’ may produce,
Though Pitt in all miscarries.”

Sir James Mackintosh, speaking of the story, told Moore (‘Journals and Correspondence’, vol. iv. p. 267) that a private letter from Adair, reporting his conversations with a high official in St. Petersburg, fell into the hands of the British Government; that some members of the Council were desirous of taking

proceedings upon it; but that Lord Grenville and Pitt threatened to resign, if any use was made of such a document so obtained. (See also the "Translation of a Letter from Bawba-Dara-Adul-Phoola," etc. — 'i.e.' "Bob Adair, a dull fool" — in the 'Anti-Jacobin', p. 208.) Adair was in 1806 sent by Fox as Ambassador to Vienna, and in 1809 was appointed by Canning Ambassador Extraordinary at Constantinople, where, with Stratford Canning as his secretary, he negotiated the Treaty of the Dardanelles. For his services, on his return in 1810, he was made a K.C.B. He was subsequently (1831-35) employed on a mission to the Low Countries, when war appeared imminent between William, Prince of Orange and King Leopold. He was afterwards sworn a member of the Privy Council, and received a pension. George Ticknor ('Life', vol. i. p. 269), who met him at Woburn in 1819, speaks of his great conversational charms, and Moore ('Journals and Correspondence', vol. vii. p. 216) describes him, in 1838, as a man "from whom one gets, now and then, an agreeable whiff of the days of Fox, Tickell, and Sheridan." Many years after Fox's death, Adair was at a fête at Chiswick House. "In which room," he asked of Samuel Rogers, 'did Fox expire?' 'In this very room,' I replied. Immediately, Adair burst into tears with a vehemence of grief such as I hardly ever saw exhibited by a man" ('Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers', p. 97).]

[Footnote 2: The sale of Wymondham and other property in Norfolk, which had come to him through his great-uncle.]

[Footnote 3: Probably an allusion to his mother leaving Burgage Manor and taking up her residence at Newstead.]

135. — To his Mother.

Salsette Frigate, off the Dardanelles, April 17, 1810.

Dear Madam, — I write at anchor (on our way to Constantinople) off the Troad, which I traversed ten days ago. All the remains of Troy are the tombs of her destroyers, amongst which I saw that of Antilochus from my cabin window. These are large mounds of earth, like the barrows of the Danes in your island. There are several monuments, about twelve miles distant, of the Alexandrian Troas, which I also examined, but by no means to be compared with the remnants of Athens and Ephesus. This will be sent in a ship of war, bound with despatches for Malta. In a few days we shall be at Constantinople, barring accidents. I have also written from Smyrna, and shall, from time to time, transmit short accounts of my movements, but I feel totally unequal to long letters.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

BYRON.

P.S. — No accounts from Hanson!!! Do not complain of short letters; I write to nobody but yourself and Mr. H.

136. — To Henry Drury.

Salsette frigate, May 3, 1810.

My Dear Drury, — When I left England, nearly a year ago, you requested me to write to you — I will do so. I have crossed Portugal, traversed the south of Spain, visited Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, and thence passed into Turkey, where I am still wandering. I first landed in Albania, the ancient Epirus, where we penetrated as far as Mount Tomarit — excellently treated by the chief Ali Pacha, — and, after journeying through Illyria, Chaonia, etc., crossed the Gulf of Actium, with a guard of fifty Albanians, and passed the Achelous in our route through Acarnania and Ætolia. We stopped a short time in the Morea, crossed the Gulf of Lepanto, and landed at the foot of Parnassus; — saw all that Delphi retains, and so on to Thebes and Athens, at which last we remained ten weeks.

His Majesty's ship, *Pylades*, brought us to Smyrna; but not before we had topographised Attica, including, of course, Marathon and the Sunian promontory. From Smyrna to the Troad (which we visited when at anchor, for a fortnight, off the tomb of Antilochus) was our next stage; and now we are in the Dardanelles, waiting for a wind to proceed to Constantinople.

This morning I swam from *Sestos* to *Abydos*. The immediate distance is not above a mile, but the current renders it hazardous; — so much so that I doubt whether Leander's conjugal affection must not have been a little chilled in his passage to Paradise. I attempted it a week ago, and failed, — owing to the north wind, and the wonderful rapidity of the tide, — though I have been from my childhood a strong swimmer. But, this morning being calmer, I succeeded, and crossed the "broad Hellespont" in an hour and ten minutes.

Well, my dear sir, I have left my home, and seen part of Africa and Asia, and a tolerable portion of Europe. I have been with generals and admirals, princes and pashas, governors and ungovernables, — but I have not time or paper to expatiate. I wish to let you know that I live with a friendly remembrance of you, and a hope to meet you again; and if I do this as shortly as possible, attribute it to any thing but forgetfulness.

Greece, ancient and modern, you know too well to require description. Albania, indeed, I have seen more of than any Englishman (except a Mr. Leake), for it is a country rarely visited, from the savage character of the natives, though abounding in more natural beauties than the classical regions of Greece, — which, however, are still eminently beautiful, particularly Delphi and Cape Colonna in Attica. Yet these are nothing to parts of Illyria and Epirus, where places without a name, and rivers not laid down in maps, may, one day, when

more known, be justly esteemed superior subjects, for the pencil and the pen, to the dry ditch of the Ilissus and the bogs of Boeotia.

The Troad is a fine field for conjecture and snipe-shooting, and a good sportsman and an ingenious scholar may exercise their feet and faculties to great advantage upon the spot; — or, if they prefer riding, lose their way (as I did) in a cursed quagmire of the Scamander, who wriggles about as if the Dardan virgins still offered their wonted tribute. The only vestige of Troy, or her destroyers, are the barrows supposed to contain the carcasses of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc.; — but Mount Ida is still in high feather, though the shepherds are now-a-days not much like Ganymede. But why should I say more of these things? are they not written in the *Boke of Gell*? and has not Hobhouse got a journal? I keep none, as I have renounced scribbling.

I see not much difference between ourselves and the Turks, save that we have — — and they have none — that they have long dresses, and we short, and that we talk much, and they little. They are sensible people. Ali Pacha told me he was sure I was a man of rank, because I had *small ears* and *hands*, and *curling hair*. By the by, I speak the Romaic, or modern Greek, tolerably. It does not differ from the ancient dialects so much as you would conceive; but the pronunciation is diametrically opposite. Of verse, except in rhyme, they have no idea.

I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals, — with all the Turkish vices, without their courage. However, some are brave, and all are beautiful, very much resembling the busts of Alcibiades; — the women not quite so handsome. I can swear in Turkish; but, except one horrible oath, and “pimp,” and “bread,” and “water,” I have got no great vocabulary in that language. They are extremely polite to strangers of any rank, properly protected; and as I have two servants and two soldiers, we get on with great *éclat*. We have been occasionally in danger of thieves, and once of shipwreck, — but always escaped.

Of Spain I sent some account to our Hodgson, but have subsequently written to no one, save notes to relations and lawyers, to keep them out of my premises. I mean to give up all connection, on my return, with many of my best friends — as I supposed them-and to snarl all my life. But I hope to have one good-humoured laugh with you, and to embrace Dwyer, and pledge Hodgson, before I commence cynicism.

Tell Dr. Butler I am now writing with the gold pen he gave me before I left England, which is the reason my scrawl is more unintelligible than usual. I have been at Athens, and seen plenty of these reeds for scribbling, some of which he refused to bestow upon me, because topographic Gell had brought them from Attica. But I will not describe, — no — you must be satisfied with simple detail till my return, and then we will unfold the floodgates of colloquy. I am in a

thirty-six gun frigate, going up to fetch Bob Adair from Constantinople, who will have the honour to carry this letter.

And so Hobhouse's *boke* is out, with some sentimental sing-song of my own to fill up, — and how does it take, eh? and where the devil is the second edition of my Satire, with additions? and my name on the title page? and more lines tagged to the end, with a new exordium and what not, hot from my anvil before I cleared the Channel? The Mediterranean and the Atlantic roll between me and criticism; and the thunders of the Hyperborean Review are deafened by the roar of the Hellespont.

Remember me to Claridge, if not translated to college, and present to Hodgson assurances of my high consideration. Now, you will ask, what shall I do next? and I answer, I do not know. I may return in a few months, but I have intents and projects after visiting Constantinople. Hobhouse, however, will probably be back in September.

On the 2d of July we have left Albion one year — *oblitus meorum obliviscendus et illis*. I was sick of my own country, and not much prepossessed in favour of any other; but I “drag on my chain” without “lengthening it at each remove.” I am like the Jolly Miller, caring for nobody, and not cared for. All countries are much the same in my eyes. I smoke, and stare at mountains, and twirl my mustachios very independently. I miss no comforts, and the mosquitoes that rack the morbid frame of H. have, luckily for me, little effect on mine, because I live more temperately.

I omitted Ephesus in my catalogue, which I visited during my sojourn at Smyrna; but the Temple has almost perished, and St. Paul need not trouble himself to epistolise the present brood of Ephesians, who have converted a large church built entirely of marble into a mosque, and I don't know that the edifice looks the worse for it.

My paper is full, and my ink ebbing — good afternoon! If you address to me at Malta, the letter will be forwarded wherever I may be. H. greets you; he pines for his poetry, — at least, some tidings of it. I almost forgot to tell you that I am dying for love of three Greek girls at Athens, sisters. I lived in the same house. Teresa, Mariana, and Katinka, are the names of these divinities, — all of them under fifteen.

Your [Greek (transliterated): tapeinotatos doulos], BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Byron made two attempts to swim across the Hellespont from Abydos to Sestos. The first, April 16, failed; the second, May 3, in warmer weather, succeeded.

“Byron was one hour and ten minutes in the water; his companion, Mr. Ekenhead, five minutes less ... My fellow-traveller had before made a more

perilous, but less celebrated, passage; for I recollect that, when we were in Portugal, he swam from Old Lisbon to Belem Castle, and, having to contend with a tide and counter-current, the wind blowing freshly, was but little less than two hours in crossing the river”

(Hobhouse, ‘Travels in Albania’, etc., vol. ii. p. 195). In Hobhouse’s journal, Byron made the following note:

“The whole distance E. and myself swam was more than four miles — the current very strong and cold — some large fish near us when half across — we were not fatigued, but a little chilled — did it with little difficulty. — May 26, 1810. BYRON.”

Of his feat Byron was always proud. See the “Lines Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos” (“by the by, from Abydos to Sestos would have been more correct”), and ‘Don Juan’, Canto II. stanza cv.: —

”A better swimmer you could scarce see ever;
He could, perhaps, have pass’d the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.”

In a note to the “Lines Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos,” Byron writes,

“Chevalier says that a young Jew swam the same distance for his mistress; and Oliver mentions its having been done by a Neapolitan; but our consul, Tarragona, remembered neither of these circumstances, and tried to dissuade us from the attempt. A number of the ‘Salsette’'s crew were known to have accomplished a greater distance; and the only thing that surprised me was that, as doubts had been entertained of the truth of Leander’s story, no traveller had ever endeavoured to ascertain its practicability.”

Lieutenant Ekenhead, of the Marines, was afterwards killed by a fall from the fortifications of Malta.]

[Footnote 2: Sir William Gell (1777-1836) published the ‘Topography of Troy’ (1804); ‘Geography and Antiquities of Ithaca’ (1807); the ‘Itinerary of Greece’ (1810); and many other subsequent works. (For Byron’s review of ‘Ithaca’ and ‘Greece’, in the ‘Monthly Review’ for August, 1811, see Appendix III.) In the MS. of ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’ (line 1034) he called him “coxcomb Gell;” but, having made his personal acquaintance before the Satire was printed, he changed the epithet to “classic.” After seeing the country himself, he again altered the epithet —

"Of Dardan tours let Dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid Gell."

To these lines is appended the following note:

"‘Rapid,’ indeed! He topographised and typographised King Priam’s dominions in three days! I called him ‘classic’ before I saw the Troad, but since have learned better than to tack to his name what don’t belong to it."

To this passage Byron, in 1816, added the further expression of his opinion, that "Gell’s survey was hasty and superficial." One of two suppressed stanzas in ‘Childe Harold’ (Canto II. stanza xiii.) refers to Gell and his works: —

"Or will the gentle Dilettanti crew
Now delegate the task to digging Gell?
That mighty limner of a bird’s-eye view,
How like to Nature let his volumes tell;
Who can with him the folio’s limits swell
With all the Author saw, or said he saw?
Who can topographise or delve so well?
No boaster he, nor impudent and raw,
His pencil, pen, and shade, alike without a flaw."]

[Footnote 3: ‘Imitations and Translations from the Ancient and Modern Classics, etc.’ (London, 1809, 8vo). Of the sixty-five pieces, nine were by Byron (see ‘Poems’, vol. i., Bibliographical note; and vol. vi., Bibliographical note). The second and enlarged edition of ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’, with Byron’s name attached, appeared in October, 1809.]

[Footnote 4: Two boys of this name, sons of J. Claridge, of Sevenoaks, entered Harrow School in April, 1805. George became a solicitor, and died at Sevenoaks in 1841; John (afterwards Sir John) went to Christ Church, Oxford, became a barrister, and died in 1868. John Claridge seems to have been one of Byron’s “juniors and favourites,” whom he “spoilt by indulgence.”]

[Footnote 5:

"Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

GOLDSMITH’S Traveller, lines 9, 10.]

[Footnote 6: The allusion is to the familiar lines inserted by Isaac Bickerstaffe in 'Love in a Village' (1762), act i. sc. 3 —

"There was a jolly miller once,
Liv'd on the river Dee;
He work'd and sung from morn till night;
No lark more blithe than he.

"And this the burden of his song,
For ever us'd to be —
I care for nobody, not I,
If no one cares for me."]

[Footnote 7:

"During our stay at Athens," writes Hobhouse ('Travels in Albania, etc.', vol. i. pp. 242, 243), "we occupied two houses separated from each other only by a single wall, through which we opened a doorway. One of them belongs to a Greek lady, whose name is Theodora Macri, the daughter of the late English Vice-Consul, and who has to show many letters of recommendation left in her hands by several English travellers. Her lodgings consisted of a sitting-room and two bedrooms, opening into a court-yard where there were five or six lemon-trees, from which, during our residence in the place, was plucked the fruit that seasoned the pilaf and other national dishes served up at our frugal table."

The beauty of the Greek women is transient. Hughes ('Travels in Sicily, etc.', vol. i. p. 254, published in 1820) speaks of the three daughters of Madame Macri as "the 'belles' of Athens." Of Theresa, the eldest, he says that "her countenance was extremely interesting, and her eye retained much of its wonted brilliancy; but the roses had already deserted the cheek, and we observed the remains only of that loveliness which elicited such strains from an impassioned poet." Walsh, in his 'Narrative of a Resident in Constantinople' (vol. i. p. 122), speaks of Theresa Macri, the "Maid of Athens," whom he saw in 1821, as "still very elegant in her person, and gentle and ladylike in her manners," but adds that "she has lost all pretensions to beauty, and has a countenance singularly marked by hopeless sadness." On the other hand, Williams, in his 'Travels in Italy, etc.' (vol. ii. pp. 290, 291), speaks, in 1820, with an artist's enthusiasm, of the beauty of the three daughters of Theodora Macri. He quotes from the "Visitors' Book," to which Hobhouse alludes, four lines written by Byron in answer to an anonymous versifier —

"This modest bard, like many a bard unknown,
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,
His name would bring more credit than his verse."

Theresa and Mariana Macri were dark; Katinka was fair. The latter name Byron uses as that of the fair Georgian in 'Don Juan' (Canto VI. stanza xli.).

"It was," says Moore, "if I recollect right, in making love to one of these girls that he had recourse to an act of courtship often practised in that country; — namely, giving himself a wound across the breast with his dagger. The young Athenian, by his own account, looked on very coolly during the operation, considering it a fit tribute to her beauty, but in no degree moved to gratitude."

Theresa, sometimes called Thyrsa, Macri married an Englishman named Black, employed in H.M.'s Consular service at Missolonghi. She survived her husband, and fell into great poverty. Finlay, the historian of Greece, made an appeal on her behalf, which obtained the support of the leading members of Athenian society, including M. Charilaus Tricoupi, for some time Prime Minister at Athens, the son of Spiridion Tricoupi — Byron's intimate friend. In the 'New York Times' for October 22, 1875, Mr. Anthony Martelaus, United States Consular Agent at Athens, describes Mrs. Black, whom he visited in August, 1875, as "a tall old lady, with features inspiring reverence, and showing that at a time past she was a beautiful woman." Theresa Black died October 15, 1875, aged 80 years. (See letters to the 'Times', October 25 and October 27, 1875, by Richard Edgcumbe and Neocles Mussabini respectively.)]

137. — To Francis Hodgson.

'Salsette' frigate, in the Dardanelles, off Abydos, May 5, 1810.

I am on my way to Constantinople, after a tour through Greece, Epirus, etc., and part of Asia Minor, some particulars of which I have just communicated to our friend and host, H. Drury. With these, then, I shall not trouble you; but as you will perhaps be pleased to hear that I am well, etc., I take the opportunity of our ambassador's return to forward the few lines I have time to despatch. We have undergone some inconveniences, and incurred partial perils, but no events worthy of communication, unless you will deem it one that two days ago I swam from Sestos to Abydos. This, with a few alarms from robbers, and some danger of shipwreck in a Turkish galliot six months ago, a visit to a Pacha, a passion for a married woman at Malta, a challenge to an officer, an attachment to three Greek girls at Athens, with a great deal of buffoonery and fine prospects, form all that has distinguished my progress since my departure from Spain.

Hobhouse rhymes and journalises; I stare and do nothing — unless smoking

can be deemed an active amusement. The Turks take too much care of their women to permit them to be scrutinised; but I have lived a good deal with the Greeks, whose modern dialect I can converse in enough for my purposes. With the Turks I have also some male acquaintances — female society is out of the question. I have been very well treated by the Pachas and Governors, and have no complaint to make of any kind. Hobhouse will one day inform you of all our adventures — were I to attempt the recital, neither *my* paper nor *your* patience would hold out during the operation.

Nobody, save yourself, has written to me since I left England; but indeed I did not request it. I except my relations, who write quite as often as I wish. Of Hobhouse's volume I know nothing, except that it is out; and of my second edition I do not even know *that*, and certainly do not, at this distance, interest myself in the matter. I hope you and Bland roll down the stream of sale with rapidity.

Of my return I cannot positively speak, but think it probable Hobhouse will precede me in that respect. We have been very nearly one year abroad. I should wish to gaze away another, at least, in these evergreen climates; but I fear business, law business, the worst of employments, will recall me previous to that period, if not very quickly. If so, you shall have due notice.

I hope you will find me an altered personage, — I do not mean in body, but in manner, for I begin to find out that nothing but virtue will do in this damned world. I am tolerably sick of vice, which I have tried in its agreeable varieties, and mean, on my return, to cut all my dissolute acquaintance, leave off wine and carnal company, and betake myself to politics and decorum. I am very serious and cynical, and a good deal disposed to moralise; but fortunately for you the coming homily is cut off by default of pen and defection of paper.

Good morrow! If you write, address to me at Malta, whence your letters will be forwarded. You need not remember me to any body, but believe me,

Yours with all faith,

BYRON.

Constantinople, May 15, 1810.

P.S. — My dear H., — The date of my postscript “will prate to you of my whereabouts.” We anchored between the Seven Towers and the Seraglio on the 13th, and yesterday settled ashore. The ambassador is laid up; but the secretary does the honours of the palace, and we have a general invitation to his palace. In a short time he has his leave of audience, and we accompany him in our uniforms to the Sultan, etc., and in a few days I am to visit the Captain Pacha with the commander of our frigate. I have seen enough of their Pashas already;

but I wish to have a view of the Sultan, the last of the Ottoman race.

Of Constantinople you have Gibbon's description, very correct as far as I have seen. The mosques I shall have a firman to visit. I shall most probably ('Deo volente'), after a full inspection of Stamboul, bend my course homewards; but this is uncertain. I have seen the most interesting parts, particularly Albania, where few Franks have ever been, and all the most celebrated ruins of Greece and Ionia.

Of England I know nothing, hear nothing, and can find no person better informed on the subject than myself. I this moment drink your health in a bumper of hock; Hobhouse fills and empties to the same; do you and Drury pledge us in a pint of any liquid you please — vinegar will bear the nearest resemblance to that which I have just swallowed to your name; but when we meet again the draught shall be mended and the wine also.

Yours ever,

B.

[Footnote 1: Mrs. Spencer Smith (see page 244 [Letter 130], [Foot]note 1).

"In the mean time," writes Galt, who was at Malta with him, "besides his "Platonic dalliance with Mrs. Spencer Smith, Byron had involved himself in a quarrel with an officer; but it was satisfactorily settled"

('Life of Byron', p. 67).]

[Footnote 2: The Rev. Robert Bland (1780-1825), the son of a well-known London doctor, educated at Harrow and Pembroke College, Cambridge, was an assistant-master at Harrow when Byron was a schoolboy. There he became one of a "social club or circle," to which belonged J. Herman Merivale, Hodgson, Henry Drury, Denman (afterwards Lord Chief Justice), Charles Pepys (afterwards Lord Chancellor), Launcelot Shadwell (afterwards Vice-Chancellor), Walford (afterwards Solicitor to the Customs), and Paley, a son of the archdeacon. A good singer, an amusing companion, and a clever, impulsive, eccentric creature, he was nicknamed by his friends "Don Hyperbolo" for his humorous extravagances. Some of his letters, together with a sketch of his life, are given in the 'Life of the Rev. Francis Hodgson', vol. i. pp. 226-250. In the 'Monthly Magazine' for March, 1805, he and Merivale began to publish a series of translations from the Greek minor poets and epigrammatists, which were afterwards collected, with additions by Denman, Hodgson, Drury, and others, and published (1806) under the title of 'Translations, chiefly from the Greek Anthology, with Tales and Miscellaneous Poems'. Bland and Merivale (1779-1844) are addressed by Byron ('English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', lines

881-890) as “associate bards,” and adjured to “resign Achaia’s lyre, and strike your own.” The two friends also collaborated in the ‘Collections from the Greek Anthology’ (1813), and ‘A Collection of the most Beautiful Poems of the Minor Poets of Greece’ (1813). Bland also published two volumes of original verse: ‘Edwy and Elgiva’ (1808), and ‘The Four Slaves of Cythera, a Poetical Romance’ (1809). Several generations of schoolboys have learned to write Latin verse from his ‘Elements of Latin Hexameters and Pentameters’. A lover of France, and of the French nation and of French acting, he spoke the language like a native, travelled in disguise over the countries occupied by Napoleon’s armies, and (1813) published, in collaboration with Miss Plumptre, a translation of the ‘Memoirs’ of Baron Grimm and Diderot. He was appointed Chaplain at Amsterdam, whence he returned in 1811. (For the circumstances of his quarrel with Hodgson, see page 195 [Letter 102], [Foot]note 1.) He was successively Curate of Prittlewell and Kenilworth. At the latter place, where he eked out a scanty income by taking pupils, he died in 1825 from breaking a blood-vessel.]

[Footnote 3: Byron and Hobhouse landed on May 14, and rode to their inn.

“This,” says Hobhouse (‘Travels in Albania, etc.’, vol. ii pp. 216, 217), “was situated at the corner of the main street of Pera, here four ways meet, all of which were not less mean and dirty than the lanes of Wapping. The hotel, however (kept by a *Mons. Marchand*), was a very comfortable mansion, containing many chambers handsomely furnished, and a large billiard-room, which is the resort of all the idle young men of the place. Our dinners there were better served, and composed of meats more to the English taste, than we had seen at any tavern since our departure from Falmouth; and the butter of Belgrade (perfectly fresh, though not of a proper consistency) was a delicacy to which we had long been unaccustomed. The best London porter, and nearly every species of wine, except port, were also to be procured in any quantity. To this eulogy cannot be added the material recommendation of cheapness.”]

[Footnote 4: Robert Adair. (See page 260 [Letter 134], [Foot]note 1.)]

[Footnote 5: Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.]

[Footnote 6: Captain Bathurst, and the officers of the ‘Salsette’, anxious to see the arsenal and the Turkish fleet, paid a visit with Byron to Ali, the Capudan-Pasha, or Lord High Admiral.

“He was,” writes Hobhouse (‘Travels in Albania, etc.’, vol. ii. p. 279), “in his kiosk of audience at Divan-Hane, a splendid chamber, surrounded by his attendants, and, contrary to custom, received us sitting. He is reported to be a ferocious character, and certainly had the appearance of being so.”]

138. — To his Mother.

Constantinople, May 18, 1810.

Dear Madam, — I arrived here in an English frigate from Smyrna a few days ago, without any events worth mentioning, except landing to view the plains of Troy, and afterwards, when we were at anchor in the Dardanelles, *swimming* from Sestos to Abydos, in imitation of Monsieur Leander, whose story you, no doubt, know too well for me to add anything on the subject except that I crossed the Hellespont without so good a motive for the undertaking. As I am just going to visit the Captain-Pacha, you will excuse the brevity of my letter. When Mr. Adair takes leave I am to see the Sultan and the mosques, *etc.*

Believe me, yours ever,

BYRON.

139. — To his Mother.

Constantinople, May 24, 1810.

Dear Mother, — I wrote to you very shortly the other day on my arrival here, and, as another opportunity avails, take up my pen again, that the frequency of my letters may atone for their brevity. Pray did you ever receive a picture of me in oil by *Sanders* in *Vigo Lane*, London? (a noted limner); if not, write for it immediately; it was paid for, except the frame (if frame there be), before I left England. I believe I mentioned to you in my last that my only notable exploit lately has been swimming from Sestos to Abydos in humble imitation of *Leander*, of amorous memory; though I had no *Hero* to receive me on the other shore of the Hellespont.

Of Constantinople you have of course read fifty descriptions by sundry travellers, which are in general so correct that I have nothing to add on the subject. When our ambassador takes his leave I shall accompany him to see the Sultan, and afterwards probably return to Greece. I have heard nothing of Mr. H — —, but one remittance without any letter from that legal gentleman. If you have occasion for any pecuniary supply, pray use my funds as far as they *go*, without reserve; and lest there should not be enough, in my next to Mr. H — — I will direct him to advance any sum you want, leaving at your discretion how much, in the present state of my affairs, you may think proper to require.

I have already seen the most interesting part of Turkey in Europe and Asia Minor, but shall not proceed further till I hear from England. In the mean time I shall expect occasional supplies, according to circumstances, and shall pass my summer amongst my friends the Greeks of the Morea. You will direct to Malta, where my letters are forwarded.

And believe me, with great sincerity, yours ever,

BYRON.

P.S. — Fletcher is well. Pray take care of my boy Robert and the old man Murray. It is fortunate they returned; neither the youth of the one nor the age of the other would have suited the changes of climate and fatigue of travelling.

140. — To Henry Drury.

Constantinople, June 17, 1810.

Though I wrote to you so recently, I break in upon you again to congratulate you on a child being born, as a letter from Hodgson apprizes me of that event, in which I rejoice.

I am just come from an expedition through the Bosphorus to the Black Sea and the Cyanean Symplegades, up which last I scrambled with as great risk as ever the Argonauts escaped in their hoy. You remember the beginning of the nurse's dole in the 'Medea', of which I beg you to take the following translation, done on the summit: —

"Oh how I wish that an embargo
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!
Who, still unlaunched from Grecian docks,
Had never passed the Azure rocks;
But now I fear her trip will be a
Damned business for my Miss Medea, etc., etc.,"

as it very nearly was to me; — for, had not this sublime passage been in my head, I should never have dreamed of ascending the said rocks, and bruising my carcass in honour of the ancients.

I have now sat on the Cyaneans, swam from Sestos to Abydos (as I trumpeted in my last), and, after passing through the Morea again, shall set sail for Santa Maura, and toss myself from the Leucadian promontory; — surviving which operation, I shall probably join you in England. Hobhouse, who will deliver this, is bound straight for these parts; and, as he is bursting with his travels, I shall not anticipate his narratives, but merely beg you not to believe one word he says, but reserve your ear for me, if you have any desire to be acquainted with the truth.

I am bound for Athens once more, and thence to the Morea; but my stay depends so much on my caprice, that I can say nothing of its probable duration. I have been out a year already, and may stay another; but I am quicksilver, and say nothing positively. We are all very much occupied doing nothing, at present. We have seen every thing but the mosques, which we are to view with a firman on Tuesday next. But of these and other sundries let H. relate, with this proviso, that 'I' am to be referred to for authenticity; and I beg leave to contradict all

those things whereon he lays particular stress. But, if he soars at any time into wit, I give you leave to applaud, because that is necessarily stolen from his fellow-pilgrim. Tell Davies that Hobhouse has made excellent use of his best jokes in many of his Majesty's ships of war; but add, also, that I always took care to restore them to the right owner; in consequence of which he (Davies) is no less famous by water than by land, and reigns unrivalled in the cabin as in the "Cocoa Tree."

And Hodgson has been publishing more poesy — I wish he would send me his 'Sir Edgar', and Bland's 'Anthology', to Malta, where they will be forwarded. In my last, which I hope you received, I gave an outline of the ground we have covered. If you have not been overtaken by this despatch, Hobhouse's tongue is at your service. Remember me to Dwyer, who owes me eleven guineas. Tell him to put them in my banker's hands at Gibraltar or Constantinople. I believe he paid them once, but that goes for nothing, as it was an annuity.

I wish you would write. I have heard from Hodgson frequently. Malta is my post-office. I mean to be with you by next Montem. You remember the last, — I hope for such another; but after having swam across the "broad Hellespont," I disdain Datchett. Good afternoon!

I am yours, very sincerely,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: Henry Drury, afterwards Archdeacon of Wilts.]

[Footnote 2: Euripides, 'Medea', lines 1-7 —

[Greek (transliterated)]:

Eith ophel Argous mae diaptasthai skaphos Kolchon es aian kuaneas Symplaegadas, maed en napaisi Paeliou pedein pote tmaetheisa peukae, maed eretmosai cheras andron aristeon, oi to pagchryson deros Pelia metaelthon ou gar an despoin emae Maedeia pyrgous gaes epleus Iolkias k.t.l.]]

[Footnote 3: For Scrope Berdmore Davies, see page 165 [Letter 86],

[Foot]note 2.]

[Footnote 4: "The Cocoa Tree," now 64, St. James's Street, formerly in Pall Mall, was, in the reign of Queen Anne, the Tory Chocolate House. It became a club about 1745, and was then regarded as the headquarters of the Jacobites. Probably for this reason Gibbon, whose father professed Jacobite opinions, belonged to it on coming to live in London (see his journal for November, 1762, and his letter to his stepmother, January 18, 1766: "The Cocoa Tree serves now

and then to take off an idle hour"). Byron was a member.]

[Footnote 5: Hodgson's 'Sir Edgar' was published in 1810.]

[Footnote 6: Alluding to his having swum across the Thames with Henry Drury, after the Montem, to see how many times they could make the passage backwards and forwards without touching land. In this trial Byron was the conqueror.]

141. — To his Mother.

Constantinople, June 28, 1810.

My dear Mother, — I regret to perceive by your last letter that several of mine have not arrived, particularly a very long one written in November last from Albania, where I was on a visit to the Pacha of that province. Fletcher has also written to his spouse perpetually.

Mr. Hobhouse, who will forward or deliver this, and is on his return to England, can inform you of our different movements, but I am very uncertain as to my own return. He will probably be down in Notts, some time or other; but Fletcher, whom I send back as an incumbrance (English servants are sad travellers), will supply his place in the interim, and describe our travels, which have been tolerably extensive.

I have written twice briefly from this capital, from Smyrna, from Athens and other parts of Greece; from Albania, the Pacha of which province desired his respects to my mother, and said he was sure I was a man of high birth because I had small ears, curling hair, and white hands!!! He was very kind to me, begged me to consider him as a father, and gave me a guard of forty soldiers through the forests of Acarnania. But of this and other circumstances I have written to you at large, and yet hope you will receive my letters.

I remember Mahmout Pacha, the grandson of Ali Pacha, at Yanina, (a little fellow of ten years of age, with large black eyes, which our ladies would purchase at any price, and those regular features which distinguish the Turks,) asked me how I came to travel so young, without anybody to take care of me. This question was put by the little man with all the gravity of threescore. I cannot now write copiously; I have only time to tell you that I have passed many a fatiguing, but never a tedious moment; and all that I am afraid of is that I shall contract a gypsy like wandering disposition, which will make home tiresome to me: this, I am told, is very common with men in the habit of peregrination, and, indeed, I feel it so. On the 3rd of May I swam from *Sestos* to *Abydos*. You know the story of Leander, but I had no *Hero* to receive me at landing.

I also passed a fortnight on the Troad. The tombs of Achilles and Æsyetes

still exist in large barrows, similar to those you have doubtless seen in the North. The other day I was at Belgrade (a village in these environs), to see the house built on the same site as Lady Mary Wortley's. By-the-by, her ladyship, as far as I can judge, has lied, but not half so much as any other woman would have done in the same situation.

I have been in all the principal mosques by the virtue of a firman: this is a favor rarely permitted to Infidels, but the ambassador's departure obtained it for us. I have been up the Bosphorus into the Black Sea, round the walls of the city, and, indeed, I know more of it by sight than I do of London. I hope to amuse you some winter's evening with the details, but at present you must excuse me; — I am not able to write long letters in June. I return to spend my summer in Greece. I write often, but you must not be alarmed when you do not receive my letters; consider we have no regular post farther than Malta, where I beg you will in future send your letters, and not to this city.

Fletcher is a poor creature, and requires comforts that I can dispense with. He is very sick of his travels, but you must not believe his account of the country. He sighs for ale, and idleness, and a wife, and the devil knows what besides. I have not been disappointed or disgusted. I have lived with the highest and the lowest. I have been for days in a Pacha's palace, and have passed many a night in a cowhouse, and I find the people inoffensive and kind. I have also passed some time with the principal Greeks in the Morea and Livadia, and, though inferior to the Turks, they are better than the Spaniards, who, in their turn, excel the Portuguese. Of Constantinople you will find many descriptions in different travels; but Lady Mary Wortley errs strangely when she says, "St. Paul's would cut a strange figure by St. Sophia's." I have been in both, surveyed them inside and out attentively. St. Sophia's is undoubtedly the most interesting from its immense antiquity, and the circumstance of all the Greek emperors, from Justinian, having been crowned there, and several murdered at the altar, besides the Turkish Sultans who attend it regularly. But it is inferior in beauty and size to some of the mosques, particularly "Soleyman," etc., and not to be mentioned in the same page with St. Paul's (I speak like a *Cockney*). However, I prefer the Gothic cathedral of Seville to St. Paul's, St. Sophia's, and any religious building I have ever seen.

The walls of the Seraglio are like the walls of Newstead gardens, only higher, and much in the same *order*; but the ride by the walls of the city, on the land side, is beautiful. Imagine four miles of immense triple battlements, covered with ivy, surmounted with 218 towers, and, on the other side of the road, Turkish burying-grounds (the loveliest spots on earth), full of enormous cypresses. I have seen the ruins of Athens, of Ephesus, and Delphi. I have traversed great part of

Turkey, and many other parts of Europe, and some of Asia; but I never beheld a work of nature or art which yielded an impression like the prospect on each side from the Seven Towers to the end of the Golden Horn.

Now for England. I am glad to hear of the progress of 'English Bards', *etc.* Of course, you observed I have made great additions to the new edition. Have you received my picture from Sanders, Vigo Lane, London? It was finished and paid for long before I left England: pray, send for it. You seem to be a mighty reader of magazines: where do you pick up all this intelligence, quotations, *etc.*, *etc.*? Though I was happy to obtain my seat without the assistance of Lord Carlisle, I had no measures to keep with a man who declined interfering as my relation on that occasion, and I have done with him, though I regret distressing Mrs. Leigh, poor thing! — I hope she is happy.

It is my opinion that Mr. B — — ought to marry Miss R — — . Our first duty is not to do evil; but, alas! that is impossible: our next is to repair it, if in our power. The girl is his equal: if she were his inferior, a sum of money and provision for the child would be some, though a poor, compensation: as it is, he should marry her. I will have no gay deceivers on my estate, and I shall not allow my tenants a privilege I do not permit myself — *that* of debauching each other's daughters. God knows, I have been guilty of many excesses; but, as I have laid down a resolution to reform, and lately kept it, I expect this Lothario to follow the example, and begin by restoring this girl to society, or, by the beard of my father! he shall hear of it. Pray take some notice of Robert, who will miss his master; poor boy, he was very unwilling to return. I trust you are well and happy. It will be a pleasure to hear from you.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,
BYRON.

P.S. — How is Joe Murray?

P.S. — I open my letter again to tell you that Fletcher having petitioned to accompany me into the Morea, I have taken him with me, contrary to the intention expressed in my letter.

[Footnote 1: Alluding to his having swum across the Thames with Henry Drury, after the Montem, to see how many times they could make the passage backwards and forwards without touching land. In this trial Byron was the conqueror.]

[Footnote 2: Lady Mary describes the village of Belgrade in a letter to Pope, dated June 17, 1717 ('Letters', edit. 1893, vol. i. pp. 331-333). But Walsh

(‘Narrative of a Residence in Constantinople’, vol. ii. 108, 109), who visited Belgrade in 1821, says that no trace of her description was then to be seen — no view of the Black Sea, no houses of the wealthy Christians, no fountains, and no fruit-trees. “The very tradition” of the house, which had disappeared before Dallaway visited Belgrade in 1794, had perished.]

[Footnote 3: Lady Mary does not compare St. Paul’s with St. Sophia’s, but with the mosque of the Valide,

“the largest of all, built entirely of marble, the most prodigious, and, I think, the most beautiful structure I ever saw, be it spoken to the honour of our sex, for it was founded by the mother of Mahomet IV. Between friends, “St. Paul’s Church would make a pitiful figure near it”

(‘Letters’, vol. i. p. 356).

[Footnote 4:

”The European with the Asian shore
Sprinkled with palaces; the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;
Sophia’s cupola with golden gleam;
The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;
The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm’d the charming Mary Montagu.”

Don Juan, Canto V. stanza 3.]

[Footnote 5: For Mrs. Leigh, ‘née’ Augusta Byron, see page 18 [Letter 7], [Foot]note 1.]

142. — To his Mother.

Constantinople, July 1, 1810.

My dear Mother, — I have no wish to forget those who have any claim upon me, and shall be glad of the good wishes of R — — when he can express them in person, which it seems will be at some very indefinite date. I shall perhaps essay a speech or *two* in the House when I return, but I am not ambitious of a parliamentary career, which is of all things the most degrading and unthankful. If I could by my own efforts inculcate the truth, that a man is not intended for a despot or a machine, but as an individual of a community, and fit for the society of kings, so long as he does not trespass on the laws or rebel against just governments, I might attempt to found a new Utopia; but as matters are at present, in course you will not expect me to sacrifice my health or self to your or anyone’s ambition.

To quit this new idea for something you will understand better, how are Miss R's, the W's, and Mr. R's blue bastards? for I suppose he will not deny their *authorship*, which was, to say the least, imprudent and immoral. Poor Miss — : if he does not marry, and marry her speedily, he shall be no tenant of mine from the day that I set foot on English shores.

I am glad you have received my portrait from Sanders. It does not *flatter* me, I think, but the subject is a bad one, and I must even do as Fletcher does over his Greek wines — make a face and hope for better. What you told me of — — is not *true*, which I regret for your sake and your gossip-seeking neighbours, whom present with my good wishes, and believe me,

Yours, etc.,

BYRON.

143. — To Francis Hodgson.

Constantinople, July 4, 1810.

My Dear Hodgson, — Twice have I written — once in answer to your last, and a former letter when I arrived here in May. That I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I will write once more — a very superfluous task, seeing that Hobhouse is bound for your parts full of talk and wonderment. My first letter went by an ambassadorial express; my second by the *Black John* lugger; my third will be conveyed by Cam, the miscellanist.

I shall begin by telling you, having only told it you twice before, that I swam from Sestos to Abydos. I do this that you may be impressed with proper respect for me, the performer; for I plume myself on this achievement more than I could possibly do on any kind of glory, political, poetical, or rhetorical. Having told you this, I will tell you nothing more, because it would be cruel to curtail Cam's narrative, which, by-the-by, you must not believe till confirmed by me, the eye-witness. I promise myself much pleasure from contradicting the greatest part of it. He has been plaguily pleased by the intelligence contained in your last to me respecting the reviews of his hymns. I refreshed him with that paragraph immediately, together with the tidings of my own third edition, which added to his recreation. But then he has had a letter from a Lincoln's Inn Benchler, full of praise of his harpings, and vituperation of the other contributions to his *Missellingany*, which that sagacious person is pleased to say must have been put in as FOILS (*horresco referens!*); furthermore he adds that Cam "is a genuine pupil of Dryden," concluding with a comparison rather to the disadvantage of Pope.

I have written to Drury by Hobhouse; a letter is also from me on its way to

England intended for that matrimonial man. Before it is very long, I hope we shall again be together; the moment I set out for England you shall have intelligence, that we may meet as soon as possible. Next week the frigate sails with Adair; I am for Greece, Hobhouse for England. A year together on the 2nd July since we sailed from Falmouth. I have known a hundred instances of men setting out in couples, but not one of a similar return. Aberdeen's party split; several voyagers at present have done the same. I am confident that twelve months of any given individual is perfect ipecacuanha.

The Russians and Turks are at it, and the Sultan in person is soon to head the army. The Captain Pasha cuts off heads every day, and a Frenchman's ears; the last is a serious affair. By-the-by I like the Pashas in general. Ali Pasha called me his son, desired his compliments to my mother, and said he was sure I was a man of birth, because I had "small ears and curling hair." He is Pasha of Albania six hundred miles off, where I was in October — a fine portly person. His grandson Mahmout, a little fellow ten years old, with large black eyes as big as pigeon's eggs, and all the gravity of sixty, asked me what I did travelling so young without a *Lala* (tutor)?

Good night, dear H. I have crammed my paper, and crave your indulgence. Write to me at Malta. I am, with all sincerity,

Yours affectionately,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: George Hamilton Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860), afterwards Prime Minister (1852-55), succeeded his grandfather as fourth earl in 1801. Grandson of the purchaser of Mrs. Byron's old home of Gight, and writer of an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' (July, 1805) on Gell's 'Topography of Troy,' he has a place in 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers' (lines 508, 509). He also appears as "sullen Aberdeen," in a suppressed stanza of 'Childe Harold', Canto II., which in the MS. follows stanza xiii., among those who

" — — pilfer all the Pilgrim loves to see, All that yet consecrates the fading scene."

After leaving Harrow, and before entering St. John's College, Cambridge, he spent two years (1801-3) in Greece. On his return he founded the Athenian Society, and became President of the Society of Antiquaries from 1812 to 1846. It may be added that he was Foreign Secretary when the Porte acknowledged the independence of Greece by the Treaty of Adrianople (1829).]

[Footnote 2: In this war, the scene of which lay chiefly in Wallachia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Servia, the main episodes were the two battles of Rustchuk (July 4 and October 14, 1811), the recapture of Silistria by the Russians, and the

Convention of Giurgevo between the contending forces (October 28, 1811).]g

144. — To his Mother.

Athens, July 25, 1810.

Dear Mother, — I have arrived here in four days from Constantinople, which is considered as singularly quick, particularly for the season of the year. I left Constantinople with Adair, at whose adieux of leave I saw Sultan Mahmout, and obtained a firman to visit the mosques, of which I gave you a description in my last letter, now voyaging to England in the *Salsette* frigate, in which I visited the plains of Troy and Constantinople. Your northern gentry can have no conception of a Greek summer; which, however, is a perfect frost compared with Malta and Gibraltar, where I reposed myself in the shade last year, after a gentle gallop of four hundred miles, without intermission, through Portugal and Spain. You see, by my date, that I am at Athens again, a place which I think I prefer, upon the whole, to any I have seen.

My next movement is tomorrow into the Morea, where I shall probably remain a month or two, and then return to winter here, if I do not change my plans, which, however, are very variable, as you may suppose; but none of them verge to England.

The Marquis of Sligo, my old fellow-collegian, is here, and wishes to accompany me into the Morea. We shall go together for that purpose; but I am woefully sick of travelling companions, after a year's experience of Mr. Hobhouse, who is on his way to Great Britain. Lord S. will afterwards pursue his way to the capital; and Lord B., having seen all the wonders in that quarter, will let you know what he does next, of which at present he is not quite certain. Malta is my perpetual post-office, from which my letters are forwarded to all parts of the habitable globe: — by the bye, I have now been in Asia, Africa, and the east of Europe, and, indeed, made the most of my time, without hurrying over the most interesting scenes of the ancient world. Fletcher, after having been toasted and roasted, and baked, and grilled, and eaten by all sorts of creeping things, begins to philosophise, is grown a refined as well as a resigned character, and promises at his return to become an ornament to his own parish, and a very prominent person in the future family pedigree of the Fletchers, who I take to be Goths by their accomplishments, Greeks by their acuteness, and ancient Saxons by their appetite. He (Fletcher) begs leave to send half-a-dozen sighs to Sally his spouse, and wonders (though I do not) that his ill-written and worse spelt letters have never come to hand; as for that matter, there is no great loss in either of our letters, saving and except that I wish you to know we are well, and warm enough at this present writing, God knows. You must not expect long letters at present, for they are written with the sweat of my brow, I assure you. It is rather singular

that Mr. Hanson has not written a syllable since my departure. Your letters I have mostly received as well as others; from which I conjecture that the man of law is either angry or busy.

I trust you like Newstead, and agree with your neighbours; but you know *you* are a *vixen* — is not that a dutiful appellation? Pray, take care of my books and several boxes of papers in the hands of Joseph; and pray leave me a few bottles of champagne to drink, for I am very thirsty; — but I do not insist on the last article, without you like it. I suppose you have your house full of silly women, prating scandalous things. Have you ever received my picture in oil from Sanders, London? It has been paid for these sixteen months: why do you not get it? My suite, consisting of two Turks, two Greeks, a Lutheran, and the nondescript, Fletcher, are making so much noise, that I am glad to sign myself

Yours, etc., etc.,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: On July 10, 1810, the British ambassador, Robert Adair, had his audience of Sultan Mahmoud II, and on the 14th the ‘Salsette’ set sail. She touched at the island of Zea to land Byron, who thence made his way to Athens.

It was in making war against Mahmoud II, the conqueror of Ali Pasha and the destroyer of the Janissaries, that Byron lost his life. The following description of the Sultan is given by Hobhouse (‘Travels in Albania, etc.,’ vol. ii. pp. 364, 365): —

“The chamber was small and dark, or rather illumined with a gloomy artificial light, reflected from the ornaments of silver, pearls, and other white brilliants, with which it is thickly studded on every side and on the roof. The throne, which is supposed the richest in the world, is like a four-posted bed, but of a dazzling splendour; the lower part formed of burnished silver and pearls, and the canopy and supporters encrusted with jewels. It is in an awkward position, being in one corner of the room, and close to a fireplace.

“Sultan Mahmoud was placed in the middle of the throne, with his feet upon the ground, which, notwithstanding the common form of squatting upon the hams, seems the seat of ceremony. He was dressed in a robe of yellow satin, with a broad border of the darkest sable; his dagger, and an ornament on his breast, were covered with diamonds; the front of his white and blue turban shone with a large treble sprig of diamonds, which served as a buckle to a high, straight plume of bird-of-paradise feathers. He, for the most part, kept a hand on each knee, and neither moved his body nor head, but rolled his eyes from side to side, without fixing them for an instant upon the ambassador or any other person present. Occasionally he stroked and turned up his beard, displaying a milk-

white hand glittering with diamond rings. His eyebrows, eyes, and beard, being of a glossy jet black, did not appear natural, but added to that indescribable majesty which it would be difficult for any but an Oriental sovereign to assume; his face was pale, and regularly formed, except that his nose (contrary to the usual form of that feature in the Ottoman princes) was slightly turned up and pointed; his whole physiognomy was mild and benevolent, but expressive and full of dignity. He appeared of a short and small stature, and about thirty years old, which is somewhat more than his actual age.”

Byron, at the audience, claimed some precedence in the procession as a peer. On May 23, 1819, Moore sat at dinner next to Stratford Canning (afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe), who

“gave a ludicrous account of Lord Byron’s insisting upon taking precedence of the ‘corps diplomatique’ in a procession at Constantinople (when Canning was secretary), and upon Adair’s refusing it, limping, with as much swagger as he could muster, up the hall, cocking a foreign military hat on his head. He found, however, he was wrong, and wrote a very frank letter acknowledging it, and offering to take his station anywhere”

(‘Journals, etc., of Thomas Moore’, vol. ii. p. 313).

An incident of the voyage from Constantinople to Zea is mentioned by Moore (‘Life’, p. 110). Picking up a Turkish dagger on the deck, Byron looked at the blade, and then, before replacing it in the sheath, was overheard to say to himself, “I should like to know how a person feels after committing a murder.” In ‘Firmilian; a Spasmodic Tragedy’ (scene ix.) the sentiment is parodied. Firmilian determines to murder his friend, in order to shriek “delirious at the taste of sin!” He had already blown up a church full of people; but —

”I must have
A more potential draught of guilt than this
With more of wormwood in it! ...
...
Courage, Firmilian! for the hour has come
When thou canst know atrocity indeed,
By smiting him that was thy dearest friend.
And think not that he dies a vulgar death —
’Tis poetry demands the sacrifice!”

And he hurls Haverillo from the summit of the Pillar of St. Simeon Stylites.

[Footnote 3: For Lord Sligo, see page 100 [Letter 51], [Foot]note 2 . Lord Sligo was at Athens with a 12-gun brig and a crew of fifty men. At Athens, also, were Lady Hester Stanhope and Michael Bruce, on their way through European Turkey. As the party were passing the Piraeus, they saw a man jump from the mole-head into the sea. Lord Sligo, recognizing the bather as Byron, called to him to dress and join them. Thus began what Byron, in his Memoranda, speaks of as “the most delightful acquaintance which I formed in Greece.” From Lord Sligo Moore heard the following stories: —

Weakened and thinned by his illness at Patras, Byron returned to Athens. There, standing one day before a looking-glass, he said to Lord Sligo, “How pale I look! I should like, I think, to die of a consumption.” “Why of a consumption?” asked his friend. “Because then,” he answered, “the women would all say, ‘See that poor Byron — how interesting he looks in dying!’”

He often spoke of his mother to Lord Sligo, who thought that his feeling towards her was little short of aversion. “Some time or other,” he said, “I will tell you why I feel thus towards her.” A few days after, when they were bathing together in the Gulf of Lepanto, pointing to his naked leg and foot, he exclaimed,

“Look there! It is to her false delicacy at my birth I owe that deformity; and yet as long as I can remember, she has never ceased to taunt and reproach me with it. Even a few days before we parted, for the last time, on my leaving England, she, in one of her fits of passion, uttered an imprecation upon me, praying that I might prove as ill formed in mind as I am in body!”

Relics of ancient art only appealed to Byron’s imagination among their original and natural surroundings. For collections and collectors he had a contempt which, like everything he thought or felt, was unreservedly expressed. Lord Sligo wished to spend some money in digging for antiquities, and Byron offered to act as his agent, and to see the money honestly applied. “You may safely trust ‘me’” he said; “I am no dilettante. Your connoisseurs are all thieves; but I care too little for these things ever to steal them.”

His system of thinning himself, which he had begun before he left England, was continued abroad. While at Athens, where he stayed at the Franciscan Convent, he took a Turkish bath three times a week, his usual drink being vinegar and water, and his food seldom more than a little rice. The result was that, when he returned to England, he weighed only 9 stone 11-1/2 lbs. (see page 127 [Letter 71], [Foot]note 1).

Moore’s account of the “cordial friendship” between Byron and Lady Hester Stanhope requires modification. Lady Hester (see page 302, note I) thus referred in after-life to her meeting with Byron, if her physician’s recollection is to be trusted (‘Memoirs’, by Dr. Meryon, vol. iii. pp. 218, 219) —

“‘I think he was a strange character: his generosity was for a motive, his avarice for a motive; one time he was mopish, and nobody was to speak to him; another, he was for being jocular with everybody. Then he was a sort of Don Quixote, fighting with the police for a woman of the town; and then he wanted to make himself something great ... At Athens I saw nothing in him but a well-bred man, like many others; for, as for poetry, it is easy enough to write verses; and as for the thoughts, who knows where he got them? ... He had a great deal of vice in his looks — his eyes set close together, and a contracted brow — so’ (imitating it). ‘Oh, Lord! I am sure he was not a liberal man, whatever else he might be. The only good thing about his looks was this part’ (drawing her hand under the cheek down the front of her neck), ‘and the curl on his forehead.’”

Michael Bruce, with the help of Sir Robert Wilson and Capt. Hutchinson, assisted Count Lavallette to escape from Paris in January, 1816. For an account, see Wilson’s intercepted letter to Lord Grey (*‘Memoires du Comte Lavallette’*, vol. ii. p. 132) and the story of their trial, conviction, and sentence before the Assize Court of the Department of the Seine (April 22-24, 1816), given in the *‘Annual Register’* for 1816, pp. 329-336.]

145. — To his Mother.

Athens, July 27, 1810.

Dear Mother, — I write again in case you have not received my letters. To-day I go into the Morea, which will, I trust, be colder than this place, where I have tarried in the expectation of obtaining rest. Sligo has very kindly proposed a union of our forces for the occasion, which will be perhaps as uncomfortable to him as to myself, judging from previous experience, which, however, may be explained by my own irritability and hurry.

At Constantinople I visited the Mosques, plains, and grandees of that place, which, in my opinion, cannot be compared with Athens and its neighbourhood; indeed I know of no Turkish scenery to equal this, which would be civilised and Celtic enough with a little alteration in situation and inhabitants. An usual custom here, as at Cadiz, is to part with wives, daughters, etc., for a trifling present of gold or English arms (which the Greeks set a high value upon). The women are generally of the middle height, with Turkish eyes, straight hair, and clear olive complexion, but are not nearly so amorous as the Spanish belles, whom I have described to you in former letters. I have some feats to boast of when I return, which is undesired and undesirable — I always except you from my complaints, and hope you will expect me with the same delight that I anticipate meeting you. You can have no conception of Lord S.’s ecstasy when I informed him of my probable movements. The man is well enough and sensible enough by himself; but the swarm of attendants, Turks, Greeks, Englishmen that

he carries with him, makes his society, or rather theirs, an intolerable annoyance. If you will read this letter to — — , you may imagine in what capacity I believe you excel.

Before I left England I promised to give my silver-mounted whip (in your chamber) to Charles. Present it to him, poor boy, for I should not like him to suppose me as unfaithful as his *amante*, who, by the way is no better than she should be, and no great loss to himself or his family. Hobhouse is silent, and has, I suppose, not yet returned; indeed, like myself, he appears to love the world better than England, and the Devil more than either, who I regret is not present to be informed of this. Do not fail, if you see him (Hobhouse, I mean), to repeat it, and the assurance that I am to him, with yourself,

Ever affectionately,

BYRON.

146. — To his Mother.

Patras, July 30, 1810.

DEAR MADAM, — In four days from Constantinople, with a favourable wind, I arrived in the frigate at the island of Teos, from whence I took a boat to Athens, where I met my friend the Marquis of Sligo, who expressed a wish to proceed with me as far as Corinth. At Corinth we separated, he for Tripolitza, I for Patras, where I had some business with the consul, Mr. Strané, in whose house I now write. He has rendered me every service in his power since I quitted Malta on my way to Constantinople, whence I have written to you twice or thrice. In a few days I visit the Pacha at Tripolitza, make the tour of the Morea, and return again to Athens, which at present is my headquarters. The heat is at present intense. In England, if it reaches 98° you are all on fire: the other day, in travelling between Athens and Megara, the thermometer was at 125°!!! Yet I feel no inconvenience; of course I am much bronzed, but I live temperately, and never enjoyed better health.

Before I left Constantinople, I saw the Sultan (with Mr. Adair), and the interior of the mosques, things which rarely happen to travellers. Mr. Hobhouse is gone to England: I am in no hurry to return, but have no particular communications for your country, except my surprise at Mr. Hanson's silence, and my desire that he will remit regularly. I suppose some arrangement has been made with regard to Wymondham and Rochdale. Malta is my post-office, or to Mr. Strané, consul-general, Patras, Morea. You complain of my silence — I have written twenty or thirty times within the last year: never less than twice a month, and often more. If my letters do not arrive, you must not conclude that we are eaten, or that there is war, or a pestilence, or famine: neither must you

credit silly reports, which I dare say you have in Notts., as usual. I am very well, and neither more nor less happy than I usually am; except that I am very glad to be once more alone, for I was sick of my companion, — not that he was a bad one, but because my nature leads me to solitude, and that every day adds to this disposition. If I chose, here are many men who would wish to join me — one wants me to go to Egypt, another to Asia, of which I have seen enough. The greater part of Greece is already my own, so that I shall only go over my old ground, and look upon my old seas and mountains, the only acquaintances I ever found improve upon me.

I have a tolerable suite, a Tartar, two Albanians, an interpreter, besides Fletcher; but in this country these are easily maintained. Adair received me wonderfully well, and indeed I have no complaints against any one. Hospitality here is necessary, for inns are not. I have lived in the houses of Greeks, Turks, Italians, and English — to-day in a palace, tomorrow in a cowhouse; this day with a Pacha, the next with a shepherd. I shall continue to write briefly, but frequently, and am glad to hear from you; but you fill your letters with things from the papers, as if English papers were not found all over the world. I have at this moment a dozen before me. Pray take care of my books, and believe me, my dear mother,

Yours very faithfully,
BYRON.

[Footnote 1: For Veli Pasha, see page 248 [Letter 131], [Foot]note 1 .]

147. — To his Mother.

Patras, October 2, 1810.

DEAR MADAM, — It is now several months since I have received any communication from you; but at this I am not surprised, nor indeed have I any complaint to make, since you have written frequently, for which I thank you; but I very much condemn Mr. Hanson, who has not taken the smallest notice of my many letters, nor of my request before I left England, which I sailed from on this very day *fifteen* months ago. Thus one year and a quarter have passed away, without my receiving the least intelligence on the state of my affairs, and they were not in a posture to admit of neglect; and I do conceive and declare that Mr. Hanson has acted negligently and culpably in not apprising me of his proceedings; I will also add uncivilly. His letters, were there any, could not easily miscarry; the communications with the Levant are slow, but tolerably secure, at least as far as Malta, and there I left directions which I know would be observed.

I have written to you several times from Constantinople and Smyrna. You

will perceive by my date I am returned into the Morea, of which I have been making the tour, and visiting the Pacha, who gave me a fine horse, and paid me all possible honours and attention. I have now seen a good portion of Turkey in Europe, and Asia Minor, and shall remain at Athens, and in the vicinity, till I hear from England.

I have punctually obeyed your injunctions of writing frequently, but I shall not pretend to describe countries which have been already amply treated of. I believe before this time Mr. Hobhouse will have arrived in England, and he brings letters from me, written at Constantinople. In these I mention having seen the Sultan and the mosques, and that I swam from Sestos to Abydos, an exploit of which I take care to boast.

I am here on business at present, but Athens is my headquarters, where I am very pleasantly situated in a Franciscan convent. Believe me to be, with great sincerity, yours very affectionately,

BYRON.

P.S. — Fletcher is well, and discontented as usual; his wife don't write, at least her scrawls have not arrived. You will address to Malta. Pray have you never received my picture in oil from Sanders, Vigo Lane, London?

[Footnote 1: In a note upon the Advertisement prefixed to his 'Siege of Corinth', Byron says,

"I visited all three (Tripolitza, Napoli, and Argos) in 1810-11, and, in the course of journeying through the country, from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto."]

148. — To Francis Hodgson.

Patras, Morea, October 3, 1810.

As I have just escaped from a physician and a fever, which confined me five days to bed, you won't expect much *allegrezza* in the ensuing letter. In this place there is an indigenous distemper, which when the wind blows from the Gulf of Corinth (as it does five months out of six), attacks great and small, and makes woful work with visiters. Here be also two physicians, one of whom trusts to his genius (never having studied) — the other to a campaign of eighteen months against the sick of Otranto, which he made in his youth with great effect.

When I was seized with my disorder, I protested against both these assassins; — but what can a helpless, feverish, toast-and-watered poor wretch do? In spite of my teeth and tongue, the English consul, my Tartar, Albanians, dragoman, forced a physician upon me, and in three days vomited and glystered me to the last gasp. In this state I made my epitaph — take it: —

Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove,
To keep my lamp *in* strongly strove:
But Romanelli was so stout,
He beat all three — and *blew* it out.

But Nature and Jove, being piqued at my doubts, did, in fact, at last, beat Romanelli, and here I am, well but weakly, at your service.

Since I left Constantinople, I have made a tour of the Morea, and visited Velei Pacha, who paid me great honours, and gave me a pretty stallion. H. is doubtless in England before even the date of this letter: — he bears a despatch from me to your bardship. He writes to me from Malta, and requests my journal, if I keep one. I have none, or he should have it; but I have replied in a consolatory and exhortatory epistle, praying him to abate three and sixpence in the price of his next boke, seeing that half a guinea is a price not to be given for any thing save an opera ticket.

As for England, it is long since I have heard from it. Every one at all connected with my concerns is asleep, and you are my only correspondent, agents excepted. I have really no friends in the world; though all my old school companions are gone forth into that world, and walk about there in monstrous disguises, in the garb of guardsmen, lawyers, parsons, fine gentlemen, and such other masquerade dresses. So, I here shake hands and cut with all these busy people, none of whom write to me. Indeed I ask it not; — and here I am, a poor traveller and heathenish philosopher, who hath perambulated the greatest part of the Levant, and seen a great quantity of very improvable land and sea, and, after all, am no better than when I set out — Lord help me!

I have been out fifteen months this very day, and I believe my concerns will draw me to England soon; but of this I will apprise you regularly from Malta. On all points Hobhouse will inform you, if you are curious as to our adventures. I have seen some old English papers up to the 15th of May. I see the *Lady of the Lake* advertised. Of course it is in his old ballad style, and pretty. After all, Scott is the best of them. The end of all scribblement is to amuse, and he certainly succeeds there. I long to read his new romance.

And how does *Sir Edgar*? and your friend Bland? I suppose you are involved in some literary squabble. The only way is to despise all brothers of the quill. I suppose you won't allow me to be an author, but I condemn you all, you dogs! — I do.

You don't know Dallas, do you? He had a farce ready for the stage before I left England, and asked me for a prologue, which I promised, but sailed in such a hurry I never penned a couplet. I am afraid to ask after his drama, for fear it should be damned — Lord forgive me for using such a word! but the pit, Sir, you know the pit — they will do those things in spite of merit. I remember this farce from a curious circumstance. When Drury Lane was burnt to the ground, by which accident Sheridan and his son lost the few remaining shillings they were worth, what doth my friend Dallas do? Why, before the fire was out, he writes a note to Tom Sheridan, the manager of this combustible concern, to inquire whether this farce was not converted into fuel with about two thousand other unactable manuscripts, which of course were in great peril, if not actually consumed. Now was not this characteristic? — the ruling passions of Pope are nothing to it. Whilst the poor distracted manager was bewailing the loss of a building only worth £300,000., together with some twenty thousand pounds of rags and tinsel in the tiring rooms, Bluebeard's elephants, and all that — in comes a note from a scorching author, requiring at his hands two acts and odd scenes of a farce!!

Dear H., remind Drury that I am his well-wisher, and let Scrope Davies be well affected towards me. I look forward to meeting you at Newstead, and renewing our old champagne evenings with all the glee of anticipation. I have written by every opportunity, and expect responses as regular as those of the liturgy, and somewhat longer. As it is impossible for a man in his senses to hope for happy days, let us at least look forward to merry ones, which come nearest to the other in appearance, if not in reality; and in such expectations I remain, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Hobhouse, writing to Byron from Malta, July 31, 1810, says,

“Mrs. Bruce picked out a pretty picture of a woman in a fashionable dress in Ackerman's ‘Repository’, and observed it was vastly like Lord Byron. I give you warning of this, for fear you should make another conquest and return to England without a curl upon your head. Surely the ladies copy Delilah when they crop their lovers after this fashion.

’Successful youth! why mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Since each lost lock bespeaks a conquer'd fair,
And young and old conspire to make thee bare?’

This makes me think of my poor ‘Miscellany’, which is quite dead, if indeed that can be said to be dead which was never alive; not a soul knows, or knowing will speak of it.” Again, July 15, 1811, he writes: “The ‘Miscellany’ is so damned that my friends make it a point of politeness not to mention it ever to me.”]

[Footnote 2: ‘The Lady of the Lake’ was published in May, 1810.]

[Footnote 3: For Dallas, see page 168 [Letter 87], [Foot]note 1. His farce, entitled, ‘Not at Home’, was acted at the Lyceum, by the Drury Lane Company, in November, 1809. It was afterwards printed, with a prologue (intended to have been spoken) written by Walter Rodwell Wright, author of ‘Horae Ionicae’.]

[Footnote 4: Drury Lane Theatre, burned down in 1791, and reopened in 1794, was again destroyed by fire on February 24, 1809.]

[Footnote 5: Thomas Sheridan (1775-1817), originally in the army, was at this time assisting his father, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, as manager of Drury Lane Theatre. His ‘Bonduca’ was played at Covent Garden in May, 1808. He married, in 1805, Caroline Henrietta Callender, who was “more beautiful than anybody but her daughters,” afterwards Mrs. Norton, the Duchess of Somerset, and Lady Dufferin. He died at the Cape of Good Hope in 1817. “Tom Sheridan and his beautiful wife” were at Gibraltar in 1809, when Byron and Hobhouse landed on the Rock, and, as Galt states (‘Life of Byron’, p. 58), brought the news to Lady Westmorland of their arrival. (See ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’, lines 572, 573, and note 1.)]

[Footnote 6: ‘Bluebeard, or Female Curiosity’, by George Colman the Younger (1762-1836), was being acted at Drury Lane in January, 1809. “Bluebeard’s elephants” were wicker-work constructions. It was at Covent Garden that the first live elephant was introduced two years later. Johnstone, the machinist employed at Drury Lane, famous for the construction of wooden children, wicker-work lions, and paste-board swans, was present with a friend.

“Among the attractions of this Christmas foolery, a *real* elephant was introduced.... The friend, who sat close to Johnstone, jogged his elbow, whispering, ‘This is a bitter bad job for Drury! Why, the elephant’s *alive*! He’ll carry all before him, and beat you hollow. What do you think on’t, eh?’ ‘Think on’t?’ said Johnstone, in a tone of utmost contempt, ‘I should be very sorry if I couldn’t make a much better elephant than that, at any time’“

(George Colman the Younger, ‘Random Records’, vol. i. pp. 228, 229).]

149. — To John Cam Hobhouse.

Patras, Morea, October 4th, 1810.

MY Dear Hobhouse, — I wrote to you two days ago, but the weather and my friend Strané’s conversation being much the same, and my ally Nicola in bed

with a fever, I think I may as well talk to you, the rather, as you can't answer me, and excite my wrath with impertinent observations, at least for three months to come.

I will try not to say the same things I have set down in my other letter of the 2nd, but I can't promise, as my poor head is still giddy with my late fever.

I saw the Lady Hesther Stanhope at Athens, and do not admire "that dangerous thing a female wit." She told me (take her own words) that she had given you a good set-down at Malta, in some disputation about the Navy; from this, of course, I readily inferred the contrary, or in the words of an *acquaintance* of ours, that "you had the best of it."

She evinced a similar disposition to *argufy* with me, which I avoided by either laughing or yielding. I despise the sex too much to squabble with them, and I rather wonder you should allow a woman to draw you into a contest, in which, however, I am sure you had the advantage, she abuses you so bitterly.

I have seen too little of the Lady to form any decisive opinion, but I have discovered nothing different from other she-things, except a great disregard of received notions in her conversation as well as conduct. I don't know whether this will recommend her to our sex, but I am sure it won't to her own. She is going on to Constantinople.

Ali Pacha is in a scrape. Ibrahim Pacha and the Pacha of Scutari have come down upon him with 20,000 Gegdes and Albanians, retaken Berat, and threaten Tepaleni. Adam Bey is dead, Vely Pacha was on his way to the Danube, but has gone off suddenly to Yanina, and all Albania is in an uproar.

The mountains we crossed last year are the scene of warfare, and there is nothing but carnage and cutting of throats. In my other letter I mentioned that Vely had given me a fine horse. On my late visit he received me with great pomp, standing, conducted me to the door with his arm round my waist, and a variety of civilities, invited me to meet him at Larissa and see his army, which I should have accepted, had not this rupture with Ibrahim taken place. Sultan Mahmout is in a phrenzy because Vely has not joined the army. We have a report here, that the Russians have beaten the Turks and taken Muchtar Pacha prisoner, but it is a Greek Bazaar rumour and not to be believed.

I have now treated you with a dish of Turkish politics. You have by this time gotten into England, and your ears and mouth are full of "Reform Burdett, Gale Jones, minority, last night's division, dissolution of Parliament, battle in Portugal," and all the cream of forty newspapers.

In my t'other letter, to which I am perpetually obliged to refer, I have offered

some moving topics on the head of your *Miscellany*, the neglect of which I attribute to the half guinea annexed as the indispensable equivalent for the said volume.

Now I do hope, notwithstanding that exorbitant demand, that on your return you will find it selling, or, what is better, sold, in consequence of which you will be able to face the public with your new volume, if that intention still subsists.

My journal, did I keep one, should be yours. As it is I can only offer my sincere wishes for your success, if you will believe it possible for a brother scribbler to be sincere on such an occasion.

Will you execute a commission for me? Lord Sligo tells me it was the intention of Miller in Albemarle Street to send by him a letter to me, which he stated to be of consequence. Now I have no concern with Mr. M. except a bill which I hope is paid before this time; will you visit the said M. and if it be a pecuniary matter, refer him to Hanson, and if not, tell me what he means, or forward his letter.

I have just received an epistle from Galt, with a Candist poem, which it seems I am to forward to you. This I would willingly do, but it is too large for a letter, and too small for a parcel, and besides appears to be damned nonsense, from all which considerations I will deliver it in person. It is entitled the "Fair Shepherdess," or rather "Herdswoman;" if you don't like the translation take the original title "[Greek (transliterated): hae boskopoula]." Galt also writes something not very intelligible about a "Spartan State paper" which by his account is everything but Laconic. Now the said Sparta having some years ceased to be a state, what the devil does he mean by a paper? he also adds mysteriously that the *affair* not being concluded, he cannot at present apply for it.

Now, Hobhouse, are you mad? or is he? Are these documents for Longman & Co.? Spartan state papers! and Cretan rhymes! indeed these circumstances super-added to his house at Mycone (whither I am invited) and his Levant wines, make me suspect his sanity. Athens is at present infested with English people, but they are moving, *Dio bendetto!* I am returning to pass a month or two; I think the spring will see me in England, but do not let this transpire, nor cease to urge the most dilatory of mortals, Hanson. I have some idea of purchasing the Island of Ithaca; I suppose you will add me to the Levant lunatics. I shall be glad to hear from your Signoria of your welfare, politics, and literature.

Your last letter closes pathetically with a postscript about a nosegay; I advise you to introduce that into your next sentimental novel. I am sure I did not suspect you of any fine feelings, and I believe you were laughing, but you are welcome.

Vale; "I can no more," like Lord Grizzle.

Yours,

[Greek (transliterated): Mpairon]

[Footnote 1: Nicolo Giraud, from whom Byron was learning Italian.]

[Footnote 2: Hobhouse had written to Byron, speaking of Lady Hester Stanhope "as the most superior woman, as Bruce says, of all the world." The daughter of Pitt's favourite sister, Lady Hester (1776-1839) was her uncle's constant companion (1803-6). In character she resembled her grandfather far more than her uncle, who owed his cool judgment to the Grenville blood. Lady Hester inherited the overweening pride, generosity, courage, and fervent heat of the "Great Commoner," as well as his indomitable will. Like him, she despised difficulties, and ignored the word "impossibility." Her romantic ideas were also combined with keen insight into character, and much practical sagacity. These were the qualities which made her for many years a power among the wild tribes of Lebanon, with whom she was in 1810 proceeding to take up her abode (1813-39).]

[Footnote 3: Sir Francis Burdett (1770-1844), a lifelong friend of Lady Hester Stanhope, was afterwards Hobhouse's colleague as M.P. for Westminster (1820-33). He was committed to the Tower in 1810 for publishing a speech which he delivered in the House of Commons in defence of John Gale Jones, whom the House (February, 1810) had sent to Newgate for a breach of privilege. Sir Francis refused to obey the warrant, and told the sergeant-at-arms that he would not go unless taken by force. His refusal led to riots near his house (77, Piccadilly), in which the Horse Guards, or "Oxford Blues" as they were called, gained the name of "Piccadilly Butchers" (Lord Albemarle's 'Recollections', vol. i. pp. 317, 318).]

[Footnote 4: See page 319, 'note 2.']

[Footnote 5: John Galt (1779-1839), the novelist, was at this time endeavouring to establish a place of business at Mycone, in the Greek Archipelago. He published in 1812 his 'Voyages and Travels in the Years' 1809, 1810, 1811. (For his meeting with Byron at Gibraltar, see page 243 [Letter 130], [Foot]note 1.)]

[Footnote 6: Hobhouse's letter to Byron of July 31, 1810, ends with the following postscript: —

"I kept the half of your little nosegay till it withered entirely, and even then I could not bear to throw it away. I can't account for this, nor can you either, I dare say."]

[Footnote 7: Lord Grizzle, in Fielding's 'Tom Thumb', is the first peer in the Court of King Arthur, who, jealous of Tom Thumb and in love with the Princess

Huncamunca, turns traitor, and is run through the body by Tom Thumb. It is the ghost, not Grizzle, who says, "I can no more." (See page 226 [Letter 124], [Foot]note 1.)]

150. — To Francis Hodgson.

Athens, November 14, 1810.

MY DEAR HODGSON, — This will arrive with an English servant whom I send homewards with some papers of consequence. I have been journeying in different parts of Greece for these last four months, and you may expect me in England somewhere about April, but this is very dubious. Hobhouse you have doubtless seen; he went home in August to arrange materials for a tour he talks of publishing. You will find him well and scribbling — that is, scribbling if well, and well if scribbling.

I suppose you have a score of new works, all of which I hope to see flourishing, with a hecatomb of reviews. *My* works are likely to have a powerful effect with a vengeance, as I hear of divers angry people, whom it is proper I should shoot at, by way of satisfaction. Be it so, the same impulse which made "Otho a warrior" will make me one also. My domestic affairs being moreover considerably deranged, my appetite for travelling pretty well satiated with my late peregrinations, my various hopes in this world almost extinct, and not very brilliant in the next, I trust I shall go through the process with a creditable *sang froid* and not disgrace a line of cut-throat ancestors.

I regret in one of your letters to hear you talk of domestic embarrassments, indeed I am at present very well calculated to sympathise with you on that point. I suppose I must take to dram-drinking as a *succedaneum* for philosophy, though as I am happily not married, I have very little occasion for either just yet.

Talking of marriage puts me in mind of Drury, who I suppose has a dozen children by this time, all fine fretful brats; I will never forgive Matrimony for having spoiled such an excellent Bachelor. If anybody honours my name with an inquiry tell them of "my whereabouts" and write if you like it. I am living alone in the Franciscan monastery with one "friar" (a Capuchin of course) and one "frier" (a bandy-legged Turkish cook), two Albanian savages, a Tartar, and a Dragoman. My only Englishman departs with this and other letters. The day before yesterday the Waywode (or Governor of Athens) with the Mufti of Thebes (a sort of Mussulman Bishop) supped here and made themselves beastly with raw rum, and the Padré of the convent being as drunk as *we*, my *Attic* feast went off with great *éclat*. I have had a present of a stallion from the Pacha of the Morea. I caught a fever going to Olympia. I was blown ashore on the Island of Salamis, in my way to Corinth through the Gulf of Ægina. I have kicked an

Athenian postmaster, I have a friendship with the French consul and an Italian painter, and am on good terms with five Teutones and Cimbri, Danes and Germans, who are travelling for an Academy. Vale!

Yours, [Greek: Mpairon]

[Footnote 1: Hodgson's father, Rector of Barwick-in-Elmet, Yorkshire, died in October, 1810, heavily in debt. Francis Hodgson undertook to satisfy the claims of his father's creditors ('Life of the Rev. Francis Hodgson', vol. i. pp. 147, 148).]

[Footnote 2: M. Fauriel, the French Consul; Lusieri, an Italian artist employed by Lord Elgin; Nicolo Giraud, from whom Byron learned Italian, and to whose sister Lusieri proposed; Baron Haller, a Bavarian 'savant'; and Dr. Bronstett, of Copenhagen, were among his friends at Athens.]

[Footnote 3: The signature represents "Byron" in modern Greek, [Greek: Mp] being the correct transliteration of 'B'.]

151. — To his Mother.

Athens, January 14, 1811.

My Dear Madam, — I seize an occasion to write as usual, shortly, but frequently, as the arrival of letters, where there exists no regular communication, is, of course, very precarious. I have lately made several small tours of some hundred or two miles about the Morea, Attica, etc., as I have finished my grand giro by the Troad, Constantinople, etc., and am returned down again to Athens. I believe I have mentioned to you more than once that I swam (in imitation of Leander, though without his lady) across the Hellespont, from Sestos to Abydos. Of this, and all other particulars, Fletcher, whom I have sent home with papers, etc., will apprise you. I cannot find that he is any loss; being tolerably master of the Italian and modern Greek languages, which last I am also studying with a master, I can order and discourse more than enough for a reasonable man. Besides, the perpetual lamentations after beef and beer, the stupid, bigoted contempt for every thing foreign, and insurmountable incapacity of acquiring even a few words of any language, rendered him, like all other English servants, an incumbrance. I do assure you, the plague of speaking for him, the comforts he required (more than myself by far), the pilaws (a Turkish dish of rice and meat) which he could not eat, the wines which he could not drink, the beds where he could not sleep, and the long list of calamities, such as stumbling horses, want of *tea!!!* etc., which assailed him, would have made a lasting source of laughter to a spectator, and inconvenience to a master. After all, the man is honest enough, and, in Christendom, capable enough; but in Turkey, Lord forgive me! my

Albanian soldiers, my Tartars and Jannissary, worked for him and us too, as my friend Hobhouse can testify.

It is probable I may steer homewards in spring; but to enable me to do that, I must have remittances. My own funds would have lasted me very well; but I was obliged to assist a friend, who, I know, will pay me; but, in the mean time, I am out of pocket. At present, I do not care to venture a winter's voyage, even if I were otherwise tired of travelling; but I am so convinced of the advantages of looking at mankind instead of reading about them, and the bitter effects of staying at home with all the narrow prejudices of an islander, that I think there should be a law amongst us, to set our young men abroad, for a term, among the few allies our wars have left us.

Here I see and have conversed with French, Italians, Germans, Danes, Greeks, Turks, Americans, etc., etc., etc.; and without losing sight of my own, I can judge of the countries and manners of others. Where I see the superiority of England (which, by the by, we are a good deal mistaken about in many things), I am pleased, and where I find her inferior, I am at least enlightened. Now, I might have stayed, smoked in your towns, or fogged in your country, a century, without being sure of this, and without acquiring any thing more useful or amusing at home. I keep no journal, nor have I any intention of scribbling my travels. I have done with authorship, and if, in my last production, I have convinced the critics or the world I was something more than they took me for, I am satisfied; nor will I hazard *that reputation* by a future effort. It is true I have some others in manuscript, but I leave them for those who come after me; and, if deemed worth publishing, they may serve to prolong my memory when I myself shall cease to remember. I have a famous Bavarian artist taking some views of Athens, etc., etc., for me. This will be better than scribbling, a disease I hope myself cured of. I hope, on my return, to lead a quiet, recluse life, but God knows and does best for us all; at least, so they say, and I have nothing to object, as, on the whole, I have no reason to complain of my lot. I am convinced, however, that men do more harm to themselves than ever the devil could do to them. I trust this will find you well, and as happy as we can be; you will, at least, be pleased to hear I am so, and

Yours ever.

152. — To his Mother.

Athens, February 28, 1811.

DEAR MADAM, — As I have received a firman for Egypt, etc., I shall proceed to that quarter in the spring, and I beg you will state to Mr. Hanson that it is necessary to [send] further remittances. On the subject of Newstead, I answer as before, *No*. If it is necessary to sell, sell Rochdale. Fletcher will have

arrived by this time with my letters to that purport. I will tell you fairly, I have, in the first place, no opinion of funded property; if, by any particular circumstances, I shall be led to adopt such a determination, I will, at all events, pass my life abroad, as my only tie to England is Newstead, and, that once gone, neither interest nor inclination lead me northward. Competence in your country is ample wealth in the East, such is the difference in the value of money and the abundance of the necessaries of life; and I feel myself so much a citizen of the world, that the spot where I can enjoy a delicious climate, and every luxury, at a less expense than a common college life in England, will always be a country to me; and such are in fact the shores of the Archipelago. This then is the alternative — if I preserve Newstead, I return; if I sell it, I stay away. I have had no letters since yours of June, but I have written several times, and shall continue, as usual, on the same plan.

Believe me, yours ever, BYRON.

P.S. — I shall most likely see you in the course of the summer, but, of course, at such a distance, I cannot specify any particular month.

153. — To his Mother.

‘Volage’ frigate, at sea, June 25, 1811.

DEAR MOTHER, — This letter, which will be forwarded on our arrival at Portsmouth, probably about the 4th of July, is begun about twenty-three days after our departure from Malta. I have just been two years (to a day, on the 2d of July) absent from England, and I return to it with much the same feelings which prevailed on my departure, viz. indifference; but within that apathy I certainly do not comprise yourself, as I will prove by every means in my power. You will be good enough to get my apartments ready at Newstead; but don’t disturb yourself, on any account, particularly mine, nor consider me in any other light than as a visiter. I must only inform you that for a long time I have been restricted to an entire vegetable diet, neither fish nor flesh coming within my regimen; so I expect a powerful stock of potatoes, greens, and biscuit; I drink no wine. I have two servants, middle-aged men, and both Greeks. It is my intention to proceed first to town, to see Mr. Hanson, and thence to Newstead, on my way to Rochdale. I have only to beg you will not forget my diet, which it is very necessary for me to observe. I am well in health, as I have generally been, with the exception of two agues, both of which I quickly got over.

My plans will so much depend on circumstances, that I shall not venture to lay down an opinion on the subject. My prospects are not very promising, but I suppose we shall wrestle through life like our neighbours; indeed, by Hanson’s last advices, I have some apprehension of finding Newstead dismantled by Messrs. Brothers, etc., and he seems determined to force me into selling it, but

he will be baffled. I don't suppose I shall be much pestered with visitors; but if I am, you must receive them, for I am determined to have nobody breaking in upon my retirement: you know that I never was fond of society, and I am less so than before. I have brought you a shawl, and a quantity of attar of roses, but these I must smuggle, if possible. I trust to find my library in tolerable order.

Fletcher is no doubt arrived. I shall separate the mill from Mr. B — 's farm, for his son is too gay a deceiver to inherit both, and place Fletcher in it, who has served me faithfully, and whose wife is a good woman; besides, it is necessary to sober young Mr. B — , or he will people the parish with bastards. In a word, if he had seduced a dairy-maid, he might have found something like an apology; but the girl is his equal, and in high life or low life reparation is made in such circumstances. But I shall not interfere further than (like Buonaparte) by dismembering Mr. B.'s *kingdom*, and erecting part of it into a principality for field-marshal Fletcher! I hope you govern my little *empire* and its sad load of national debt with a wary hand. To drop my metaphor, I beg leave to subscribe myself

Yours ever, BYRON.

P.S. July 14. — This letter was written to be sent from Portsmouth, but, on arriving there, the squadron was ordered to the Nore, from whence I shall forward it. This I have not done before, supposing you might be alarmed by the interval mentioned in the letter being longer than expected between our arrival in port and my appearance at Newstead.

[Footnote 1: Brothers, an upholsterer of Nottingham, had put in an execution at Newstead for £1600.]

154. — To R. C. Dallas.

Volage Frigate, at sea, June 28, 1811.

After two years' absence (to a day, on the 2d of July, before which we shall not arrive at Portsmouth), I am retracing my way to England. I have, as you know, spent the greater part of that period in Turkey, except two months in Spain and Portugal, which were then accessible. I have seen every thing most remarkable in Turkey, particularly the Troad, Greece, Constantinople, and Albania, into which last region very few have penetrated so high as Hobhouse and myself. I don't know that I have done anything to distinguish me from other voyagers, unless you will reckon my swimming from Sestos to Abydos, on May 3d, 1810, a tolerable feat for a *modern*.

I am coming back with little prospect of pleasure at home, and with a body a little shaken by one or two smart fevers, but a spirit I hope yet unbroken. My affairs, it seems, are considerably involved, and much business must be done

with lawyers, colliers, farmers, and creditors. Now this, to a man who hates bustle as he hates a bishop, is a serious concern. But enough of my home department.

I find I have been scolding Cawthorn without a cause, as I found two parcels with two letters from you on my return to Malta. By these it appears you have not received a letter from Constantinople, addressed to Longman's, but it was of no consequence.

My Satire, it seems, is in a fourth edition, a success rather above the middling run, but not much for a production which, from its topics, must be temporary, and of course be successful at first, or not at all. At this period, when I can think and act more coolly, I regret that I have written it, though I shall probably find it forgotten by all except those whom it has offended. My friend Hobhouse's *Miscellany* has not succeeded; but he himself writes so good-humouredly on the subject, I don't know whether to laugh or cry with him. He met with your son at Cadiz, of whom he speaks highly.

Yours and Pratt's *protégé*, Blacket, the cobbler, is dead, in spite of his rhymes, and is probably one of the instances where death has saved a man from damnation. You were the ruin of that poor fellow amongst you: had it not been for his patrons, he might now have been in very good plight, shoe- (not verse-) making; but you have made him immortal with a vengeance. I write this, supposing poetry, patronage, and strong waters, to have been the death of him. If you are in town in or about the beginning of July, you will find me at Dorant's, in Albemarle Street, glad to see you. I have an imitation of Horace's *Art of Poetry* ready for Cawthorn, but don't let that deter you, for I sha'n't inflict it upon you. You know I never read my rhymes to visitors. I shall quit town in a few days for Notts., and thence to Rochdale. I shall send this the moment we arrive in harbour, that is a week hence.

Yours ever sincerely, BYRON.

[Footnote 1: For Pratt, see page 186, note 1.]

[Footnote 2: Joseph Blacket (1786-1810) has his place in 'English Bards' (lines 765, 798) and 'Hints from Horace' (line 734). The son of a labourer, and himself by trade a cobbler, he wrote verses in which Pratt saw signs of genius. A volume of his poetry was published in 1809, under the title of 'Specimens', edited by Pratt. Among those who befriended him were Elliston the actor, Dallas, and Miss Milbanke, afterwards Lady Byron (see 'English Bards', lines 770, and note 1). His 'Remains' were collected and published by Pratt in 1811 for the benefit of Blacket's orphan daughter, with a dedication to "the Duchess of Leeds, Lady Milbanke and family" (see page 337, and 'Hints from Horace',

line 734, and Byron's note). In the suppressed edition of Dallas's 'Correspondence of Lord Byron' (pp. 127, 128) occurs the following passage, from which, if Dallas's grammar is to be trusted, it seems that the famous epitaph on Blacket was not Byron's composition. Dallas

"was persuaded by Mr. Pratt's warmth to see some sparkling of genius in the effusions of this young man (Blacket). It was upon this that Lord Byron and a young friend of his were sometimes playful in conversation, and in writing to me. 'I see,' says the latter, 'that Blacket the Son of Crispin and Apollo is dead.' Looking into Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' the other day, I saw, 'We were talking about the famous Mr. Wordsworth, the poetical Shoemaker.' Now, I never before heard that there had been a Mr. Wordsworth a Poet, a Shoemaker, or a famous man; and I dare say you have never heard of him. Thus it will be with Bloomfield and Blackett — their names two years after their death will be found neither on the rolls of Curriers' Hall nor of Parnassus. Who would think that anybody would be such a blockhead as to sin against an express proverb, 'Ne sutor ultra crepidam'?"

'But spare him, ye Critics, his follies are past,
For the Cobler is come, as he ought, to his 'last'.'

Which two lines, with a scratch under 'last', to show where the joke lies, I beg that you will prevail on Miss Milbanke to have inserted on the tomb of her departed Blacket."

It should be added that the shoemaking poet was not Wordsworth, but Woodhouse.]

[Footnote 3: Dallas called on Byron at Reddish's Hotel, St. James's Street, July 15, 1811, and received from him the MS. of 'Hints from Horace'. Byron finished the work March 12, 1811, at the Franciscan Convent at Athens, where he found a copy of the 'De Arte Poeticâ'. ('Hints from Horace' were not, however, published till 1831.) On July 16 Dallas called again, and expressed surprise that Byron had written nothing else. Byron then produced out of his trunk 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage', saying, "They are not worth troubling you with, but you shall have them all with you if you like." He was as reluctant to publish 'Childe Harold' as he was eager to publish 'Hints from Horace'.]

155. — To Francis Hodgson.

'Volage' Frigate, at sea, June 29, 1811.

In a week, with a fair wind, we shall be at Portsmouth, and on the 2d of July I

shall have completed (to a day) two years of peregrination, from which I am returning with as little emotion as I set out. I think, upon the whole, I was more grieved at leaving Greece than England, which I am impatient to see, simply because I am tired of a long voyage.

Indeed, my prospects are not very pleasant. Embarrassed in my private affairs, indifferent to public, solitary without the wish to be social, with a body a little enfeebled by a succession of fevers, but a spirit I trust, yet unbroken, I am returning *home* without a hope, and almost without a desire. The first thing I shall have to encounter will be a lawyer, the next a creditor, then colliers, farmers, surveyors, and all the agreeable attachments to estates out of repair, and contested coal-pits. In short, I am sick and sorry, and when I have a little repaired my irreparable affairs, away I shall march, either to campaign in Spain, or back again to the East, where I can at least have cloudless skies and a cessation from impertinence.

I trust to meet, or see you, in town, or at Newstead, whenever you can make it convenient — I suppose you are in love and in poetry as usual. That husband, H. Drury, has never written to me, albeit I have sent him more than one letter; — but I dare say the poor man has a family, and of course all his cares are confined to his circle.

”For children fresh expenses yet,
And Dicky now for school is fit.”

WARTON.

If you see him, tell him I have a letter for him from Tucker, a regimental surgeon and friend of his, who prescribed for me, — — and is a very worthy man, but too fond of hard words. I should be too late for a speech-day, or I should probably go down to Harrow. I regretted very much in Greece having omitted to carry the *Anthology* with me — I mean Bland and Merivale’s. — What has *Sir Edgar* done? And the *Imitations and Translations* — where are they? I suppose you don’t mean to let the public off so easily, but charge them home with a quarto. For me, I am “sick of fops, and poesy, and prate,” and shall leave the “whole Castalian state” to Bufo, or any body else. But you are a sentimental and sensibilitous person, and will rhyme to the end of the chapter. Howbeit, I have written some 4000 lines, of one kind or another, on my travels.

I need not repeat that I shall be happy to see you. I shall be in town about the 8th, at Dorant’s Hotel, in Albemarle Street, and proceed in a few days to Notts., and thence to Rochdale on business.

I am, here and there, yours, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: Warton's 'Progress of Discontent', lines 109, 110.]

[Footnote 2:

"But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state."

Pope, 'Prologue to the Satires', lines 229, 230.]

156. — To Henry Drury.

'Volage' frigate, off Ushant, July 17, 1811.

My Dear Drury, — After two years' absence (on the 2d) and some odd days, I am approaching your country. The day of our arrival you will see by the outside date of my letter. At present, we are becalmed comfortably, close to Brest Harbour; — I have never been so near it since I left Duck Puddle. We left Malta thirty-four days ago, and have had a tedious passage of it. You will either see or hear from or of me, soon after the receipt of this, as I pass through town to repair my irreparable affairs; and thence I want to go to Notts. and raise rents, and to Lanes. and sell collieries, and back to London and pay debts, — for it seems I shall neither have coals nor comfort till I go down to Rochdale in person.

I have brought home some marbles for Hobhouse; — for myself, four ancient Athenian skulls, dug out of sarcophagi — a phial of Attic hemlock — four live tortoises — a greyhound (died on the passage) — two live Greek servants, one an Athenian, t'other a *Yaniote*, who can speak nothing but Romaic and Italian — and *myself*, as Moses in the *Vicar of Wakefield* says, *slily* and I may say it too, for I have as little cause to boast of my expedition as he had of his to the fair.

I wrote to you from the Cyanean Rocks to tell you I had swam from Sestos to Abydos — have you received my letter? Hobhouse went to England to fish up his *Miscellany*, which foundered (so he tells me) in the Gulph of Lethe. I daresay it capsized with the vile goods of his contributory friends, for his own share was very portable. However, I hope he will either weigh up or set sail with a fresh cargo, and a luckier vessel. Hodgson, I suppose, is four deep by this time. What would he have given to have seen, like me, the *real Parnassus*, where I robbed the Bishop of Chrisso of a book of geography! — but this I only call plagiarism, as it was done within an hour's ride of Delphi.

[Footnote 1: The swimming-bath at Harrow.]

[Footnote 2: Given afterwards to Sir Walter Scott.]

[Footnote 3: At present in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

[Footnote 4:

”‘Welcome, welcome, Moses! Well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?’

‘I have brought you *myself*,’ cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.”

‘Vicar of Wakefield’, ch. xii.]

157.-To his Mother.

Reddish’s Hotel, St. James’s Street, London, July 23, 1811.

MY DEAR MADAM, — I am only detained by Mr. Hanson to sign some copyhold papers, and will give you timely notice of my approach. It is with great reluctance I remain in town. I shall pay a short visit as we go on to Lancashire on Rochdale business. I shall attend to your directions, of course, and am, with great respect, yours ever,

BYRON.

P.S. — You will consider Newstead as your house, not mine; and me only as a visiter.

[Footnote 1: On his way to London, Byron paid a visit, at Sittingbourne, to Hobhouse, who was with his Militia Regiment, and under orders for Ireland. He also stayed with H. Drury, at Harrow, for two or three days.]

158. — To William Miller.

Reddish’s Hotel, July 30th, 1811.

SIR, — I am perfectly aware of the justice of your remarks, and am convinced that, if ever the poem is published, the same objections will be made in much stronger terms. But as it was intended to be a poem on *Ariosto’s plan*, that is to say on *no plan* at all, and, as is usual in similar cases, having a predilection for the worst passages, I shall retain those parts, though I cannot venture to defend them. Under these circumstances I regret that you decline the publication, on my own account, as I think the book would have done better in your hands; the pecuniary part, you know, I have nothing to do with. But I can perfectly conceive, and indeed *approve* your reasons, and assure you my sensations are not *Archiepiscopal* enough as yet to regard the rejection of my Homilies.

I am, Sir, your very obed’t humble serv’t,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: William Miller (1769-1844), son of Thomas Miller, bookseller, of Bungay (see Beloe’s ‘Sexagenarian,’ 2nd edit., vol. ii. pp. 253, 254), served

his apprenticeship in Hookham's publishing house. In 1790 he set up for himself as a bookselling publisher in Bond Street. From 1804 onwards his place of business was at 50, Albemarle Street. But in September, 1812, he sold his stock, copyrights, good will, and lease to John Murray, and retired to a country farm in Hertfordshire. He declined to publish 'Childe Harold,' on the grounds that it contained "sceptical stanzas," and attacked Lord Elgin as a plunderer. But on the latter point, Byron, who was in serious earnest, was not likely to give way. In Beloe's 'Sexagenarian' (vol. ii. pp. 270, 271), Miller is described as "the splendid bookseller," who "was enabled to retire to tranquillity and independence long before the decline of life, or infirmities of age, rendered it necessary to do so. He was highly respectable, but could drive a hard bargain with a poor author, as well as any of his fraternity."

[Footnote 2: Alluding to Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Grenada (see page 121 [Letter 67], [Foot]note 3).]

159. — To John M. B. Pigot.

Newport Pagnell, August 2, 1811.

MY DEAR DOCTOR, — My poor mother died yesterday! and I am on my way from town to attend her to the family vault. I heard *one* day of her illness, the *next* of her death. Thank God her last moments were most tranquil. I am told she was in little pain, and not aware of her situation. I now feel the truth of Mr. Gray's observation, "That we can only have *one* mother." Peace be with her! I have to thank you for your expressions of regard; and as in six weeks I shall be in Lancashire on business, I may extend to Liverpool and Chester, — at least I shall endeavour.

If it will be any satisfaction, I have to inform you that in November next the Editor of the *Scourge* will be tried for two different libels on the late Mrs. B. and myself (the decease of Mrs. B. makes no difference in the proceedings); and as he is guilty, by his very foolish and unfounded assertion of a breach of privilege, he will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour.

I inform you of this, as you seem interested in the affair, which is now in the hands of the Attorney-general.

I shall remain at Newstead the greater part of this month, where I shall be happy to hear from you, after my two years' absence in the East.

I am, dear Pigot, yours very truly,

BYRON.

[Footnote 1: On the night after his arrival at Newstead, Mrs. Byron's maid, passing the room where the body lay, heard a heavy sigh from within. Entering

the room, she found Byron sitting in the dark beside the bed. When she spoke to him, he burst into tears, and exclaimed,

“Oh, Mrs. By, I had but one friend in the world, and she is gone!”

On the day of the funeral he refused to follow the corpse to the grave, but watched the procession move away from the door of Newstead; then, turning to Rushton, bade him bring the gloves, and began his usual sparring exercise. Only his silence, abstraction, and unusual violence betrayed to his antagonist, says Moore (‘Life’, p. 128), the state of his feelings.]

[Footnote 2:

“I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one’s whole life one can never have more than a single mother. You may think this is obvious, and (what you call) a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was at the same age (very near) as wise as you, and yet I never discovered this (with full evidence and conviction, I mean) till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago, ... and every day I live it sinks deeper into my heart.”

Gray to Nicholls, ‘Works’, vol. i. p. 482.]

[Footnote 3: One of Byron’s first acts on returning to England was to buy a copy of the ‘Scourge’, In Ridgway’s bill for books supplied from Piccadilly to Byron on July 24, 1811, is a copy of the ‘Scourge’ at 2’s. 6’d. Hewson Clarke (1787-1832) was entered at Emanuel College, Cambridge, apparently as a sizar, in 1806. Obligated to leave the University before he had taken his degree, he supported himself in London by his pen. He wrote two historical works — a continuation of Hume’s ‘History of England’ (1832), and an ‘Impartial History of the Naval, etc., Events in Europe’ from the French Revolution to the Peace of 1815. It was, however, as a journalist that he came into collision with Byron. In the ‘Satirist’, a monthly magazine, illustrated with coloured cartoons, three attacks were made on Byron, which he attributed to Clarke:

(1) October, 1807 (vol. i pp. 77-81), a review of ‘Hours of Idleness’;

(2) June, 1808 (vol. ii p. 368), verses on “Lord B — n to his Bear. To the tune of ‘Lo chin y gair;’“

(3) August, 1808 (vol. iii pp. 78-86), a review of ‘Poems Original and Translated’.

Byron’s reply was the passage in ‘English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers’ (lines 973-980; see also the notes), where Clarke is described as

”A would-be satirist, a hired Buffoon,

A monthly scribbler of some low Lampoon,” etc.;

and also the Postscript to the second edition (see ‘Poems’, vol. i. p. 382). In

the 'Scourge' for March, 1811 (vol. i. pp. 191, 'et seqq'.), appeared an article headed "Lord Byron," in which the alleged libel occurred.

"We are unacquainted," says the article, "with any act of cowardice that can be compared with that of keeping a libel 'ready cut and dried' till some favourable opportunity enable its author to disperse it without the hazard of personal responsibility, and under circumstances which deprive the injured party of every means of reparation ... He confined the knowledge of his lampoon, therefore, to the circle of his own immediate friends, and left it to be given to the public as soon as he should have bid adieu to the shores of Britain. Whether his voyage was in reality no further than to Paris, in search of the proofs of his own legitimacy, or, as he asserts, to 'Afric's coasts, and Calpe's adverse height', was of little consequence to Mr. Clarke, who felt that to recriminate during his absence would be unworthy of his character ... Considering the two parties not as writers, but as men, Mr. Clarke might confidently appeal to the knowledge and opinion of the whole university; but a character like his disdains comparison with that of his noble calumniator; a temper unruffled by malignant passions, a mind superior to vicissitude, are gifts for which the pride of doubtful birth, and the temporary possession of Newstead Abbey are contemptible equivalents ...

"It may be reasonably asked whether to be a denizen of Berwick-upon-Tweed be more disgraceful than to be the illegitimate descendant of a murderer; whether to labour in an honourable profession for the peace and competence of maturer age be less worthy of praise than to waste the property of others in vulgar debauchery; whether to be the offspring of parents whose only crime is their want of title, be not as honourable as to be the son of a profligate father, and a mother whose days and nights are spent in the delirium of drunkenness; and, finally, whether to deserve the kindness of his own college, to obtain its prizes, and to prepare himself for any examination that might entitle him to share the highest honours which the university can bestow, be less indicative of talent and virtue than to be held up to the derision and contempt of his fellow-students, as a scribbler of doggerel and a bear-leader; to be hated for malignity of temper and repulsiveness of manners, and shunned by every man who did not want to be considered a profligate without wit, and trifling without elegance. ... We ... shall neither expose the infamy of his uncle, the indiscretions of his mother, nor his personal follies and embarrassments. But let him not again obtrude himself on our attention as a moralist, etc."

The Attorney-General, Sir Vicary Gibbs, gave his opinion against legal proceedings, on the two grounds that a considerable time had elapsed since the publication, and Byron himself had provoked the attack.]

160. — To John Hanson.

Newstead Abbey, August 4th, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR, — The *Earl* of Huntley and the Lady *Jean* Stewart, daughter of James 1st, of Scotland were the progenitors of Mrs. Byron. I think it would be as well to be correct in the statement. Every thing is doing that can be done, plainly yet decently, for the interment.

When you favour me with your company, be kind enough to bring down my carriage from Messrs. Baxter's & Co., Long Acre. I have written to them, and beg you will come down in it, as I cannot travel conveniently or properly without it. I trust that the decease of Mrs. B. will not interrupt the prosecution of the Editor of the Magazine, less for the mere punishment of the rascal, than to set the question at rest, which, with the ignorant & weak-minded, might leave a wrong impression. I will have no stain on the Memory of my Mother; with a very large portion of foibles and irritability, she was without a *vice* (and in these days that is much). The laws of my country shall do her and me justice in the first instance; but, if they were deficient, the laws of modern Honour should decide. Cost what it may, Gold or blood, I will pursue to the last the cowardly calumniator of an absent man and a defenceless woman.

The effects of the deceased are sealed and untouched. I have sent for her agent, Mr. Bolton, to ascertain the proper steps and nothing shall be done precipitately. I understand her jewels and clothes are of considerable value. I shall write to you again soon, and in the meantime, with my most particular remembrance to Mrs. Hanson, my regards to Charles, and my *respects* to the young ladies, I am, Dear Sir,

Your very sincere and obliged servant,
BYRON.

161. — To Scrope Berdmore Davies.

Newstead Abbey, August 7, 1811.

MY DEAREST DAVIES, — Some curse hangs over me and mine. My mother lies a corpse in this house; one of my best friends is drowned in a ditch. What can I say, or think, or do? I received a letter from him the day before yesterday. My dear Scrope, if you can spare a moment, do come down to me — I want a friend. Matthews's last letter was written on *Friday*. — on Saturday he was not. In ability, who was like Matthews? How did we all shrink before him? You do me but justice in saying, I would have risked my paltry existence to have preserved his. This very evening did I mean to write, inviting him, as I invite you, my very dear friend, to visit me. God forgive — — for his apathy! What will our poor Hobhouse feel? His letters breathe but of Matthews. Come to me,

Scrope, I am almost desolate — left almost alone in the world — I had but you, and H., and M., and let me enjoy the survivors whilst I can. Poor M., in his letter of Friday, speaks of his intended contest for Cambridge, and a speedy journey to London. Write or come, but come if you can, or one or both.

Yours ever.

[Footnote 1: Charles Skinner Matthews (see page 150 [Letter 84], [Foot]note 3).]

[Footnote 2: In 1811 Byron had lost, besides his mother and Matthews (August), his Harrow friend Wingfield (see page 180, note 1), Hargreaves Hanson (see page 54 [Letter 18], [Foot]note 1), and Edleston (see page 130 [Letter 74], [Foot]note 3).]

162. — To R. C. Dallas.

Newstead Abbey, Notts., August 12, 1811.

Peace be with the dead! Regret cannot wake them. With a sigh to the departed, let us resume the dull business of life, in the certainty that we also shall have our repose. Besides her who gave me being, I have lost more than one who made that being tolerable. — The best friend of my friend Hobhouse, Matthews, a man of the first talents, and also not the worst of my narrow circle, has perished miserably in the muddy waves of the Cam, always fatal to genius: — my poor school-fellow, Wingfield, at Coimbra — within a month; and whilst I had heard from *all three*, but not seen *one*. Matthews wrote to me the very day before his death; and though I feel for his fate, I am still more anxious for Hobhouse, who, I very much fear, will hardly retain his senses: his letters to me since the event have been most incoherent. But let this pass; we shall all one day pass along with the rest — the world is too full of such things, and our very sorrow is selfish.

I received a letter from you, which my late occupations prevented me from duly noticing. — I hope your friends and family will long hold together. I shall be glad to hear from you, on business, on commonplace, or any thing, or nothing — but death — I am already too familiar with the dead. It is strange that I look on the skulls which stand beside me (I have always had *four* in my study) without emotion, but I cannot strip the features of those I have known of their fleshy covering, even in idea, without a hideous sensation; but the worms are less ceremonious. — Surely, the Romans did well when they burned the dead. — I shall be happy to hear from you, and am,

Yours, *etc.*

[Footnote 1:

“Just,” writes Hobhouse to Byron, in an undated letter from Dover, “as I was preparing to condole with you on your severe misfortune, an event has taken place, the details of which you will find in the enclosed letter from S. Davies. I am totally unable to say one word on the subject. He was my oldest friend, and, though quite unworthy of his attachment, I believe that I was an object of his regard.

“I now fear that I have not been sufficiently at all times just and kind to him. Return me this fatal letter, and pray add, if it is but one line, a few words of your own.”

A second letter, dated August 8, 1811, is as follows: —

“MY DEAR BYRON, — Tomorrow morning we sail for Cork. It is with difficulty I bring myself to talk of my paltry concerns, but I cannot refuse giving you such information as may enable me to hear from one of the friends that I have still left. Pray do give me a line; nothing is more selfish than sorrow. His great and unrivalled talents were observable by all, his kindness was known to his friends. You recollect how affectionately he shook my hand at parting. It was the last time you ever saw him — did you think it would be the last? But three days before his death he told me in a letter that he had heard from you. On Friday he wrote to me again, and on Saturday — alas, alas! we are not stocks or stones, — every word of our friend Davies’ letter still pierces me to the soul — such a man and such a death! I would that he had not been so minute in his horrid details. Oh, my dear Byron, do write to me; I am very, very sick at heart indeed, and, after various efforts to write upon my own concerns, I still revert to the same melancholy subject. I wrote to Cawthorn to-day, but knew not what I said to him; half my incitement to finish that task is for ever gone. I can neither have his assistance during my labour, his comfort if I should fail, nor his congratulation if I should succeed. Forgive me, I do not forget you — but I cannot but remember him.

Ever your obliged and faithful, JOHN C. HOBHOUSE.”

Byron had apparently suggested that Hobhouse should write some brief record of his friend. Hobhouse replies from Enniscorthy, September 13, 1811: —

“The melancholy subject of your last, in spite of every effort, perpetually recurs to me. It is indeed a hard science to forget, though I cannot but think that it is the wisest and indeed the only remedy for grief. I should be quite incapable every way of doing what you mention, and I could not even set about such a melancholy task with spirit or prospect of success. The thing may be better done by a person less interested than myself in so cruel a catastrophe. Whatever you say in your book will be well said, and do credit both to your heart and head;

how much would it have gratified him who shall ne'er hear it!"]

[Footnote 2: Dallas had written on July 29 to protest, on six grounds which he gives ('Correspondence of Lord Byron', pp. 151-153), "against the sceptical stanzas" of 'Childe Harold'.]

163. — To — — Bolton.

Newstead Abbey, August 12, 1811.

Sir, — I enclose a rough draught of my intended will which I beg to have drawn up as soon as possible, in the firmest manner. The alterations are principally made in consequence of the death of Mrs. Byron. I have only to request that it may be got ready in a short time, and have the honour to be,

Your most obedient, humble servant,
BYRON.

163. To — — Bolton.

Newstead Abbey, August 12, 1811.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE CONTENTS OF A WILL TO BE DRAWN UP IMMEDIATELY.

The estate of Newstead to be entailed (subject to certain deductions) on George Anson Byron, heir-at-law, or whoever may be the heir-at-law on the death of Lord B. The Rochdale property to be sold in part or the whole, according to the debts and legacies of the present Lord B.

To Nicolo Giraud of Athens, subject of France, but born in Greece, the sum of seven thousand pounds sterling, to be paid from the sale of such parts of Rochdale, Newstead, or elsewhere, as may enable the said Nicolo Giraud (resident at Athens and Malta in the year 1810) to receive the above sum on his attaining the age of twenty-one years.

To William Fletcher, Joseph Murray, and Demetrius Zografio (native of Greece), servants, the sum of fifty pounds pr. ann. each, for their natural lives. To Wm. Fletcher, the Mill at Newstead, on condition that he payeth rent, but not subject to the caprice of the landlord. To Rt. Rushton the sum of fifty pounds per ann. for life, and a further sum of one thousand pounds on attaining the age of twenty-five years.

To Jn. Hanson, Esq. the sum of two thousand pounds sterling.

The claims of S. B. Davies, Esq. to be satisfied on proving the amount of the same.

The body of Lord B. to be buried in the vault of the garden of

Newstead, without any ceremony or burial-service whatever, or any inscription, save his name and age. His dog not to be removed from the said vault.

My library and furniture of every description to my friends Jn. Cam Hobhouse, Esq., and S. B. Davies, Esq., my executors. In case of their decease, the Rev. J. Becher, of Southwell, Notts., and R. C. Dallas, Esq., of Mortlake, Surrey, to be executors.

The produce of the sale of Wymondham in Norfolk, and the late Mrs. B.'s Scotch property, to be appropriated in aid of the payment of debts and legacies.

This is the last will and testament of me, the Rt. Honble George Gordon, Lord Byron, Baron Byron of Rochdale, in the county of Lancaster. — I desire that my body may be buried in the vault of the garden of Newstead, without any ceremony or burial-service whatever, and that no inscription, save my name and age, be written on the tomb or tablet; and it is my will that my faithful dog may not be removed from the said vault. To the performance of this my particular desire, I rely on the attention of my executors hereinafter named.

==It is submitted to Lord Byron whether this clause relative to the funeral had not better be omitted. The substance of it can be given in a letter from his Lordship to the executors, and accompany the will; and the will may state that the funeral shall be performed in such manner as his Lordship may by letter direct, and, in default of any such letter, then at the discretion of his executors==

It must stand.

B.

I do hereby specifically order and direct that all the claims of the said S. B. Davies upon me shall be fully paid and satisfied as soon as conveniently may be after my decease, on his proving {by vouchers, or otherwise, to the satisfaction of my executors hereinafter named} the amount thereof, and the correctness of the same.

==If Mr, Davies has any unsettled claims upon Lord Byron, that circumstance is a reason for his not being appointed executor; each executor having an opportunity of paying himself his own debt without consulting his co-executors.==

So much the better — if possible, let him be an executor.

B.

[Footnote 1:

“If the papers lie not (which they generally do), Demetrius Zograffo of Athens is at the head of the Athenian part of the Greek insurrection. He was my servant in 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, at different intervals of those years (for I left him in Greece when I went to Constantinople), and accompanied me to England in 1811: he returned to Greece, spring, 1812. He was a clever, but not *apparently* an enterprising man; but circumstances make men. His two sons (*then* infants) were named Miltiades and Alcibiades: may the omen be happy!”

Byron’s MS. Journal, quoted by Moore, ‘Life’, p. 131.]

[Footnote 2: In the clause enumerating the names and places of abode of the executors, the solicitor had left blanks for the Christian names of these gentlemen, and Lord Byron, having filled up all but that of Dallas, writes in the margin, “I forget the Christian name of Dallas — cut him out.”]

[Footnote 3: On the death of Mrs. Byron, the sum of £4200, the remains of the price of the estate of Gight were paid over to Byron by her trustee.]

[Footnote 4: The passages printed ==thus== are suggestions made by the solicitors.]

[Footnote 5: Over the words placed {between brackets}, Byron drew his pen.]

164. — To — — Bolton.

Newstead Abbey, August 16, 1811.

SIR, — I have answered the queries on the margin. I wish Mr. Davies’s claims to be most fully allowed, and, further, that he be one of my executors. I wish the will to be made in a manner to prevent all discussion, if possible, after my decease; and this I leave to you as a professional gentleman.

With regard to the few and simple directions for the disposal of my *carcass*, I must have them implicitly fulfilled, as they will, at least, prevent trouble and expense; — and (what would be of little consequence to me, but may quiet the conscience of the survivors) the garden is *consecrated* ground. These directions are copied verbatim from my former will; the alterations in other parts have arisen from the death of Mrs. B. I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

BYRON.

165. — To — Bolton.

Newstead Abbey, August 20, 1811.

Sir, — The witnesses shall be provided from amongst my tenants, and I shall be happy to see you on any day most convenient to yourself. I forgot to mention, that it must be specified by codicil, or otherwise, that my body is on no account to be removed from the vault where I have directed it to be placed; and in case

any of my successors within the entail (from bigotry, or otherwise) might think proper to remove the carcass, such proceeding shall be attended by forfeiture of the estate, which in such case shall go to my sister, the Hon'ble Augusta Leigh and her heirs on similar conditions. I have the honour to be, sir,

Your very obedient, humble servant,
BYRON.

166. — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh.
Newstead Abbey, August 21st, 1811.

My Dear Sister, — I ought to have answered your letter before, but when did I ever do any-thing that I ought?

I am losing my relatives & you are adding to the number of yours; but which is best, God knows; — besides poor Mrs. Byron, I have been deprived by death of two most particular friends within little more than a month; but as all observations on such subjects are superfluous and unavailing, I leave the dead to their rest, and return to the dull business of life, which however presents nothing very pleasant to me either in prospect or retrospection.

I hear you have been increasing his Majesty's Subjects, which in these times of War and tribulation is really patriotic. Notwithstanding Malthus tells us that, were it not for Battle, Murder, and Sudden death, we should be overstocked, I think we have latterly had a redundance of these national benefits, and therefore I give you all credit for your matronly behaviour.

I believe you know that for upwards of two years I have been rambling round the Archipelago, and am returned just in time to know that I might as well have staid away for any good I ever have done, or am likely to do at home, and so, as soon as I have somewhat *repaired* my *irreparable* affairs I shall soon go abroad again, for I am heartily sick of your climate and every thing it *rains* upon, always save and except *yourself* as in *duty bound*.

I should be glad to see you here (as I think you have never seen the place) if you could make it convenient. Murray is still like a Rock, and will probably outlast some six Lords Byron, though in his 75th Autumn. I took him with me to Portugal & sent him round by sea to Gibraltar whilst I rode through the Interior of Spain, which was then (1809) accessible.

You say you have much to communicate to me, let us have it by all means, as I am utterly at a loss to guess; whatever it may be it will meet with due attention.

Your trusty and well beloved cousin F. Howard is married to a Miss Somebody, I wish him joy on your account, and on his own, though speaking generally I do not affect that Brood.

By the bye, I shall marry, if I can find any thing inclined to barter money for rank within six months; after which I shall return to my friends the Turks.

In the interim I am, Dear Madam,
[Signature cut out.]

[Footnote 1: The Rev. T. R. Malthus (1766-1834) published, in 1798, his 'Essay on the Principle of Population'.]

[Footnote 2: The Hon. Frederick Howard (see page 55 [Letter 19], [Foot]note 1) married, August 6, 1811, Frances Susan Lambton, only daughter of William Lambton, formerly M.P. for Durham.]

167. — To R. C. Dallas.

Newstead, August 21, 1811.

Your letter gives me credit for more acute feelings than I possess; for though I feel tolerably miserable, yet I am at the same time subject to a kind of hysterical merriment, or rather laughter without merriment, which I can neither account for nor conquer, and yet I do not feel relieved by it; but an indifferent person would think me in excellent spirits. "We must forget these things," and have recourse to our old selfish comforts, or rather comfortable selfishness.

I do not think I shall return to London immediately, and shall therefore accept freely what is offered courteously — your mediation between me and Murray. I don't think my name will answer the purpose, and you must be aware that my plaguy Satire will bring the north and south Grub Streets down upon the *Pilgrimage*; — but, nevertheless, if Murray makes a point of it, and you coincide with him, I will do it daringly; so let it be entitled "By the author of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." My remarks on the Romaic, etc., once intended to accompany the *Hints from Horace*, shall go along with the other, as being indeed more appropriate; also the smaller poems now in my possession, with a few selected from those published in Hobhouse's *Miscellany*. I have found amongst my poor mother's papers all my letters from the East, and one in particular of some length from Albania. From this, if necessary, I can work up a note or two on that subject. As I kept no journal, the letters written on the spot are the best. But of this anon, when we have definitively arranged.

Has Murray shown the work to any one? He may — but I will have no traps for applause. Of course there are little things I would wish to alter, and perhaps the two stanzas of a buffooning cast on London's Sunday are as well left out. I much wish to avoid identifying Childe Harold's character with mine, and that, in

sooth, is my second objection to my name appearing in the title-page. When you have made arrangements as to time, size, type, etc., favour me with a reply. I am giving you an universe of trouble, which thanks cannot atone for. I made a kind of prose apology for my scepticism at the head of the MS., which, on recollection, is so much more like an attack than a defence, that, haply, it might better be omitted — perpend, pronounce. After all, I fear Murray will be in a scrape with the orthodox; but I cannot help it, though I wish him well through it. As for me, “I have supped full of criticism,” and I don’t think that the “most dismal treatise” will stir and rouse my “fell of hair” till “Birnam wood do come to Dunsinane.”

I shall continue to write at intervals, and hope you will pay me in kind. How does Pratt get on, or rather get off, Joe Blackett’s posthumous stock? You killed that poor man amongst you, in spite of your Ionian friend and myself, who would have saved him from Pratt, poetry, present poverty, and posthumous oblivion. Cruel patronage! to ruin a man at his calling; but then he is a divine subject for subscription and biography; and Pratt, who makes the most of his dedications, has inscribed the volume to no less than five families of distinction.

I am sorry you don’t like Harry White: with a great deal of cant, which in him was sincere (indeed it killed him as you killed Joe Blackett), certes there is poesy and genius. I don’t say this on account of my simile and rhymes; but surely he was beyond all the Bloomfields and Blacketts, and their collateral cobblers, whom Lofft and Pratt have or may kidnap from their calling into the service of the trade. You must excuse my flippancy, for I am writing I know not what, to escape from myself. Hobhouse is gone to Ireland. Mr. Davies has been here on his way to Harrowgate.

You did not know Matthews: he was a man of the most astonishing powers, as he sufficiently proved at Cambridge, by carrying off more prizes and fellowships, against the ablest candidates, than any other graduate on record; but a most decided atheist, indeed noxiously so, for he proclaimed his principles in all societies. I knew him well, and feel a loss not easily to be supplied to myself — to Hobhouse never. Let me hear from you, and

Believe me, *etc.*

[Footnote 1: In 1793 John Murray the first (born 1745) died, leaving a widow, two daughters, and one son, John Murray the second (1778-1843), then a boy of fifteen. The bookselling and publishing business at 32, Fleet Street, which the first John Murray had purchased in 1768 from William Sandby, was for two years carried on by the chief assistant, Samuel Highley. From 1795, when John Murray the second joined it, it was conducted as a partnership, under the title of Murray and Highley. But in 1803 John Murray cancelled the partnership, and

started for himself at 32, Fleet Street. Relieved from a timorous partner, he at once displayed his shrewdness, energy, and literary enthusiasm. He rapidly became, as Byron called him, “the [Greek (transliterated): Anax] of Publishers,” or, as he was nicknamed, “The Emperor of the West.” In February, 1809, he had launched the ‘Quarterly Review’; in March, 1812, he published ‘Childe Harold’; in the following September, he moved to 50, Albemarle Street, the lease of which, with the stock, good will, and copyrights, he purchased from William Miller (see page 319 [Letter 158], [Foot]note 2). The remarkable position which the second John Murray created for himself, has two aspects, one commercial, the other social. He was not only the publisher, but the friend, of the most distinguished men of the day; and he was both by reason, partly of his honourable character, partly of his personal attractiveness. Sir Walter Scott, writing, October 30, 1828, to Lockhart, speaks of Murray in words which sum up his character:

“By all means do what the Emperor says. He is what Emperor Nap was not, ‘much a gentleman.’“

Murray was the first to divorce the business of publishing from that of selling books; the first to see, as he wrote to Sir Walter Scott, October 13, 1825 (‘A Publisher and his Friends’, vol. ii. p. 199), that

“the business of a publishing bookseller is not in his shop, or even his connection, but in his brains.”

Quick-tempered and warm-hearted, he was endowed with a strong sense of humour, and a gift of felicitous expression, which made him at once an admirable talker and an excellent letter-writer, and enabled him to hold his own among the noted wits and brilliant men of letters whom he gathered under his roof. A man of ideas more than a man of business, of enterprise rather than of calculation, he was always on the watch for new writers and new openings. But his imagination and impulsive temperament were checked by his fine taste for sound literature, and controlled by high principles in matters of trade. Thus he was saved from those disastrous speculations which involved Scott in ruin, and might otherwise have appealed with fatal force to his own sanguine nature. His close relations with Byron, which began in 1811, and lasted till the poet’s death, are set forth in the numerous letters which follow, and were never embittered even when he refused to continue the publication of ‘Don Juan’. Their names are inseparably associated in the history of literature. A generous paymaster, he was also an hospitable host. Round him gathers much of the literary history of a half-century which includes such names as those of Scott, Byron, Southey, Coleridge, Hallam, Milman, Mahon, Carlyle, Grote, Benjamin Disraeli, Sir Robert Peel, Canning, and Mr. Gladstone. His literary dinners were famous, and his drawing-

room was the rallying-place of all that was witty and agreeable in society. At the same time, he was the acknowledged head of the publishing trade, unswerving in the rectitude of his commercial dealings, and in the maintenance of the honourable traditions of his most distinguished predecessors, as well as sincere in his enthusiasm for English letters.]

[Footnote 2: Walter Rodwell Wright, author of 'Horae Ionicae, a Poem descriptive of the Ionian Islands, and part of the adjacent coast of Greece,' (1809), had been Consul-General of the Seven Islands. On his return he became Recorder of Bury St. Edmund's. He was subsequently President of the Court of Appeals in Malta, where he died in 1826. (See Byron's address to him in 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', lines 877-880.)]

[Footnote 3: Henry Kirke White (1785-1806) published 'Clifton Grove' and other poems in 1803. He died at Cambridge in 1806. His 'Remains' were published by Southey in 1807. (See 'English Bards', and Scotch Reviewers', lines 831-848, and note 2.)]

[Footnote 4: The three brothers, George Bloomfield, a shoemaker, Nathaniel, a tailor, and Robert, also a shoemaker, were the sons of a tailor at Honington, in Suffolk, whose wife kept the village school. (For further details as to George and Nathaniel, see 'English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers', lines 765-798, and 'notes'.)]

Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823) achieved a success with his 'Farmer's Boy' (1800), of which thousands of copies were sold in England, and which was translated into French and Italian. But however creditable the lines may have been to the author, Byron's opinion of the merits of the poet was the true one. Bloomfield's subsequent volumes, of which there were seven, were inferior to 'The Farmer's Boy'. 'Good Tidings, or News from the Farm' (1804), is perhaps the best known. A collected edition of Bloomfield's 'Works' was published in 1824.]

[Footnote 5: Capel Lofft (1751-1824), educated at Eton and Cambridge, was called to the Bar in 1775. Succeeding in 1781 to the family estates near Bury St. Edmund's, he lived for some years at Troston Hall. Crabb Robinson ('Diary', vol. i. p. 29) describes him, in 1795, as

"a gentleman of good family and estate — an author on an infinity of subjects; his books were on Law, History, Poetry, Antiquities, Divinity, and Politics. He was then an acting magistrate, having abandoned the profession of the Bar. He was one of the numerous answerers of Burke; and, in spite of a feeble voice and other disadvantages, was an eloquent speaker."

His boyish figure, slovenly dress, and involved sentences were well known on the platforms where he advocated parliamentary reform. On May 17, 1784, Johnson dined at Mr. Dilly's. Among the guests was

"Mr. Capel Lofft, who, though a most zealous Whig, has a mind so full of learning and knowledge, and so much in exercise in various exertions, and withal so much liberality, that the stupendous powers of the literary Goliath, though they did not frighten this little David of popular spirit, could not but excite his admiration."

Lofft held strong opinions in favour of the French Revolution, which he admired. He, "Godwin, and Thelwall are the only three persons I know (except Hazlitt) who grieve at the late events;" so writes Crabb Robinson, after the battle of Waterloo ('Diary', vol. i. p. 491). He published numerous works on law and politics, besides four volumes of poetry: 'The Praises of Poetry, a Poem' (1775); 'Eudisia, or a Poem on the Universe' (1781); 'The first and second Georgics of Virgil' (in blank verse, 1803); 'Laura, or an Anthology of Sonnets' (1814). He also edited Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. In November, 1798, Lofft read the manuscript of 'The Farmer's Boy', written by Robert Bloomfield in a London garret, where he worked as a shoemaker. Interested in the poem and the Suffolk poet, Lofft had it published in 1800, with cuts by Bewick, and a preface by himself.]

168. — To Francis Hodgson.

Newstead Abbey, August 22, 1811.

You may have heard of the sudden death of my mother, and poor Matthews, which, with that of Wingfield (of which I was not fully aware till just before I left town, and indeed hardly believed it,) has made a sad chasm in my connections. Indeed the blows followed each other so rapidly that I am yet stupid from the shock; and though I do eat, and drink, and talk, and even laugh, at times, yet I can hardly persuade myself that I am awake, did not every morning convince me mournfully to the contrary. — I shall now wave the subject, — the dead are at rest, and none but the dead can be so.

You will feel for poor Hobhouse, — Matthews was the "god of his idolatry;" and if intellect could exalt a man above his fellows, no one could refuse him preeminence. I knew him most intimately, and valued him proportionably; but I am recurring — so let us talk of life and the living.

If you should feel a disposition to come here, you will find "beef and a sea-coal fire," and not ungenerous wine. Whether Otway's two other requisites for an Englishman or not, I cannot tell, but probably one of them. — Let me know when I may expect you, that I may tell you when I go and when return. I have not yet been to Lancs. Davies has been here, and has invited me to Cambridge

for a week in October, so that, peradventure, we may encounter glass to glass. His gaiety (death cannot mar it) has done me service; but, after all, ours was a hollow laughter.

You will write to me? I am solitary, and I never felt solitude irksome before. Your anxiety about the critique on — — 's book is amusing; as it was anonymous, certes it was of little consequence: I wish it had produced a little more confusion, being a lover of literary malice. Are you doing nothing? writing nothing? printing nothing? why not your Satire on Methodism? the subject (supposing the public to be blind to merit) would do wonders. Besides, it would be as well for a destined deacon to prove his orthodoxy. — It really would give me pleasure to see you properly appreciated. I say *really*, as, being an author, my humanity might be suspected.

Believe me, dear H., yours always.

[Footnote 1:

”Give but an Englishman his whore and ease,
Beef and a sea-coal fire, he’s yours for ever.”

‘Venice Preserved’, act ii. sc. 3]

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I — REVIEW OF WORDSWORTH'S POEMS, 2 VOLS. 1807.

(From 'Monthly Literary Recreations' for July, 1807.)

The volumes before us are by the author of *Lyric Ballads*, a collection which has not undeservedly met with a considerable share of public applause. The characteristics of Mr. Wordsworth's muse are simple and flowing, though occasionally inharmonious verse; strong, and sometimes irresistible appeals to the feelings, with unexceptionable sentiments. Though the present work may not equal his former efforts, many of the poems possess a native elegance, natural and unaffected, totally devoid of the tinsel embellishments and abstract hyperboles of several contemporary sonneteers. The last sonnet in the first volume, p. 152, is perhaps the best, without any novelty in the sentiments, which we hope are common to every Briton at the present crisis; the force and expression is that of a genuine poet, feeling as he writes —

Another year! another deadly blow!
Another mighty empire overthrown!
And we are left, or shall be left, alone —
The last that dares to struggle with the foe.
'Tis well! — from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought,
That by our own right-hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unprop'd, or be laid low.
O dastard! whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant, not a venal band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

The song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, the Seven Sisters, the Affliction of Margaret — — of — —, possess all the beauties, and few of the defects, of the writer: the following lines from the last are in his first style: —

"Ah! little doth the young one dream,

When full of play and childish cares,
What power hath e'en his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares:
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress,
But do not make her love the less."

The pieces least worthy of the author are those entitled "Moods of my own Mind." We certainly wish these "Moods" had been less frequent, or not permitted to occupy a place near works which only make their deformity more obvious; when Mr. W. ceases to please, it is by "abandoning" his mind to the most commonplace ideas, at the same time clothing them in language not simple, but puerile. What will any reader or auditor, out of the nursery, say to such namby-pamby as "Lines written at the Foot of Brother's Bridge"?

"The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest,
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising,
There are forty feeding like one.
Like an army defeated,
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill,
On the top of the bare hill."

"The ploughboy is whooping anon, anon," etc., etc., is in the same exquisite measure. This appears to us neither more nor less than an imitation of such minstrelsy as soothed our cries in the cradle, with the shrill ditty of

"Hey de diddle,
The cat and the fiddle:
The cow jump'd over the moon,
The little dog laugh'd to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon."

On the whole, however, with the exception of the above, and other INNOCENT odes of the same cast, we think these volumes display a genius worthy of higher pursuits, and regret that Mr. W. confines his muse to such trifling subjects. We trust his motto will be in future “Paulo majora canamus.” Many, with inferior abilities, have acquired a loftier seat on Parnassus, merely by attempting strains in which Wordsworth is more qualified to excel.

APPENDIX II — ARTICLE FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, FOR JANUARY, 1808.

‘Hours of Idleness; a Series of Poems, original and translated.’

By George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor. 8vo, pp. 200. Newark, 1807.

The poesy of this young lord belongs to the class which neither gods nor men are said to permit. Indeed, we do not recollect to have seen a quantity of verse with so few deviations in either direction from that exact standard. His effusions are spread over a dead flat, and can no more get above or below the level, than if they were so much stagnant water. As an extenuation of this offence, the noble author is peculiarly forward in pleading minority. We have it in the title-page, and on the very back of the volume; it follows his name like a favourite part of his ‘style’. Much stress is laid upon it in the preface; and the poems are connected with this general statement of his case, by particular dates, substantiating the age at which each was written. Now, the law upon the point of minority we hold to be perfectly clear. It is a plea available only to the defendant; no plaintiff can offer it as a supplementary ground of action. Thus, if any suit could be brought against Lord Byron, for the purpose of compelling him to put into court a certain quantity of poetry, and if judgment were given against him, it is highly probable that an exception would be taken, were he to deliver ‘for poetry’ the contents of this volume. To this he might plead ‘minority’; but, as he now makes voluntary tender of the article, he hath no right to sue, on that ground, for the price in good current praise, should the goods be unmarketable.

This is our view of the law on the point; and, we dare to say, so will it be ruled. Perhaps, however, in reality, all that he tells us about his youth is rather with a view to increase our wonder than to soften our censures. He possibly means to say, “See how a minor can write! This poem was actually composed by a young man of eighteen, and this by one of only sixteen!” But, alas! We all remember the poetry of Cowley at ten, and Pope at twelve; and so far from hearing, with any degree of surprise, that very poor verses were written by a youth from his leaving school to his leaving college, inclusive, we really believe this to be the most common of all occurrences; that it happens in the life of nine men in ten who are educated in England; and that the tenth man writes better verse than Lord Byron.

His other plea of privilege our author rather brings forward in order to waive it. He certainly, however, does allude frequently to his family and ancestry — sometimes in poetry, sometimes in notes; and, while giving up his claim on the

score of rank, he takes care to remember us of Dr. Johnson's saying, that when a nobleman appears as an author, his merit should be handsomely acknowledged. In truth, it is this consideration only that induces us to give Lord Byron's poems a place in our review, beside our desire to counsel him, that he do forthwith abandon poetry, and turn his talents, which are considerable, and his opportunities, which are great, to better account.

With this view, we must beg leave seriously to assure him, that the mere rhyming of the final syllable, even when accompanied by the presence of a certain number of feet, — nay, although (which does not always happen) those feet should scan regularly, and have been all counted accurately upon the fingers, — is not the whole art of poetry. We would entreat him to believe, that a certain portion of liveliness, somewhat of fancy, is necessary to constitute a poem, and that a poem in the present day, to be read, must contain at least one thought, either in a little degree different from the ideas of former writers, or differently expressed. We put it to his candour, whether there is any thing so deserving the name of poetry in verses like the following, written in 1806; and whether, if a youth of eighteen could say any thing so uninteresting to his ancestors, a youth of nineteen should publish it; —

"Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu!
Abroad or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he'll think upon glory and you.

"Though a tear dim his eye at this sad separation,
'Tis nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emulation;
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

"That fame, and that memory, still will he cherish;
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown;
Like you will he live, or like you will he perish;
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own."

Now, we positively do assert, that there is nothing better than these stanzas in the whole compass of the noble minor's volume.

Lord Byron should also have a care of attempting what the greatest poets have done before him, for comparisons (as he must have had occasion to see at his writing-master's) are odious. Gray's Ode on Eton College should really have

kept out the ten hobbling stanzas “On a distant View of the Village and School of Harrow.”

”Where fancy yet joys to retrace the resemblance
Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied,
How welcome to me your ne’er-fading remembrance,
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied.”

In like manner, the exquisite lines of Mr. Rogers, “On a Tear,” might have warned the noble author off those premises, and spared us a whole dozen such stanzas as the following: —

”Mild Charity’s glow, to us mortals below,
Shows the soul from barbarity clear;
Compassion will melt where this virtue is felt,
And its dew is diffused in a Tear.

”The man doom’d to sail with the blast of the gale,
Through billows Atlantic to steer,
As he bends o’er the wave, which may soon be his grave,
The green sparkles bright with a Tear.”

And so of instances in which former poets have failed. Thus we do not think Lord Byron was made for translating, during his nonage, “Adrian’s Address to his Soul,” when Pope succeeded so indifferently in the attempt. If our readers, however, are of another opinion, they may look at it.

”Ah! gentle, fleeting, wavering sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.”

However, be this as it may, we fear his translations and imitations are great favourites with Lord Byron. We have them of all kinds, from Anacreon to Ossian; and, viewing them as school exercises, they may pass. Only, why print them after they have had their day and served their turn? And why call the thing in p. 79 (see p. 380) a translation, where ‘two’ words [Gr.](‘thelo legein’) of the original are expanded into four lines, and the other thing in p. 81 (see ‘ibid’.)

where [Gr.] ‘mesonuktiais poth horais’ is rendered by means of six hobbling verses? As to his Ossianic poesy, we are not very good judges, being in truth, so moderately skilled in that species of composition, that we should, in all probability, be criticizing some bit of the genuine Macpherson itself, were we to express our opinion of Lord Byron’s rhapsodies. If, then, the following beginning of a “Song of Bards” is by his lordship, we venture to object to it, as far as we can comprehend it. “What form rises on the roar of clouds? whose dark ghost gleams on the red stream of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder; ‘tis Orla, the brown chief of Oithona. He “was,” *etc.* After detaining this “brown chief” some time, the bards conclude by giving him their advice to “raise his fair locks;” then to “spread them on the arch of the rainbow;” and to “smile through the tears of the storm.” Of this kind of thing there are no less than *nine* pages; and we can so far venture an opinion in their favour, that they look very like Macpherson; and we are positive they are pretty nearly as stupid and tiresome.

It is a sort of privilege of poets to be egotists; but they should “use it as not abusing it;” and particularly one who piques himself (though indeed at the ripe age of nineteen) on being “an infant bard,” — (“The artless Helicon I boast is youth”) — should either not know, or should seem not to know, so much about his own ancestry. Besides a poem above cited, on the family seat of the Byrons, we have another of eleven pages, on the self-same subject, introduced with an apology, “he certainly had no intention of inserting it,” but really “the particular request of some friends,” *etc.*, *etc.* It concludes with five stanzas on himself, “the last and youngest of a noble line.” There is a good deal also about his maternal ancestors, in a poem on Lachin y Gair, a mountain where he spent part of his youth, and might have learnt that pibroch is not a bagpipe, any more than duet means a fiddle.

As the author has dedicated so large a part of his volume to immortalise his employments at school and college, we cannot possibly dismiss it without presenting the reader with a specimen of these ingenious effusions. In an ode with a Greek motto, called “Granta,” we have the following magnificent stanzas:

There, in apartments small and damp,
The candidate for college prizes,
Sits poring by the midnight lamp,
Goes late to bed, yet early rises.

Who reads false quantities in Sele,
Or puzzles o’er the deep triangle,

Deprived of many a wholesome meal,
In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle:

Renouncing every pleasing page,
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage,
The square of the hypothenuse.

Still harmless are these occupations,
That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compared with other recreations,
Which bring together the imprudent."

We are sorry to hear so bad an account of the college psalmody as is contained in the following Attic stanzas: —

"Our choir would scarcely be excused
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne'er descended:
In furious mood he would have tore 'em!"

But, whatever judgment may be passed on the poems of this noble minor, it seems we must take them as we find them, and be content; for they are the last we shall ever have from him. He is, at best, he says, but an intruder into the groves of Parnassus: he never lived in a garret, like thorough-bred poets; and "though he once roved a careless mountaineer in the Highlands of Scotland," he has not of late enjoyed this advantage. Moreover, he expects no profit from his publication; and, whether it succeeds or not, "it is highly improbable, from his situation and pursuits hereafter," that he should again condescend to become an author. Therefore, let us take what we get, and be thankful. What right have we poor devils to be nice? We are well off to have got so much from a man of this lord's station, who does not live in a garret, but "has the sway" of Newstead Abbey. Again, we say, let us be thankful; and, with honest Sancho, bid God bless the giver, nor look the gift horse in the mouth.

APPENDIX III — REVIEW OF GELL'S GEOGRAPHY OF ITHACA', AND 'ITINERARY OF GREECE'.

(From the Monthly Review for August, 1811.)

That laudable curiosity concerning the remains of classical antiquity, which has of late years increased among our countrymen, is in no traveller or author more conspicuous than in Mr. Gell. Whatever difference of opinion may yet exist with regard to the success of the several disputants in the famous Trojan controversy, or, indeed, relating to the present author's merits as an inspector of the Troad, it must universally be acknowledged that any work, which more forcibly impresses on our imaginations the scenes of heroic action, and the subjects of immortal song, possesses claims on the attention of every scholar.

Of the two works which now demand our report, we conceive the former to be by far the most interesting to the reader, as the latter is indisputably the most serviceable to the traveller. Excepting, indeed, the running commentary which it contains on a number of extracts from Pausanias and Strabo, it is, as the title imports, a mere itinerary of Greece, or rather of Argolis only, in its present circumstances. This being the case, surely it would have answered every purpose of utility much better by being printed as a pocket road-book of that part of the Morea; for a quarto is a very unmanageable travelling companion. The maps and drawings, we shall be told, would not permit such an arrangement; but as to the drawings, they are not in general to be admired as specimens of the art; and several of them, as we have been assured by eye-witnesses of the scenes which they describe, do not compensate for their mediocrity in point of execution, by any extraordinary fidelity of representation. Others, indeed, are more faithful, according to our informants. The true reason, however, for this costly mode of publication is in course to be found in a desire of gratifying the public passion for large margins, and all the luxury of typography; and we have before expressed our dissatisfaction with Mr. Gell's aristocratical mode of communicating a species of knowledge, which ought to be accessible to a much greater portion of classical students than can at present acquire it by his means: — but, as such expostulations are generally useless, we shall be thankful for what we can obtain, and that in the manner in which Mr. Gell has chosen to present it.

The former of these volumes, we have observed, is the most attractive in the closet. It comprehends a very full survey of the far-famed island which the hero of the 'Odyssey' has immortalized; for we really are inclined to think that the author has established the identity of the modern 'Theaki' with the 'Ithaca' of

Homer. At all events, if it be an illusion, it is a very agreeable deception, and is effected by an ingenious interpretation of the passages in Homer that are supposed to be descriptive of the scenes which our traveller has visited. We shall extract some of these adaptations of the ancient picture to the modern scene, marking the points of resemblance which appear to be strained and forced, as well as those which are more easy and natural; but we must first insert some preliminary matter from the opening chapter. The following passage conveys a sort of general sketch of the book, which may give our readers a tolerably adequate notion of its contents: —

“The present work may adduce, by a simple and correct survey of the island, coincidences in its geography, in its natural productions, and moral state, before unnoticed. Some will be directly pointed out; the fancy or ingenuity of the reader may be employed in tracing others; the mind familiar with the imagery of the ‘Odyssey’ will recognise with satisfaction the scenes themselves; and this volume is offered to the public, not entirely without hopes of vindicating the poem of Homer from the scepticism of those critics who imagine that the ‘Odyssey’ is a mere poetical composition, unsupported by history, and unconnected with the localities of any particular situation.

“Some have asserted that, in the comparison of places now existing with the descriptions of Homer, we ought not to expect coincidence in minute details; yet it seems only by these that the kingdom of Ulysses, or any other, can be identified, as, if such an idea be admitted, every small and rocky island in the Ionian Sea, containing a good port, might, with equal plausibility, assume the appellation of Ithaca.

“The Venetian geographers have in a great degree contributed to raise those doubts which have existed on the identity of the modern with the ancient Ithaca, by giving, in their charts, the name of Val di Compare to the island. That name is, however, totally unknown in the country, where the isle is invariably called Ithaca by the upper ranks, and Theaki by the vulgar. The Venetians have equally corrupted the name of almost every place in Greece; yet, as the natives of Epactos or Naupactos never heard of Lepanto, those of Zacynthos of Zante, or the Athenians of Settines, it would be as unfair to rob Ithaca of its name, on such authority, as it would be to assert that no such island existed, because no tolerable representation of its form can be found in the Venetian surveys.

“The rare medals of the Island, of which three are represented in the title-page, might be adduced as a proof that the name of Ithaca was not lost during the reigns of the Roman emperors. They have the head of Ulysses, recognised by the pileum, or pointed cap, while the reverse of one presents the figure of a cock, the emblem of his vigilance, with the legend [Greek: IThAKON]. A few of these

medals are preserved in the cabinets of the curious, and one also, with the cock, found in the island, is in the possession of Signor Zavo, of Bathi. The uppermost coin is in the collection of Dr. Hunter; the second is copied from Newman; and the third is the property of R.P. Knight, Esq.

“Several inscriptions, which will be hereafter produced, will tend to the confirmation of the idea that Ithaca was inhabited about the time when the Romans were masters of Greece; yet there is every reason to believe that few, if any, of the present proprietors of the soil are descended from ancestors who had long resided successively in the island. Even those who lived, at the time of Ulysses, in Ithaca, seem to have been on the point of emigrating to Argos, and no chief remained, after the second in descent from that hero, worthy of being recorded in history. It appears that the isle has been twice colonised from Cephalonia in modern times, and I was informed that a grant had been made by the Venetians, entitling each settler in Ithaca to as much land as his circumstances would enable him to cultivate.”

Mr. Gell then proceeds to invalidate the authority of previous writers on the subject of Ithaca. Sir George Wheeler and M. le Chevalier fall under his severe animadversion; and, indeed, according to his account, neither of these gentlemen had visited the island, and the description of the latter is “absolutely too absurd for refutation.” In another place, he speaks of M. le C. “disgracing a work of such merit by the introduction of such fabrications;” again, of the inaccuracy of the author’s maps; and, lastly, of his inserting an island at the southern entry of the channel between Cephalonia and Ithaca, which has no existence. This observation very nearly approaches to the use of that monosyllable which Gibbon, without expressing it, so adroitly applied to some assertion of his antagonist, Mr. Davies. In truth, our traveller’s words are rather bitter towards his brother tourist; but we must conclude that their justice warrants their severity.

In the second chapter, the author describes his landing in Ithaca, and arrival at the rock Korax and the fountain Arethusa, as he designates it with sufficient positiveness. — This rock, now known by the name of Korax, or Koraka Petra, he contends to be the same with that which Homer mentions as contiguous to the habitation of Eumæus, the faithful swineherd of Ulysses. — We shall take the liberty of adding to our extracts from Mr. Gell some of the passages in Homer to which he *refers* only, conceiving this to be the fairest method of exhibiting the strength or the weakness of his argument.

“Ulysses,” he observes, “came to the extremity of the isle to visit Eumæus, and that extremity was the most southern; for Telemachus, coming from Pylos, touched at the first south-eastern part of Ithaca with the same intention.”

[Greek:

Kai tote dae r Odysaea kakos pothen aegage daimon
Agrou ep eschatiaen, hothi *domata naie subotaes*
Enth aelthen philos uhios Odyssaeos theioio,
Ek Pylon aemathoentos ion sun naei melainae.

Odyssei O.

Autar epaen protaen aktaen Ithakaes aphikaeai,
Naea men es polin otrunai kai pantas etairous
Autos de *protista subotaen* eisaphikesthai, k.t.l.

Odyssei O.]

These citations, we think, appear to justify the author in his attempt to identify the situation of his rock and fountain with the place of those mentioned by Homer. But let us now follow him in the closer description of the scene. — After some account of the subjects in the plate affixed, Mr. Gell remarks:

“It is impossible to visit this sequestered spot without being struck with the recollection of the Fount of Arethusa and the rock Korax, which the poet mentions in the same line, adding, that there the swine ate the *sweet* acorns, and drank the black water.”

[Greek:

Daeis ton ge suessi paraemenon ai de nemontai
Par Korakos petrae, epi te kraenae Arethousae,
Esthousai balanon menoeikea, kai melan hudor
Pinousai.

Odyssei N.]

“Having passed some time at the fountain, taken a drawing, and made the necessary observations on the situation of the place, we proceeded to an examination of the precipice, climbing over the terraces above the source among shady fig-trees, which, however, did not prevent us from feeling the powerful effects of the mid-day sun. After a short but fatiguing ascent, we arrived at the rock, which extends in a vast perpendicular semicircle, beautifully fringed with trees, facing to the south-east. Under the crag we found two caves of inconsiderable extent, the entrance of one of which, not difficult of access, is seen in the view of the fount. They are still the resort of sheep and goats, and in

one of them are small natural receptacles for the water, covered by a stalagmatic incrustation.

“These caves, being at the extremity of the curve formed by the precipice, open toward the south, and present us with another accompaniment of the fount of Arethusa, mentioned by the poet, who informs us that the swineherd Eumæus left his guests in the house, whilst he, putting on a thick garment, went to sleep near the herd, under the hollow of the rock, which sheltered him from the northern blast. Now we know that the herd fed near the fount; for Minerva tells Ulysses that he is to go first to Eumæus, whom he should find with the swine, near the rock Korax and the fount of Arethusa. As the swine then fed at the fountain, so it is necessary that a cavern should be found in its vicinity; and this seems to coincide, in distance and situation, with that of the poem. Near the fount also was the fold or stathmos of Eumæus; for the goddess informs Ulysses that he should find his faithful servant at or above the fount.

“Now the hero meets the swineherd close to the fold, which was consequently very near that source. At the top of the rock, and just above the spot where the waterfall shoots down the precipice, is at this day a stagni, or pastoral dwelling, which the herdsmen of Ithaca still inhabit, on account of the water necessary for their cattle. One of these people walked on the verge of the precipice at the time of our visit to the place, and seemed so anxious to know how we had been conveyed to the spot, that his inquiries reminded us of a question probably not uncommon in the days of Homer, who more than once represents the Ithacences demanding of strangers what ship had brought them to the island, it being evident they could not come on foot. He told us that there was, on the summit where he stood, a small cistern of water, and a kalybea, or shepherd’s hut. There are also vestiges of ancient habitations, and the place is now called Amarâthia.

“Convenience, as well as safety, seems to have pointed out the lofty situation of Amarâthia as a fit place for the residence of the herdsmen of this part of the island from the earliest ages. A small source of water is a treasure in these climates; and if the inhabitants of Ithaca now select a rugged and elevated spot, to secure them from the robbers of the Echinades, it is to be recollected that the Taphian pirates were not less formidable, even in the days of Ulysses, and that a residence in a solitary part of the island, far from the fortress, and close to a celebrated fountain, must at all times have been dangerous, without some such security as the rocks of Korax. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the house of Eumæus was on the top of the precipice; for Ulysses, in order to evince the truth of his story to the swineherd, desires to be thrown from the summit if his narration does not prove correct.

“Near the bottom of the precipice is a curious natural gallery, about seven feet

high, which is expressed in the plate. It may be fairly presumed, from the very remarkable coincidence between this place and the Homeric account, that this was the scene designated by the poet as the fountain of Arethusa, and the residence of Eumæus; and, perhaps, it would be impossible to find another spot which bears, at this day, so strong a resemblance to a poetic description composed at a period so very remote. There is no other fountain in this part of the island, nor any rock which bears the slightest resemblance to the Korax of Homer.

“The stathmos of the good Eumæus appears to have been little different, either in use or construction, from the stagni and kalybea of the present day. The poet expressly mentions that other herdsmen drove their flocks into the city at sunset, — a custom which still prevails throughout Greece during the winter, and that was the season in which Ulysses visited Eumæus. Yet Homer accounts for this deviation from the prevailing custom, by observing that he had retired from the city to avoid the suitors of Penelope. These trifling occurrences afford a strong presumption that the Ithaca of Homer was something more than the creature of his own fancy, as some have supposed it; for though the grand outline of a fable may be easily imagined, yet the consistent adaptation of minute incidents to a long and elaborate falsehood is a task of the most arduous and complicated nature.”

After this long extract, by which we have endeavoured to do justice to Mr. Gell’s argument, we cannot allow room for any farther quotations of such extent; and we must offer a brief and imperfect analysis of the remainder of the work. In the third chapter the traveller arrives at the capital, and in the fourth he describes it in an agreeable manner. We select his account of the mode of celebrating a Christian festival in the Greek Church: —

“We were present at the celebration of the feast of the Ascension, when the citizens appeared in their gayest dresses, and saluted each other in the streets with demonstrations of pleasure. As we sate at breakfast in the house of Signer Zavo, we were suddenly roused by the discharge of a gun, succeeded by a tremendous crash of pottery, which fell on the tiles, steps, and pavements, in every direction. The bells of the numerous churches commenced a most discordant jingle; colours were hoisted on every mast in the port, and a general shout of joy announced some great event. Our host informed us that the feast of the Ascension was annually commemorated in this manner at Bathi, the populace exclaiming [Greek: anestae o Christos, alaethinos o Theos], Christ is risen, the true God.”

In another passage, he continues this account as follows: —

“In the evening of the festival, the inhabitants danced before their houses; and

at one we saw the figure which is said to have been first used by the youths and virgins of Delos, at the happy return of Theseus from the expedition of the Cretan Labyrinth. It has now lost much of that intricacy which was supposed to allude to the windings of the habitation of the Minotaur,”

etc., etc. This is rather too much for even the inflexible gravity of our censorial muscles. When the author talks, with all the ‘reality’ (if we may use the expression) of a Lemprière, on the stories of the fabulous ages, we cannot refrain from indulging a momentary smile; nor can we seriously accompany him in the learned architectural detail by which he endeavours to give us, from the ‘Odyssey’, the ground-plot of the house of Ulysses, — of which he actually offers a plan in drawing! “showing how the description of the house of Ulysses in the ‘Odyssey’ may be supposed to correspond with the foundations yet visible on the hill of Aito!” — Oh, Foote! Foote! why are you lost to such inviting subjects for your ludicrous pencil! — In his account of this celebrated mansion, Mr. Gell says, one side of the court seems to have been occupied by the Thalamos, or sleeping apartments of the men, etc., etc.; and, in confirmation of this hypothesis, he refers to the 10th ‘Odyssey’, line 340. On examining his reference, we read —

[Greek: ‘Es thalamon t’ ienai, kai saes epibaemenai eunaes’]

where Ulysses records an invitation which he received from Circe to take a part of her bed. How this illustrates the above conjecture, we are at a loss to divine: but we suppose that some numerical error has occurred in the reference, as we have detected a trifling mistake or two of the same nature.

Mr. G. labours hard to identify the cave of Dexia near Bathi (the capital of the island), with the grotto of the Nymphs described in the 13th ‘Odyssey’. We are disposed to grant that he has succeeded; but we cannot here enter into the proofs by which he supports his opinion; and we can only extract one of the concluding sentences of the chapter, which appears to us candid and judicious: —

“Whatever opinion may be formed as to the identity of the cave of Dexia with the grotto of the Nymphs, it is fair to state, that Strabo positively asserts that no such cave as that described by Homer existed in his time, and that geographer thought it better to assign a physical change, rather than ignorance in Homer, to account for a difference which he imagined to exist between the Ithaca of his time and that of the poet. But Strabo, who was an uncommonly accurate observer with respect to countries surveyed by himself, appears to have been wretchedly misled by his informers on many occasions.

“That Strabo had never visited this country is evident, not only from his inaccurate account of it, but from his citation of Apollodorus and Scephsius, whose relations are in direct opposition to each other on the subject of Ithaca, as

will be demonstrated on a future opportunity.”

We must, however, observe that “demonstration” is a strong term. — In his description of the Leucadian Promontory (of which we have a pleasing representation in the plate), the author remarks that it is “celebrated for the *leap* of Sappho, and the *death* of Artemisia.” From this variety in the expression, a reader would hardly conceive that both the ladies perished in the same manner; in fact, the sentence is as proper as it would be to talk of the decapitation of Russell, and the death of Sidney. The view from this promontory includes the island of Corfu; and the name suggests to Mr. Gell the following note, which, though rather irrelevant, is of a curious nature, and we therefore conclude our citations by transcribing it: —

“It has been generally supposed that Corfu, or Corcyra, was the Phæacia of Homer; but Sir Henry Englefield thinks the position of that island inconsistent with the voyage of Ulysses as described in the ‘Odyssey’. That gentleman has also observed a number of such remarkable coincidences between the courts of Alcinous and Solomon, that they may be thought curious and interesting. Homer was familiar with the names of Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt; and, as he lived about the time of Solomon, it would not have been extraordinary if he had introduced some account of the magnificence of that prince into his poem. As Solomon was famous for wisdom, so the name of Alcinous signifies strength of knowledge; as the gardens of Solomon were celebrated, so are those of Alcinous (‘Od’. 7. 112); as the kingdom of Solomon was distinguished by twelve tribes under twelve princes (1 Kings ch. 4), so that of Alcinous (‘Od’. 8. 390) was ruled by an equal number: as the throne of Solomon was supported by lions of gold (1 Kings ch. 10), so that of Alcinous was placed on dogs of silver and gold (‘Od’. 7. 91); as the fleets of Solomon were famous, so were those of Alcinous. It is perhaps worthy of remark, that Neptune sate on the mountains of the SOLYMI, as he returned from Æthiopia to Ægæ, while he raised the tempest which threw Ulysses on the coast of Phæacia; and that the Solymi of Pamphylia are very considerably distant from the route. — The suspicious character, also, which Nausicaa attributes to her countryman agrees precisely with that which the Greeks and Romans gave of the Jews.”

The seventh chapter contains a description of the Monastery of Kathara, and several adjacent places. The eighth, among other curiosities, fixes on an imaginary site for the Farm of Laertes; but this is the agony of conjecture indeed! — and the ninth chapter mentions another Monastery, and a rock still called the School of Homer. Some sepulchral inscriptions of a very simple nature are included. — The tenth and last chapter brings us round to the Port of Schoenus, near Bathi; after we have completed, seemingly in a very minute and

accurate manner, the tour of the island.

We can certainly recommend a perusal of this volume to every lover of classical scene and story. If we may indulge the pleasing belief that Homer sang of a real kingdom, and that Ulysses governed it, though we discern many feeble links in Mr. Gell's chain of evidence, we are on the whole induced to fancy that this is the Ithaca of the bard and of the monarch. At all events, Mr. Gell has enabled every future traveller to form a clearer judgment on the question than he could have established without such a "Vade-mecum to Ithaca," or a "Have with you, to the House of Ulysses," as the present. With Homer in his pocket, and Gell on his sumpter-horse or mule, the Odyssean tourist may now make a very classical and delightful excursion; and we doubt not that the advantages accruing to the Ithacences, from the increased number of travellers who will visit them in consequence of Mr. Gell's account of their country, will induce them to confer on that gentleman any heraldic honours which they may have to bestow, should he ever look in upon them again. — 'Baron Bathi' would be a pretty title: —

"'Hoc' Ithacus 'velit, et magno mercentur Atridae'."

VIRGIL.

For ourselves, we confess that all our old Grecian feelings would be alive on approaching the fountain of Melainudros, where, as the tradition runs, or as the priests relate, Homer was restored to sight.

We now come to the "Grecian Patterson," or "Cary," which Mr. Gell has begun to publish; and really he has carried the epic rule of concealing the person of the author to as great a length as either of the above-mentioned heroes of itinerary writ. We hear nothing of his "hair-breadth 'scapes" by sea or land; and we do not even know, for the greater part of his journey through Argolis, whether he relates what he has seen or what he has heard. From other parts of the book, we find the former to be the case; but, though there have been tourists and "strangers" in other countries, who have kindly permitted their readers to learn rather too much of their sweet selves, yet it is possible to carry delicacy, or cautious silence, or whatever it may be called, to the contrary extreme. We think that Mr. Gell has fallen into this error, so opposite to that of his numerous brethren. It is offensive, indeed, to be told what a man has eaten for dinner, or how pathetic he was on certain occasions; but we like to know that there is a being yet living who describes the scenes to which he introduces us; and that it is not a mere translation from Strabo or Pausanias which we are reading, or a commentary on those authors. This reflection leads us to the concluding remark in Mr. Gell's preface (by much the most interesting part of his book) to his

‘Itinerary of Greece’, in which he thus expresses himself: —

“The confusion of the modern with the ancient names of places in this volume is absolutely unavoidable; they are, however, mentioned in such a manner, that the reader will soon be accustomed to the indiscriminate use of them. The necessity of applying the ancient appellations to the different routes, will be evident from the total ignorance of the public on the subject of the modern names, which, having never appeared in print, are only known to the few individuals who have visited the country.

“What could appear less intelligible to the reader, or less useful to the traveller, than a route from Chione and Zaracca to Kutchukmadi, from thence by Krabata to Schoenochorio, and by the mills of Peali, while every one is in some degree acquainted with the names of Stymphalus, Nemea, Mycenæ, Lyrceia, Lerna, and Tegea?”

Although this may be very true inasmuch as it relates to the reader, yet to the traveller we must observe, in opposition to Mr. Gell, that nothing can be less useful than the designation of his route according to the ancient names. We might as well, and with as much chance of arriving at the place of our destination, talk to a Hounslow post-boy about making haste to ‘Augusta’, as apply to our Turkish guide in modern Greece for a direction to Stymphalus, Nemea, Mycenæ, etc., etc. This is neither more nor less than classical affectation; and it renders Mr. Gell’s book of much more confined use than it would otherwise have been: — but we have some other and more important remarks to make on his general directions to Grecian tourists; and we beg leave to assure our readers that they are derived from travellers who have lately visited Greece. In the first place, Mr. Cell is absolutely incautious enough to recommend an interference on the part of English travellers with the Minister at the Porte, in behalf of the Greeks.

“The folly of such neglect (page 16, preface), in many instances, where the emancipation of a district might often be obtained by the present of a snuff-box or a watch, at Constantinople, *and without the smallest danger of exciting the jealousy of such a court as that of Turkey*, will be acknowledged when we are no longer able to rectify the error.”

We have every reason to believe, on the contrary, that the folly of half a dozen travellers, taking this advice, might bring us into a war. “Never interfere with any thing of the kind,” is a much sounder and more political suggestion to all English travellers in Greece.

Mr. Gell apologizes for the introduction of “his panoramic designs,” as he calls them, on the score of the great difficulty of giving any tolerable idea of the face of a country in writing, and the ease with which a very accurate knowledge

of it may be acquired by maps and panoramic designs. We are informed that this is not the case with many of these designs. The small scale of the single map we have already censured; and we have hinted that some of the drawings are not remarkable for correct resemblance of their originals. The two nearer views of the Gate of the Lions at Mycenæ are indeed good likenesses of their subject, and the first of them is unusually well executed; but the general view of Mycenæ is not more than tolerable in any respect; and the prospect of Larissa, etc., is barely equal to the former. The view *from* this last place is also indifferent; and we are positively assured that there are no windows at Nauplia which look like a box of dominos, — the idea suggested by Mr. Gell's plate. We must not, however, be too severe on these picturesque bagatelles, which, probably, were very hasty sketches; and the circumstances of weather, etc., may have occasioned some difference in the appearance of the same objects to different spectators. We shall therefore return to Mr. Gell's preface; endeavouring to set him right in his directions to travellers, where we think that he is erroneous, and adding what appears to have been omitted. In his first sentence, he makes an assertion which is by no means correct. He says, "We are at present as ignorant of Greece, as of the interior of Africa." Surely not quite so ignorant; or several of our Grecian *Mungo Parks* have travelled in vain, and some very sumptuous works have been published to no purpose! As we proceed, we find the author observing that "Athens is 'now' the most polished city of "Greece," when we believe it to be the most barbarous, even to a proverb —

[Greek: *O Athaena, protae chora,*
Ti gaidarous trepheis tora;]

is a couplet of reproach *now* applied to this once famous city; whose inhabitants seem little worthy of the inspiring call which was addressed to them within these twenty years, by the celebrated Riga: —

[Greek: *Deute paides ton Hellaenon,* k.t.l.]

Iannina, the capital of Epirus, and the seat of Ali Pacha's government, 'is' in truth deserving of the honours which Mr. Gell has improperly bestowed on degraded Athens. As to the correctness of the remark concerning the fashion of wearing the hair cropped in 'Molossia', as Mr. Gell informs us, our authorities cannot depose; but why will he use the classical term of Eleuthero-Lacones, when that people are so much better known by their modern name of Mainotes? "The court of the Pacha of Tripolizza" is said "to realise the splendid visions of the Arabian Nights." This is true with regard to the 'court'; but surely the traveller ought to have added that the city and palace are most miserable, and

form an extraordinary contrast to the splendour of the court. — Mr. Gell mentions ‘gold’ mines in Greece: he should have specified their situation, as it certainly is not universally known. When, also, he remarks that “the first article of necessity ‘in Greece’ is a firman, or order from the Sultan, permitting the traveller to pass unmolested,” we are much misinformed if he be right. On the contrary, we believe this to be almost the only part of the Turkish dominions in which a firman is not necessary; since the passport of the Pacha is absolute within his territory (according to Mr. G.’s own admission), and much more effectual than a firman. —

“Money,” he remarks, “is easily procured at Salonica, or Patrass, where the English have consuls.” It is much better procured, we understand, from the Turkish governors, who never charge discount. The consuls for the English are not of the most magnanimous order of Greeks, and far from being so liberal, generally speaking; although there are, in course, some exceptions, and Strané of Patras has been more honourably mentioned. — After having observed that “horses seem the best mode of conveyance in Greece,” Mr. Gell proceeds: “Some travellers would prefer an English saddle; but a saddle of this sort is always objected to by the owner of the horse, *and not without reason*,” etc. This, we learn, is far from being the case; and, indeed, for a very simple reason, an English saddle must seem to be preferable to one of the country, because it is much lighter. When, too, Mr. Gell calls the *postillion* “Menzilgi,” he mistakes him for his betters; *Serrugees* are postillions; *Menzilgis* are postmasters. — Our traveller was fortunate in his Turks, who are hired to walk by the side of the baggage-horses. They “are certain,” he says, “of performing their engagement without grumbling.” We apprehend that this is by no means certain: — but Mr. Gell is perfectly right in preferring a Turk to a Greek for this purpose; and in his general recommendation to take a Janissary on the tour: who, we may add, should be suffered to act as he pleases, since nothing is to be done by gentle means, or even by offers of money, at the places of accommodation. A courier, to be sent on before to the place at which the traveller intends to sleep, is indispensable to comfort; but no tourist should be misled by the author’s advice to suffer the Greeks to gratify their curiosity, in permitting them to remain for some time about him on his arrival at an inn. They should be removed as soon as possible; for, as to the remark that “no stranger would think of intruding when a room is pre-occupied,” our informants were not so well convinced of that fact.

Though we have made the above exceptions to the accuracy of Mr. Gell’s information, we are most ready to do justice to the general utility of his directions, and can certainly concede the praise which he is desirous of obtaining, — namely, “of having facilitated the researches of future travellers,

by affording that local information which it was before impossible to obtain.” This book, indeed, is absolutely necessary to any person who wishes to explore the Morea advantageously; and we hope that Mr. Gell will continue his *Itinerary* over that and over every other part of Greece. He allows that his volume “is only calculated to become a book of reference, and not of general entertainment;” but we do not see any reason against the compatibility of both objects in a survey of the most celebrated country of the ancient world. To that country, we trust, the attention not only of our travellers, but of our legislators, will hereafter be directed. The greatest caution will, indeed, be required, as we have premised, in touching on so delicate a subject as the amelioration of the possessions of an ally: but the field for the exercise of political sagacity is wide and inviting in this portion of the globe; and Mr. Gell, and all other writers who interest us, however remotely, in its extraordinary *capabilities*, deserve well of the British empire. We shall conclude by an extract from the author’s work: which, even if it fails of exciting that general interest which we hope most earnestly it may attract towards its important subject, cannot, as he justly observes, “be entirely uninteresting to the scholar;” since it is a work “which gives him a faithful description of the remains of cities, the very existence of which was doubtful, as they perished before the æra of authentic history.” The subjoined quotation is a good specimen of the author’s minuteness of research as a topographer; and we trust that the credit which must accrue to him from the present performance will ensure the completion of his *Itinerary*: —

“The inaccuracies of the maps of Anacharsis are in many respects very glaring. The situation of Phlius is marked by Strabo as surrounded by the territories of Sicyon, Argos, Cleonæ, and Stymphalus. Mr. Hawkins observed, that Phlius, the ruins of which still exist near Agios Giorgios, lies in a direct line between Cleonæ and Stymphalus, and another from Sicyon to Argos; so that Strabo was correct in saying that it lay between those four towns; yet we see Phlius, in the map of Argolis by M. Barbie du Bocage, placed ten miles to the north of Stymphalus, contradicting both history and fact. D’Anville is guilty of the same error.

“M. du Bocage places a town named Phlius, and by him Phlonte, on the point of land which forms the port of Drepano; there are not at present any ruins there. The maps of D’Anville are generally more correct than any others where ancient geography is concerned. A mistake occurs on the subject of Tiryns, and a place named by him Vathia, but of which nothing can be understood. It is possible that Vathi, or the profound valley, may be a name sometimes used for the valley of Barbitsa, and that the place named by D’Anville Claustra may be the outlet of that valley called Kleisoura, which has a corresponding signification.

“The city of Tiryns is also placed in two different positions, once by its Greek name, and again as Tirynthus. The mistake between the islands of Sphæria and Calaura has been noticed in page 135. The Pontinus, which D’Anville represents as a river, and the Erasinus, are equally ill placed in his map. There was a place called Creopolis, somewhere toward Cynouria; but its situation is not easily fixed. The ports called Bucephalium and Piræus seem to have been nothing more than little bays in the country between Corinth and Epidaurus. The town called Athenæ, in Cynouria, by Pausanias, is called Anthena by ‘Thucydides’, book 5. 41.

“In general, the map of D’Anville will be found more accurate than those which have been published since his time; indeed, the mistakes of that geographer are in general such as could not be avoided without visiting the country. Two errors of D’Anville may be mentioned, lest the opportunity of publishing the itinerary of Arcadia should never occur. The first is, that the rivers Malætas and Mylaon, near Methydrium, are represented as running toward the south, whereas they flow northwards to the Ladon; and the second is, that the Aroanius, which falls into the Erymanthus at Psophis, is represented as flowing from the lake of Pheneos; a mistake which arises from the ignorance of the ancients themselves who have written on the subject. The fact is that the Ladon receives the waters of the lakes of Orchomenos and Pheneos; but the Aroanius rises at a spot not two hours distant from Psophis.”

In furtherance of our principal object in this critique, we have only to add a wish that some of our Grecian tourists, among the fresh articles of information concerning Greece which they have lately imported, would turn their minds to the language of the country. So strikingly similar to the ancient Greek is the modern Romaic as a written language, and so dissimilar in sound, that even a few general rules concerning pronunciation would be of most extensive use.

VOLUME II.

PREFACE

The second volume of Mr. Murray's edition of Byron's *Letters and Journals* carries the autobiographical record of the poet's life from August, 1811, to April, 1814. Between these dates were published *Childe Harold* (Cantos I., II.), *The Waltz*, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, the *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*. At the beginning of this period Byron had suddenly become the idol of society; towards its close his personal popularity almost as rapidly declined before a storm of political vituperation.

Three great collections of Byron's letters, as was noted in the Preface to the previous volume, are in existence. The first is contained in Moore's *Life* (1830); the second was published in America, in FitzGreene Halleck's edition of Byron's *Works* (1847); of the third, edited by Mr. W. E. Henley, only the first volume has yet appeared. A comparison between the letters contained in these three collections and in that of Mr. Murray, down to December, 1813, shows the following results: Moore prints 152 letters; Halleck, 192; Mr. Henley, 231. Mr. Murray's edition adds 236 letters to Moore, 196 to Halleck, and to Mr. Henley 157. It should also be noticed that the material added to Moore's *Life* in the second and third collections consists almost entirely of letters which were already in print, and had been, for the most part, seen and rejected by the biographer. The material added in Mr. Murray's edition, on the contrary, consists mainly of letters which have never before been published, and were inaccessible to Moore when he wrote his *Life* of Byron.

These necessary comparisons suggest some further remarks. It would have been easy, not only to indicate what letters or portions of letters are new, but also to state the sources whence they are derived. But, in the circumstances, such a course, at all events for the present, is so impolitic as to be impossible. On the other hand, anxiety has been expressed as to the authority for the text which is adopted in these volumes. To satisfy this anxiety, so far as circumstances allow, the following details are given.

The material contained in these two volumes consists partly of letters now for the first time printed; partly of letters already published by Moore, Dallas, and Leigh Hunt, or in such books as Galt's *Life of Lord Byron*, and the *Memoirs of Francis Hodgson*. Speaking generally, it may be said that the text of the new matter, with the few exceptions noted below, has been prepared from the original letters, and that it has proved impossible to authenticate the text of most of the old material by any such process.

The point may be treated in greater detail. Out of the 388 letters contained in these two volumes, 220 have been printed from the original letters. In these 220 are included practically the whole of the new material. Among the letters thus collated with the originals are those to Mrs. Byron (with four exceptions), all those to the Hon. Augusta Byron, to the Hanson family, to James Wedderburn Webster, and to John Murray, twelve of those to Francis Hodgson, those to the younger Rushton, William Gifford, John Cam Hobhouse, Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs. Parker, Bernard Barton, and others. The two letters to Charles Gordon (30, 33), the three to Captain Leacroft (62, 63, 64), and the one to Ensign Long (vol. ii. p. 19, *note*), are printed from copies only.

The old material stands in a different position. Efforts have been made to discover the original letters, and sometimes with success. But it still remains true that, speaking generally, the printed text of the letters published by Moore, Dallas, Leigh Hunt, and others, has not been collated with the originals. The fact is important. Moore, who, it is believed, destroyed not only his own letters from Byron, but also many of those entrusted to him for the preparation of the *Life*, allowed himself unusual liberties as an editor. The examples of this licence given in Mr. Clayden's *Rogers and his Contemporaries* throw suspicion on his text, even where no apparent motive exists for his suppressions. But, as Byron's letters became more bitter in tone, and his criticisms of his contemporaries more outspoken, Moore felt himself more justified in omitting passages which referred to persons who were still living in 1830. From 1816 onwards, it will be found that he has transferred passages from one letter to another, or printed two letters as one, and *vice versâ*, or made such large omissions as to shorten letters, in some instances, by a third or even a half. No collation with the originals has ever been attempted, and the garbled text which Moore printed is the only text at present available for an edition of the most important of Byron's letters. But the originals of the majority of the letters published in the *Life*, from 1816 to 1824, are in the possession or control of Mr. Murray, and in his edition they will be for the first time printed as they were written. If any passages are omitted, the omissions will be indicated.

Besides the new letters contained in this volume, passages have been restored from Byron's manuscript notes (*Detached Thoughts*, 1821). To these have been added Sir Walter Scott's comments, collated with the originals, and, in several instances, now for the first time published.

Appendix VII. contains a collection of the attacks made upon him in the Tory press for February and March, 1814, which led him, for the moment, to resolve on abandoning his literary work.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat my acknowledgment of the invaluable aid of the *National Dictionary of Biography*, both in the facts which it supplies and the sources of information which it suggests.

R. E. Prothero.

September, 1898.

CHAPTER V — AUGUST, 1811-MARCH, 1812

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTOS I, II

Letter No. 169 — to John Murray

Newstead Abbey, Notts., August 23, 1811.

Sir, — A domestic calamity in the death of a near relation has hitherto prevented my addressing you on the subject of this letter. My friend, Mr. Dallas, has placed in your hands a manuscript poem written by me in Greece, which he tells me you do not object to publishing. But he also informed me in London that you wished to send the MS. to Mr. Gifford. Now, though no one would feel more gratified by the chance of obtaining his observations on a work than myself, there is in such a proceeding a kind of petition for praise, that neither my pride — or whatever you please to call it — will admit.

Mr. G. is not only the first satirist of the day, but editor of one of the principal reviews. As such, he is the last man whose censure (however eager to avoid it) I would deprecate by clandestine means. You will therefore retain the manuscript in your own care, or, if it must needs be shown, send it to another. Though not very patient of censure, I would fain obtain fairly any little praise my rhymes might deserve, at all events not by extortion, and the humble solicitations of a bandied-about MS. I am sure a little consideration will convince you it would be wrong.

If you determine on publication, I have some smaller poems (never published), a few notes, and a short dissertation on the literature of the modern Greeks (written at Athens), which will come in at the end of the volume. — And, if the present poem should succeed, it is my intention, at some subsequent period, to publish some selections from my first work, — my Satire, — another nearly the same length, and a few other things, with the MS. now in your hands, in two volumes. — But of these hereafter. You will apprise me of your determination.

I am, Sir, your very obedient, humble servant,

Byron.

170 — to James Wedderburn Webster

Newstead Abbey, August 24th, 1811.

My Dear W., — Conceiving your wrath to be somewhat evaporated, and your Dignity recovered from the *Hysterics* into which my innocent note from London had thrown it, I should feel happy to be informed how you have determined on the disposal of this accursed Coach, which has driven us out of our Good humour and Good manners to a complete Standstill, from which I begin to apprehend that I am to lose altogether your valuable correspondence. Your angry letter arrived at a moment, to which I shall not allude further, as my happiness is best consulted in forgetting it.

You have perhaps heard also of the death of poor Matthews, whom you recollect to have met at Newstead. He was one whom his friends will find it difficult to replace, nor will Cambridge ever see his equal.

I trust you are on the point of adding to your relatives instead of losing them, and of *friends* a man of fortune will always have a plentiful stock — at his Table.

I dare say now you are gay, and connubial, and popular, so that in the next parliament we shall be having you a County Member. But beware your Tutor, for I am sure he Germanized that sanguinary letter; you must not write such another to your Constituents; for myself (as the mildest of men) I shall say no more about it.

Seriously, *mio Caro W.*, if you can spare a moment from Matrimony, I shall be glad to hear that you have recovered from the pucker into which this *Vis* (one would think it had been a *Sulky*) has thrown you; you know I wish you well, and if I have not inflicted my society upon you according to your own Invitation, it is only because I am not a social animal, and should feel sadly at a loss amongst Countesses and Maids of Honour, particularly being just come from a far Country, where Ladies are neither carved for, or fought for, or danced after, or mixed at all (publicly) with the Men-folks, so that you must make allowances for my natural *diffidence* and two years travel.

But (God and yourself willing) I shall certes pay my promised visit, as I shall be in town, if Parliament meets, in October.

In the mean time let me hear from you (without a privy Council), and believe me in sober sadness,

Yours very sincerely,

Byron.

Moore (*Memoirs, Journals, etc.*, vol. iii. p. 112) mentions dining with Webster at Paris in 1820.

“He told me,” writes Moore, “that, one day, travelling from Newstead to town with Lord Byron in his vis-a-vis, the latter kept his pistols beside him, and continued silent for hours, with the most ferocious expression possible on his countenance.

‘For God’s sake, my dear B.,’ said W — — at last, ‘what are you thinking of? Are you about to commit murder? or what other dreadful thing are you meditating?’

To which Byron answered that he always had a sort of presentiment that his own life would be attacked some time or other; and that this was the reason of his always going armed, as it was also the subject of his thoughts at that moment.”

Moore also adds (*ibid.*, p. 292),

“W. W. owes Lord Byron, he says, £1000, and does not seem to have the slightest intention of paying him.”

Lady Frances was the lady to whom Byron seriously devoted himself in 1813-4. Subsequently she was practically separated from her husband, and Byron, in 1823, endeavoured to reconcile them. Moore (*Memoirs, Journals, etc.*, vol. ii. p. 249) writes,

“To the Devizes ball in the evening; Lady Frances W. there; introduced to her, and had much conversation, chiefly about our friend Lord B. Several of those beautiful things, published (if I remember right) with the *Bride*, were addressed to her. She must have been very pretty when she had more of the freshness of youth, though she is still but five or six and twenty; but she looks faded already” (1819).

In the Court of Common Pleas, February 16, 1816, the libel action of *Webster v. Baldwin* was heard. The plaintiff obtained £2000 in damages for a libel charging Lady Frances and the Duke of Wellington with adultery.

“Reddish’s Hotel, 29th July, 1811.

“**My Dear Webster**, — As this eternal *vis-a-vis* seems to sit heavy on your soul, I beg leave to apprise you that I have arranged with Goodall: you are to give me

the promised Wheels, and the lining, with ‘the Box at Brighton,’ and I am to pay the stipulated sum.

“I am obliged to you for your favourable opinion, and trust that the happiness you talk so much of will be stationary, and not take those freaks to which the felicity of common mortals is subject. I do very sincerely wish you well, and am so convinced of the justice of your matrimonial arguments, that I shall follow your example as soon as I can get a sufficient price for my coronet. In the mean time I should be happy to drill for my new situation under your auspices; but business, inexorable business, keeps me here. Your letters are forwarded. If I can serve you in any way, command me. I will endeavour to fulfil your requests as awkwardly as another. I shall pay you a visit, perhaps, in the autumn. Believe me, dear W.,

Yours unintelligibly,
B.”

“Reddish’s Hotel, July 31st, 1811.

My Dear W. W., — I always understood that the *lining* was to accompany the *carriage*; if not, the *carriage* may accompany the *lining*, for I will have neither the one nor the other. In short, to prevent squabbling, this is my determination, so decide; — if you leave it to my *feelings* (as you say) they are very strongly in favour of the said lining. Two hundred guineas for a carriage with ancient lining!!! Rags and rubbish! You must write another pamphlet, my dear W., before; but pray do not waste your time and eloquence in expostulation, because it will do neither of us any good, but decide — content or *not* content. The best thing you can do for the Tutor you speak of will be to send him in your Vis (with the lining) to ‘the UNiversity of Göttingen.’ How can you suppose (now that my own Bear is dead) that I have any situation for a German genius of this kind, till I get another, or some children? I am infinitely obliged by your invitations, but I can’t pay so high for a second-hand chaise to make my friends a visit. The coronet will not *grace* the ‘pretty Vis,’ till your tattered lining ceases to *disgrace* it. Pray favour me with an answer, as we must finish the affair one way or another immediately, — before next week.

Believe me, yours truly,

Byron.”

“Byron,” says Webster, in a note, “was more than strict about “trifles.”

171 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, August 25, 1811.

Being fortunately enabled to frank, I do not spare scribbling, having sent you packets within the last ten days. I am passing solitary, and do not expect my agent to accompany me to Rochdale before the second week in September; a delay which perplexes me, as I wish the business over, and should at present welcome employment. I sent you exordiums, annotations, etc., for the forthcoming quarto, if quarto it is to be: and I also have written to Mr. Murray my objection to sending the MS. to Juvenal, but allowing him to show it to any others of the calling. Hobhouse is amongst the types already: so, between his prose and my verse, the world will be decently drawn upon for its paper-money and patience. Besides all this, my *Imitation of Horace* is gasping for the press at Cawthorn's, but I am hesitating as to the how and the when, the single or the double, the present or the future. You must excuse all this, for I have nothing to say in this lone mansion but of myself, and yet I would willingly talk or think of aught else.

What are you about to do? Do you think of perching in Cumberland, as you opined when I was in the metropolis? If you mean to retire, why not occupy Miss Milbanke's "Cottage of Friendship," late the seat of Cobbler Joe, for whose death you and others are answerable? His "Orphan Daughter" (pathetic Pratt!) will, certes, turn out a shoemaking Sappho. Have you no remorse? I think that elegant address to Miss Dallas should be inscribed on the cenotaph which Miss Milbanke means to stitch to his memory.

The newspapers seem much disappointed at his Majesty's not dying, or doing something better. I presume it is almost over. If parliament meets in October, I shall be in town to attend. I am also invited to Cambridge for the beginning of that month, but am first to jaunt to Rochdale. Now Matthews is gone, and Hobhouse in Ireland, I have hardly one left there to bid me welcome, except my inviter. At three-and-twenty I am left alone, and what more can we be at seventy? It is true I am young enough to begin again, but with whom can I retrace the laughing part of life? It is odd how few of my friends have died a quiet death, — I mean, in their beds. But a quiet life is of more consequence. Yet one loves squabbling and jostling better than yawning. This *last word* admonishes me to relieve you from

Yours very truly, *etc.*

“In Seaham churchyard, without any memorial,” says Mr. Surtees, “rest the remains of Joseph Blacket, an unfortunate child of genius, whose last days were soothed by the generous attention of the family of Milbanke.”

Hist. of Durham, vol. i. p. 272. (See also *Letters*, vol. i. p. 314, note 2 [

“It is, I believe, certainly true that the King has taken for the last three days scarcely any food at all, and that, unless a change takes place very shortly in that respect, he cannot survive many days”

(*Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 366).

It was, however, the mind, and not the physical strength that failed.

“The King, I should suppose,” wrote Lord Buckinghamshire, on August 13, “is not likely to die soon, but I fear his mental recovery is hardly to be expected “

(*ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 367).

George III. never, except for brief intervals, recovered his reason.

172 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Aug. 27, 1811.

I was so sincere in my note on the late Charles Matthews, and do feel myself so totally unable to do justice to his talents, that the passage must stand for the very reason you bring against it. To him all the men I ever knew were pigmies. He was an intellectual giant. It is true I loved Wingfield better; he was the earliest and the dearest, and one of the few one could never repent of having loved: but in ability — ah! you did not know Matthews!

Childe Harold may wait and welcome — books are never the worse for delay in the publication. So you have got our heir, George Anson Byron, and his sister, with you.

You may say what you please, but you are one of the *murderers* of Blackett, and yet you won't allow Harry White's genius.

Setting aside his bigotry, he surely ranks next Chatterton. It is astonishing how little he was known; and at Cambridge no one thought or heard of such a man till his death rendered all notice useless. For my own part, I should have

been most proud of such an acquaintance: his very prejudices were respectable. There is a sucking epic poet at Granta, a Mr. Townsend, *protégé* of the late Cumberland. Did you ever hear of him and his *Armageddon*? I think his plan (the man I don't know) borders on the sublime: though, perhaps, the anticipation of the "Last Day" (according to you Nazarenes) is a little too daring: at least, it looks like telling the Lord what he is to do, and might remind an ill-natured person of the line,

"And fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

But I don't mean to cavil, only other folks will, and he may bring all the lambs of Jacob Behmen about his ears. However, I hope he will bring it to a conclusion, though Milton is in his way.

Write to me — I dote on gossip — and make a bow to Ju — , and shake George by the hand for me; but, take care, for he has a sad sea paw.

P.S. — I would ask George here, but I don't know how to amuse him — all my horses were sold when I left England, and I have not had time to replace them. Nevertheless, if he will come down and shoot in September, he will be very welcome: but he must bring a gun, for I gave away all mine to Ali Pacha, and other Turks. Dogs, a keeper, and plenty of game, with a very large manor, I have — a lake, a boat, houseroom, and *neat wines*.

"I have been reading the *Remains* of Kirke White, and find that you have to answer for misleading me. He does not, in my opinion, merit the high praise you have bestowed upon him."

Writing again, August 26, he objected to the *note* on Matthews in *Childe Harold*:

"In your note, as it stands, it strikes me that the eulogy on Matthews is a *little* at the expense of Wingfield and others whom you *have* commemorated. I should think it quite enough to say that his Powers and Attainments were above all praise, without expressly admitting them to be above that of a Muse who soars high in the praise of others."

173 — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh

Newstead Abbey, August 30th, 1811.

My Dear Augusta, — The embarrassments you mention in your last letter I never heard of before, but that disease is epidemic in our family. Neither have I been apprised of any of the changes at which you hint, indeed how should I? On the borders of the Black Sea, we heard only of the Russians. So you have much

to tell, and all will be novelty.

I don't know what Scrope Davies meant by telling you I liked Children, I abominate the sight of them so much that I have always had the greatest respect for the character of Herod. But, as my house here is large enough for us all, we should go on very well, and I need not tell you that I long to see *you*. I really do not perceive any thing so formidable in a Journey hither of two days, but all this comes of Matrimony, you have a Nurse and all the etceteras of a family. Well, I must marry to repair the ravages of myself and prodigal ancestry, but if I am ever so unfortunate as to be presented with an Heir, instead of a *Rattle* he shall be provided with a *Gag*.

I shall perhaps be able to accept D's invitation to Cambridge, but I fear my stay in Lancashire will be prolonged, I proceed there in the 2d week in Sept to arrange my coal concerns, & then if I can't persuade some wealthy dowdy to ennoble the dirty puddle of her mercantile Blood, — why — I shall leave England and all it's clouds for the East again; I am very sick of it already. Joe has been getting well of a disease that would have killed a troop of horse; he promises to bear away the palm of longevity from old Parr. As you won't come, you will write; I long to hear all those unutterable things, being utterly unable to guess at any of them, unless they concern *your* relative the Thane of Carlisle, though I had great hopes we had done with him.

I have little to add that you do not already know, and being quite alone, have no great variety of incident to gossip with; I am but rarely pestered with visitors, and the few I have I get rid of as soon as possible. I will now take leave of you in the Jargon of 1794. "Health & *Fraternity!*"

Yours always, B.

"6 Mile Bottom, Aug. 27th.

"My Dearest Brother, — Your letter was stupidly sent to Town to me on Sunday, from whence I arrived at home yesterday; consequently I have not received it so soon as I ought to have done. I feel so very happy to have the pleasure of hearing from you that I will not delay a moment answering it, altho' I am in all the delights of *unpacking*, and afraid of being too late for the Post.

"I have been a fortnight in Town, and went up on my *eldest* little girl's account. She had been very unwell for some time, and I could not feel happy till I had better advice than this neighbourhood affords. She is, thank Heaven! much better, and I hope in a fair way to be quite *herself* again. Mr. Davies flattered me by saying she was exactly the sort of child *you* would delight in. I am determined not to say another word in her praise for fear you should accuse me of partiality

and expect too much. The youngest (*little* Augusta) is just 6 months old, and has no particular merit at present but a very sweet placid temper.

“Oh! that I could immediately set out to Newstead and shew them to you. I can’t tell you *half* the happiness it would give me to see it and *you*; but, my dearest B., it is a long journey and serious undertaking all things considered. Mr. Davies writes me word you promise to make him a visit bye and bye; *pray do*, you can then so easily come here. I have set my heart upon it. Consider how very long it is since I’ve seen you.

“I have indeed *much* to tell you; but it is more easily *said* than *written*. Probably you have heard of many changes in our situation since you left England; in a *pecuniary* point of view it is materially altered for the worse; perhaps in other respects better. Col. Leigh has been in Dorsetshire and Sussex during my stay in Town. I expect him at home towards the end of this week, and hope to make him acquainted with you ere long.

“I have not time to write half I have to say, for my letter must go; but I prefer writing in a hurry to not writing at all. You can’t think how much I feel for your griefs and losses, or how much and constantly I have thought of you lately. I began a letter to you in Town, but destroyed it, from the fear of appearing troublesome. There are times, I know, when one cannot write with any degree of comfort or satisfaction. I intend to do so again shortly, so I hope you won’t think me a bore.

Remember me most kindly to Old Joe. I rejoice to hear of his health and prosperity. Your letter (some parts of it at least) made me laugh. I am so very glad to hear you have sufficiently overcome your prejudices against the *fair sex* to have determined upon marrying; but I shall be most anxious that my future *Belle Soeur* should have more attractions than merely money, though to be sure *that* is somewhat necessary. I have not another moment, dearest B., so forgive me if I write again very soon, and believe me,

Your most affec’tn Sister, A. L.

Do write if you can.”

“One night Scrope Davies at a Gaming house (before I was of age), being tipsy as he usually was at the Midnight hour, and having lost monies, was in vain intreated by his friends, one degree less intoxicated than himself, to come or go home. In despair, he was left to himself and to the demons of the dice-box.

Next day, being visited about two of the Clock, by some friends just risen with a severe headache and empty pockets (who had left him losing at four or five in

the morning), he was found in a sound sleep, without a night-cap, and not particularly encumbered with bed-cloathes: a Chamber-pot stood by his bedside, brim-full of — *-Bank Notes!*, all won, God knows how, and crammed, Scrope knew not where; but **There** they were, all good legitimate notes, and to the amount of some thousand pounds.”

174 — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh

Newstead Abbey, Aug'st 30th, 1811.

My Dear Augusta, — I wrote to you yesterday, and as you will not be very sorry to hear from me again, considering our long separation, I shall fill up this sheet before I go to bed. I have heard something of a quarrel between your spouse and the Prince, I don't wish to pry into family secrets or to hear anything more of the matter, but I can't help regretting on your account that so long an intimacy should be dissolved at the very moment when your husband might have derived some advantage from his R. H.'s friendship. However, at all events, and in all Situations, you have a brother in me, and a home here.

I am led into this train of thinking by a part of your letter which hints at pecuniary losses. I know how delicate one ought to be on such subjects, but you are probably the only being on Earth *now* interested in my welfare, certainly the only relative, and I should be very ungrateful if I did not feel the obligation. You must excuse my being a little cynical, knowing how my *temper* was tried in my Non-age; the manner in which I was brought up must necessarily have broken a meek Spirit, or rendered a fiery one ungovernable; the effect it has had on mine I need not state.

However, buffeting with the World has brought me a little to reason, and two years travel in distant and barbarous countries has accustomed me to bear privations, and consequently to laugh at many things which would have made me angry before. But I am wandering — in short I only want to assure you that I love you, and that you must not think I am indifferent, because I don't shew my affection in the usual way.

Pray can't you contrive to pay me a visit between this and Xmas? or shall I carry you down with me from Cambridge, supposing it practicable for me to come? You will do what you please, without our interfering with each other; the

premises are so delightfully extensive, that two people might live together without ever seeing, hearing or meeting, — but I can't feel the comfort of this till I marry. In short it would be the most amiable matrimonial mansion, and that is another great inducement to my plan, — my wife and I shall be so happy, — one in each Wing. If this description won't make you come, I can't tell what will, you must please yourself. Good night, I have to walk half a mile to my Bed chamber.

Yours ever, **Byron.**

175 — To James Wedderburn Webster

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Aug'st 31st, 1811.

My Dear W., — I send you back your friend's letter, and, though I don't agree with his Canons of Criticism, they are not the worse for that. My friend Hodgson is not much honoured by the comparison to the *Pursuits of L.*, which is notoriously, as far as the *poetry* goes, the worst written of its kind; the World has been long but of one opinion, viz. that it's sole merit lies in the Notes, which are indisputably excellent.

Had Hodgson's "Alterative" been placed with the *Baviad* the compliment had been higher to both; for, surely, the *Baviad* is as much superior to H.'s poem, as I do firmly believe H.'s poem to be to the *Pursuits of Literature*.

Your correspondent talks for talking's sake when he says "Lady J. Grey" is neither "Epic, dramatic, or legendary." Who ever said it was "epic" or "dramatic"? he might as well say his letter was neither "epic or dramatic;" the poem makes no pretensions to either character. "Legendary" it certainly is, but what has that to do with its merits? All stories of that kind founded on facts are in a certain degree legendary, but they may be well or ill written without the smallest alteration in that respect. When Mr. Hare prattles about the "Economy," etc., he sinks sadly; — all such expressions are the mere cant of a schoolboy hovering round the Skirts of Criticism.

Hodgson's tale is one of the best efforts of his Muse, and Mr. H.'s approbation must be of more consequence, before any body will reduce it to a "Scale," or be much affected by "the place" he "assigns" to the productions of a man like Hodgson.

But I have said more than I intended and only beg you never to allow yourself

to be imposed upon by such “common place” as the 6th form letter you sent me. Judge for yourself.

I know the Mr. Bankes you mention though not to that “extreme” you seem to think, but I am flattered by his “boasting” on such a subject (as you say), for I never thought him likely to “boast” of any thing which was not his own. I am not “*melancholish*” — pray what “*folk*” dare to say any such thing? I must contradict them by being *merry* at their expence.

I shall invade you in the course of the winter, out of envy, as Lucifer looked at Adam and Eve.

Pray be as happy as you can, and write to me that I may catch the infection.

Yours ever, **Byron.**

In the volume (pp. 56-77) was printed his “Gentle Alterative prepared for the Reviewers,” which Hare apparently compared to *The Pursuits of Literature* (1794-97), by T. J. Mathias.

To this criticism Byron objected, saying that the “Alterative” might be more fairly compared to Gifford’s *Baviad* (1794).

176 — To the Hon. Augusta Leigh

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 2d, 1811.

My dear Augusta, — I wrote you a vastly dutiful letter since my answer to your second epistle, and I now write you a third, for which you have to thank Silence and Solitude. Mr. Hanson comes hither on the 14th, and I am going to Rochdale on business, but that need not prevent you from coming here, you will find Joe, and the house and the cellar and all therein very much at your Service.

As to Lady B., when I discover one rich enough to suit me and foolish enough to have me, I will give her leave to make me miserable if she can. Money is the magnet; as to Women, one is as well as another, the older the better, we have then a chance of getting her to Heaven. So, your Spouse does not like brats better than myself; now those who beget them have no right to find fault, but *I* may rail with great propriety.

My “Satire!” — I am glad it made you laugh for Somebody told me in Greece that you was angry, and I was sorry, as you were perhaps the only person whom I did *not* want to *make angry*.

But how you will make *me laugh* I don’t know, for it is a vastly *serious*

subject to me I assure you; therefore take care, or I shall hitch *you* into the next Edition to make up our family party. Nothing so fretful, so despicable as a Scribbler, see what *I* am, and what a parcel of Scoundrels I have brought about my ears, and what language I have been obliged to treat them with to deal with them in their own way; — all this comes of Authorship, but now I am in for it, and shall be at war with Grubstreet, till I find some better amusement.

You will write to me your Intentions and may almost depend on my being at Cambridge in October. You say you mean to be *etc.* in the *Autumn*; I should be glad to know what you call this present Season, it would be Winter in every other Country which I have seen. If we meet in October we will travel in my *Vis.* and can have a cage for the children and a cart for the Nurse. Or perhaps we can forward them by the Canal. Do let us know all about it, your “*bright thought*” is a little clouded, like the Moon in this preposterous climate.

Good even, Child.

Yours ever, B.

“6 Mile Bottom, Saturday, 31 Aug.

My dearest brother, — I hope you don’t dislike receiving letters so much as writing them, for you would in that case pronounce me a great torment. But as I prepared you in my last for its being followed very soon by another, I hope you will have reconciled your mind to the impending toil. I really wrote in such a hurry that I did not say half I wished; but I did not like to delay telling you how happy you made me by writing. I have been dwelling constantly upon the idea of going to Newstead ever since I had your wish to see me there. At last a *bright thought* struck me.

We intend, I believe, to go to Yorkshire in the autumn. Now, if I could contrive to pay you a visit *en passant*, it would be delightful, and give me the greatest pleasure. But I fear you would be obliged to make up your mind to receive my *Brats* too. As for my husband, he prefers the *outside of the Mail* to the *inside of a Post-Chaise*, particularly when partly occupied by Nurse and Children, so that we always travel *independent* of each other.

So much for this, my dear B. I can only say I should *much* like to see you at Newstead. The former I hope I shall at all events, as you must not be shabby, but come to Cambridge as you promised. Are you staying at Newstead now for any time? I saw George Byron in Town for one day, and he promised to call or write again, but has not done either, so I begin to think he has gone back to Lisbon. I think it is impossible not to like him; he is so good-natured and natural. We talked much of you; he told me you were grown very thin; as you don’t

complain, I hope you are not the worse for being so, and I remember you used to wish it. Don't you think *it a great shame* that George B. is not promoted? I wish there was any possibility of assisting him about it; but all I know who *could* do any good with you *present* Ministers, I don't for many reasons like to ask. Perhaps there may be a change bye and bye.

Fred Howard is married to Miss *Lambton*. I saw them in town in their way to Castle Howard. I hope he will be happy with all my heart; his kindness and friendship to us last year, when Col. *Leigh* was placed in one of the most perplexing situations that I think anybody could be in, is never to be forgotten. I think he used to be a greater favourite with you than some others of his family. *Mrs. F.H.* is very pretty, very young (not quite 17), and appears gentle and pleasing, which is all one can expect [to discover from] a very slight acquaintance.

Now, my dearest Byron, pray let me hear from you. I shall be daily expecting to hear of a *Lady Byron*, since you have confided to me your determination of marrying, in which I really hope you are serious, being convinced such an event would contribute greatly to your happiness, **provided** *her Ladyship* was the sort of person that would suit you; and you won't be angry with me for saying that it is not **every** one who would; therefore don't be too *precipitate*. You will *wish me hanged*, I fear, for boring you so unmercifully, so God bless you, my dearest Bro.; and, when you have time, do write. Are you going to amuse us with any more *Satires*? Oh, *English Bards*! I shall make you laugh (when we meet) about it.

Ever your most affectionate Sis. and Friend,
A.L.

177 — To To Francis Hodgson

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 3, 1811.

My Dear Hodgson, — I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another. If men are to live, why die at all? and if they die, why disturb the sweet and sound sleep that “knows no waking”?

“Post Mortem nihil est, ipsaque Mors nihil ... quæris quo jaceas post obitum

loco? Quo *non* Nata jacent.”

As to revealed religion, Christ came to save men; but a good Pagan will go to heaven, and a bad Nazarene to hell; “Argal” (I argue like the gravedigger) why are not all men Christians? or why are any? If mankind may be saved who never heard or dreamt, at Timbuctoo, Otaheite, Terra Incognita, etc., of Galilee and its Prophet, Christianity is of no avail: if they cannot be saved without, why are not all orthodox? It is a little hard to send a man preaching to Judæa, and leave the rest of the world — Negers and what not — *dark* as their complexions, without a ray of light for so many years to lead them on high; and who will believe that God will damn men for not knowing what they were never taught? I hope I am sincere; I was so at least on a bed of sickness in a far-distant country, when I had neither friend, nor comforter, nor hope, to sustain me. I looked to death as a relief from pain, without a wish for an after-life, but a confidence that the God who punishes in this existence had left that last asylum for the weary.

I am no Platonist, I am nothing at all; but I would sooner be a Paulician, Manichean, Spinozist, Gentile, Pyrrhonian, Zoroastrian, than one of the seventy-two villainous sects who are tearing each other to pieces for the love of the Lord and hatred of each other. Talk of Galileism? Show me the effects — are you better, wiser, kinder by your precepts? I will bring you ten Mussulmans shall shame you in all goodwill towards men, prayer to God, and duty to their neighbours. And is there a Talapoin, or a Bonze, who is not superior to a fox-hunting curate? But I will say no more on this endless theme; let me live, well if possible, and die without pain. The rest is with God, who assuredly, had He *come* or *sent*, would have made Himself manifest to nations, and intelligible to all.

I shall rejoice to see you. My present intention is to accept Scrope Davies’s invitation; and then, if you accept mine, we shall meet *here* and *there*. Did you know poor Matthews? I shall miss him much at Cambridge.

Byron’s opinions were not newly formed, as is shown by the following letter to Ensign Long (see *Letters*, vol. i. p. 73, *note* 2 [

Southwell, Ap: 16th, 1807.

“Your Epistle, my dear Standard Bearer, augurs not much in favour of your new life, particularly the latter part, where you say your happiest Days are over. I most sincerely hope not. The past has certainly in some parts been pleasant, but I trust will be equalled, if not exceeded by the future. You hope it is not so with me.

“To be plain with Regard to myself. Nature stamp’d me in the Die of Indifference. I consider myself as destined never to be happy, although in some instances fortunate. I am an isolated Being on the Earth, without a Tie to attach me to life, except a few Schoolfellows, and a *score of females*. Let me but ‘hear my fame on the winds’ and the song of the Bards in my Norman house, I ask no more and don’t expect so much. Of Religion I know nothing, at least in its *favour*. We have *fools* in all sects and Impostors in most; why should I believe mysteries no one understands, because written by men who chose to mistake madness for Inspiration, and style themselves *Evangelicals*? However enough on this subject. Your *piety* will be *aghast*, and I wish for no proselytes. This much I will venture to affirm, that all the virtues and pious *Deeds* performed on Earth can never entitle a man to Everlasting happiness in a future State; nor on the other hand can such a Scene as a Seat of eternal punishment exist, it is incompatible with the benign attributes of a Deity to suppose so.

“I am surrounded here by parsons and methodists, but, as you will see, not infected with the mania. I have lived a *Deist*, what I shall die I know not; however, come what may, *ridens moriar*.

“Nothing detains me here but the publication, which will not be complete till June. About 20 of the present pieces will be cut out, and a number of new things added. Amongst them a complete Episode of Nisus and Euryalus from Virgil, some Odes from Anacreon, and several original Odes, the whole will cover 170 pages. My last production has been a poem in imitation of Ossian, which I shall not publish, having enough without it. Many of the present poems are enlarged and altered, in short you will behold an ‘Old friend with a new face.’ Were I to publish all I have written in Rhyme, I should fill a decent Quarto; however, half is quite enough at present. You shall have *all* when we meet.

“I grow thin daily; since the commencement of my System I have lost 23 lbs. in my weight (*i.e.*) 1 st. and 9 lbs. When I began I weighed 14 st. 6 lbs., and on Tuesday I found myself reduced to 12 st. 11 lb. What sayest thou, Ned? do you not envy? I shall still proceed till I arrive at 12 st. and then stop, at least if I am not too fat, but shall always live temperately and take much exercise.

“If there is a possibility we shall meet in June. I shall be in Town, before I proceed to Granta, and if the ‘mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the mountain.’ I don’t mean, by comparing you to the mountain, to insinuate anything on the Subject of your Size. Xerxes, it is said, formed Mount Athos into the Shape of a Woman; had he lived now, and taken a peep at Chatham, he would have spared himself the trouble and made it unnecessary by finding a *Hill* ready cut to his wishes.

“Adieu, dear Mont Blanc, or rather *Mont Rouge*; don’t, for Heaven’s sake, turn Volcanic, at least roll the Lava of your indignation in any other Channel, and not consume Your’s ever,

Byron.

“*Write Immediately.*”

Byron lived to modify these opinions, as is shown by the following passages from his *Detached Thoughts*:

“If I were to live over again, I do not know what I would change in my life, unless it were *for — not to have lived at all*. All history and experience, and the rest, teaches us that the good and evil are pretty equally balanced in this existence, and that what is most to be desired is an easy passage out of it. What can it give us but years? and those have little of good but their ending.

“Of the immortality of the soul it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of mind; it is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body — in dreams, for instance; — incoherently and *madly*, I grant you, but still it is mind, and much more mind than when we are awake. Now that this should not act *separately*, as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state ‘a soul which drags a carcass,’ — a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains being material may be shaken off. How far our future life will be *individual*, or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our *present* existence, is another question; but that the mind is eternal seems as probable as that the body is not so. Of course I here venture upon the question without recurring to Revelation, which, however, is at least as rational a solution of it as any other. A *material* resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment which is to *revenge* rather than *correct* must be *morally wrong*; and *when the world is at an end*, what moral or warning purpose *can* eternal tortures answer? Human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here; — but the whole thing is inscrutable.”

“It is useless to tell me *not to reason*, but to *believe*. You might as well tell a man not to wake, but *sleep*. And then to *bully* with torments, and all that! I cannot help thinking that the *menace* of hell makes as many devils as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains.”

“Man is born *passionate* of body, but with an innate though secret tendency

to the love of good in his main-spring of mind. But, God help us all! it is at present a sad jar of atoms.”

“Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil.

.....

.....

Quæris, quo jaceas post obitum loco?
Quo non nata jacent.”

In the *Comicorum Græcorum Sententiæ, id est* (p. 219, ed, Henricus Stephanus, MDLXIX.) it is quoted as a leonine verse:

Plautus gives it thus (*Bacchides*, iv. 7):
“Quem di diligunt adolescens moritur.”

“Les Européens les ont appelés *talapoins*, probablement du nom de l’éventail qu’ils tiennent à la main, lequel s’appelle *talapat*, qui signifie *feuille de palmier*.”

Possibly Byron knew the word through Voltaire (*Dial. xxii., André des Couches à Siam*);

“A. des C.:
Combien avez-vous de soldats?

Croutef.:
Quatre-vingt mille, fort médiocrement payés.

A. des C.:
Et de talapoins?

Cr.:
Cent vingt-mille, tous fainéans et très riches,” etc.

Newstead Abbey, September 4th, 1811.

My dear Sir, — I am at present anxious, as Cawthorn seems to wish it, to have a small edition of the *Hints from Horace* published immediately, but the Latin (the most difficult poem in the language) renders it necessary to be very particular not only in correcting the proofs with Horace open, but in adapting the parallel passages of the imitation in such places to the original as may enable the reader not to lose sight of the allusion. I don't know whether I ought to ask you to do this, but I am too far off to do it for myself; and if you condescend to my schoolboy erudition, you will oblige me by setting this thing going, though you will smile at the importance I attach to it.

Believe me, ever yours,

Byron.

The following letter from Cawthorn shows that considerable progress had been made with the printing of the poem, and that Byron also contemplated another edition of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*. The advice of his friends led him to abandon both plans; but his letter to Cawthorn, printed below, is evidence that in September he was still at work on *Hints from Horace*:

“24, Cockspur Street, Aug. 22'd, 1811.

“My Lord, — Mr. Green the Amanuensis has finished the Latin of the Horace, and I shall be happy to do with it as your Lordship may direct, either to forward it to Newstead, or keep it in Town. Would it not be better to print a small edition separate (*sic*), and afterwards print the two satires together? This I leave to your Lordship's consideration. Four Sheets of the *Travels* are already printed, and one of the plates (Albanian Solain) is executed. I sent it Capt. H[obhouse] yesterday to Cork, to see if it meets his approbation. The work is printed in quarto, for which I may be in some measure indebted to your Lordship, as I urged it so strongly. I shall be extremely sorry if Capt. H. is not pleased with it, but I think he will. Your Lordship's goodness will excuse me for saying how much the very sudden and melancholy events that have lately transpired — I regret — Capt. Hobhouse has written me since the decease of Mr. Mathews. I am told Capt. H. is very much affected at it. I have received some drawings of costumes from him, which I am to deliver to your Lordship. Is it likely we shall see your Lordship in Town soon?

“I have the honour to be your Lordship's

“Most respectful and greatly obliged Servt.,

“James Cawthorn.

“If a small edition is printed of ‘*Horace*’ for the first” [words erased] “that, and I think in all probability the ‘*E. Bards*’ will want reprinting about March next, when both could be done together. Do not think me too sanguine.”

A few days later, Byron writes to Cawthorn as follows:

“Newstead Abbey, September 4th, 1811.

“More notes for the ‘*Hints*’! You mistake me much by thinking me inattentive to this publication. If I had a friend willing and able to correct the press, it should be out with my good will immediately. Pray attend to annexing additional notes in their proper places, and let them be added immediately.

“Yours, etc.,

“Byron.”

179 — to John Murray

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Sept. 5, 1811.

Sir, — The time seems to be past when (as Dr. Johnson said) a man was certain to “hear the truth from his bookseller,” for you have paid me so many compliments, that, if I was not the veriest scribbler on earth, I should feel affronted. As I accept your compliments, it is but fair I should give equal or greater credit to your objections, the more so as I believe them to be well founded. With regard to the political and metaphysical parts, I am afraid I can alter nothing; but I have high authority for my Errors in that point, for even the *Æneid* was a *political* poem, and written for a *political* purpose; and as to my unlucky opinions on Subjects of more importance, I am too sincere in them for recantation. On Spanish affairs I have said what I saw, and every day confirms me in that notion of the result formed on the Spot; and I rather think honest John Bull is beginning to come round again to that Sobriety which Massena’s retreat had begun to reel from its centre — the usual consequence of *unusual* success. So you perceive I cannot alter the Sentiments; but if there are any alterations in the structure of the versification you would wish to be made, I will tag rhymes and turn stanzas as much as you please. As for the “*Orthodox*,” let us hope they will buy, on purpose to abuse — you will forgive the one, if they will do the other. You are aware that any thing from my pen must expect no quarter, on

many accounts; and as the present publication is of a nature very different from the former, we must not be sanguine.

You have given me no answer to my question — tell me fairly, did you show the MS. to some of your corps?

I sent an introductory stanza to Mr. Dallas, that it might be forwarded to you; the poem else will open too abruptly. The Stanzas had better be numbered in Roman characters, there is a disquisition on the literature of the modern Greeks, and some smaller poems to come in at the close. These are now at Newstead, but will be sent in time. If Mr. D. has lost the Stanza and note annexed to it, write, and I will send it myself. — You tell me to add two cantos, but I am about to visit my *Collieries* in Lancashire on the 15th instant, which is so *unpoetical* an employment that I need say no more.

I am, sir, your most obedient, etc., etc.,

Byron.

“London, Sept. 4, 1811, Wednesday.

“**My Lord**, — An absence of some days, passed in the country, has prevented me from writing earlier in answer to your obliging letter. I have now, however, the pleasure of sending under a separate cover, the first proof sheet of your Lordship’s *Poem*, which is so good as to be entitled to all your care to render perfect. Besides its general merit, there are parts, which, I am tempted to believe, far excel anything that your Lordship has hitherto published, and it were therefore grievous indeed, if you do not condescend to bestow upon it all the improvement of which your Lordship’s mind is so capable; every correction already made is valuable, and this circumstance renders me more confident in soliciting for it your further attention.

“There are some expressions, too, concerning Spain and Portugal, which, however just, and particularly so at the time they were conceived, yet as they do not harmonize with the general feeling, would so greatly interfere with the popularity which the poem is, in other respects, so certainly calculated to excite, that, in compassion to your publisher, who does not presume to reason upon the subject, otherwise than as a mere matter of business, I hope your Lordship’s goodness will induce you to obviate them, and, with them, perhaps, some religious feelings which may deprive me of some customers amongst the

Orthodox.

“Could I flatter myself that these suggestions were not obtrusive, I would hazard another, in an earnest solicitation that your Lordship would add the two promised Cantos, and complete the *Poem*. It were cruel indeed not to perfect a work which contains so much that is excellent; your Fame, my Lord, demands it; you are raising a Monument that will outlive your present feelings, and it should therefore be so constructed as to excite no other associations than those of respect and admiration for your Lordship’s Character and Genius.

“I trust that you will pardon the warmth of this address when I assure your Lordship that it arises, in the greatest degree, in a sincere regard for your lasting reputation, with, however, some view to that portion of it, which must attend the Publisher of so beautiful a Poem, as your Lordship is capable of rendering

“The Romaunt of Childe Harold.

“I have the honour to be, My Lord,

“Your Lordship’s

“Obedient and faithful servant,

“John Murray.”

180 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, September 7, 1811.

As Gifford has been ever my “Magnus Apollo,” any approbation, such as you mention, would, of course, be more welcome than “all Bocara’s vaunted gold”, than all “the gems of Samarcand.” But I am sorry the MS. was shown to him in such a manner, and had written to Murray to say as much, before I was aware that it was too late.

Your objection to the expression “central line” I can only meet by saying that, before Childe Harold left England, it was his full intention to traverse Persia, and return by India, which he could not have done without passing the equinoctial.

The other errors you mention, I must correct in the progress through the press. I feel honoured by the wish of such men that the poem should be continued, but to do that I must return to Greece and Asia; I must have a warm sun, a blue sky; I cannot describe scenes so dear to me by a sea-coal fire. I had projected an additional canto when I was in the Troad and Constantinople, and if I saw them again, it would go on; but under existing circumstances and *sensations*, I have neither harp, “heart, nor voice” to proceed, I feel that *you are all right* as to the

metaphysical part; but I also feel that I am sincere, and that if I am only to write “ad captandum vulgus,” I might as well edit a magazine at once, or spin canzonettas for Vauxhall.

My work must make its way as well as it can; I know I have every thing against me, angry poets and prejudices; but if the poem is a *poem*, it will surmount these obstacles, and if *not*, it deserves its fate. Your friend’s Ode I have read — it is no great compliment to pronounce it far superior to Smythe’s on the same subject, or to the merits of the new Chancellor. It is evidently the production of a man of taste, and a poet, though I should not be willing to say it was fully equal to what might be expected from the author of “*Horæ Ionicae*.” I thank you for it, and that is more than I would do for any other Ode of the present day.

I am very sensible of your good wishes, and, indeed, I have need of them. My whole life has been at variance with propriety, not to say decency; my circumstances are become involved; my friends are dead or estranged, and my existence a dreary void. In Matthews I have lost my “guide, philosopher, and friend;” in Wingfield a friend only, but one whom I could have wished to have preceded in his long journey.

Matthews was indeed an extraordinary man; it has not entered into the heart of a stranger to conceive such a man: there was the stamp of immortality in all he said or did; — and now what is he? When we see such men pass away and be no more — men, who seem created to display what the Creator *could make* his creatures, gathered into corruption, before the maturity of minds that might have been the pride of posterity, what are we to conclude? For my own part, I am bewildered. To me he was much, to Hobhouse every thing. My poor Hobhouse doted on Matthews. For me, I did not love quite so much as I honoured him; I was indeed so sensible of his infinite superiority, that though I did not envy, I stood in awe of it. He, Hobhouse, Davies, and myself, formed a coterie of our own at Cambridge and elsewhere. Davies is a wit and man of the world, and feels as much as such a character can do; but not as Hobhouse has been affected. Davies, who is not a scribbler, has always beaten us all in the war of words, and by his colloquial powers at once delighted and kept us in order. Hobhouse and myself always had the worst of it with the other two; and even Matthews yielded to the dashing vivacity of Scrope Davies. But I am talking to you of men, or boys, as if you cared about such beings.

I expect mine agent down on the 14th to proceed to Lancashire, where I hear from all quarters that I have a very valuable property in coals, *etc.* I then intend to accept an invitation to Cambridge in October, and shall, perhaps, run up to

town. I have four invitations — to Wales, Dorset, Cambridge, and Chester; but I must be a man of business. I am quite alone, as these long letters sadly testify. I perceive, by referring to your letter, that the Ode is from the author; make my thanks acceptable to him. His muse is worthy a nobler theme. You will write as usual, I hope. I wish you good evening, and am, *etc.*

“Sweet maid, if thou would’st charm my sight,
And bid these arms thy neck infold;
That rosy cheek, that lily hand,
Would give thy poet more delight,
Than all Bocara’s vaunted gold,
Than all the gems of Samarcand.”

181 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

[Six Mile Bottom, Newmarket.]
Newstead Abbey, Sept. 9th, 1811.

My Dear Augusta, — My Rochdale affairs are understood to be settled as far as the Law can settle them, and indeed I am told that the most valuable part is that which was never disputed; but I have never reaped any advantage from them, and God knows if I ever shall. Mr. H., my agent, is a good man and able, but the most dilatory in the world. I expect him down on the 14th to accompany me to Rochdale, where something will be decided as to selling or working the Collieries. I am Lord of the Manor (a most extensive one), and they want to enclose, which cannot be done without me; but I go there in the worst humour possible and am afraid I shall do or say something not very conciliatory. In short all my affairs are going on as badly as possible, and I have no hopes or plans to better them as I long ago pledged myself never to sell Newstead, which I mean to hold in defiance of the Devil and Man.

I am quite alone and never see strangers without being sick, but I am nevertheless on good terms with my neighbours, for I neither ride or shoot or move over my Garden walls, but I fence and box and swim and run a good deal to keep me in exercise and get me to sleep. Poor Murray is ill again, and one of my Greek servants is ill too, and my valet has got a pestilent cough, so that we are in a peck of troubles; my family Surgeon sent an Emetic this morning for *one* of them, I did not very well know *which*, but I swore *Somebody* should take it, so

after a deal of discussion the Greek swallowed it with tears in his eyes, and by the blessing of it, and the *Virgin* whom he invoked to assist *it* and *him*, I suppose he'll be well tomorrow, if not, *another* shall have the *next*. So your Spouse likes children, *that* is lucky as he will have to bring them up; for my part (since I lost my Newfoundland dog,) I like nobody except his successor a Dutch Mastiff and three land Tortoises brought with me from Greece.

I thank you for your letters and am always glad to hear from you, but if you won't come here before Xmas, I very much fear we shall not meet *here* at all, for I shall be off somewhere or other very soon out of this land of Paper credit (or rather no credit at all, for every body seems on the high road to Bankruptcy), and if I quit it again I shall not be back in a hurry.

However, I shall endeavour to see you somewhere, and make my bow with decorum before I return to the Ottomans, I believe I shall turn Mussulman in the end.

You ask after my health; I am in tolerable leanness, which I promote by exercise and abstinence. I don't know that I have acquired any thing by my travels but a smattering of two languages and a habit of chewing Tobacco.

Yours ever,

B.

“In fact, there's nothing makes me so much grieve,
As that abominable tittle-tattle,
Which is the cud eschewed by human cattle.”

182 — to Francis Hodgson

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 9, 1811.

Dear Hodgson, — I have been a good deal in your company lately, for I have been reading *Juvenal* and *Lady Jane*, etc., for the first time since my return. The Tenth Sat'e has always been my favourite, as I suppose indeed of everybody's. It is the finest recipe for making one miserable with his life, and content to walk out of it, in any language. I should think it might be redde with great effect to a man dying without much pain, in preference to all the stuff that ever was said or sung in churches. But you are a deacon, and I say no more. Ah! you will marry and become lethargic, like poor Hal of Harrow, who yawns at 10 o' nights, and orders caudle annually.

I wrote an answer to yours fully some days ago, and, being quite alone and able to frank, you must excuse this subsequent epistle, which will cost nothing but the trouble of deciphering. I am expectant of agents to accompany me to Rochdale, a journey not to be anticipated with pleasure; though I feel very restless where I am, and shall probably ship off for Greece again; what nonsense it is to talk of Soul, when a cloud makes it *melancholy* and wine makes it *mad*.

Collet of Staines, your “most kind host,” has lost that girl you saw of his. She grew to five feet eleven, and might have been God knows how high if it had pleased Him to renew the race of Anak; but she fell by a ptisick, a fresh proof of the folly of begetting children. You knew Matthews. Was he not an intellectual giant? I knew few better or more intimately, and none who deserved more admiration in point of ability.

Scrope Davies has been here on his way to Harrowgate; I am his guest in October at King’s, where we will “drink deep ere we depart.” “Won’t you, won’t you, won’t you, won’t you come, Mr. Mug?” We did not amalgamate properly at Harrow; it was somehow rainy, and then a wife makes such a damp; but in a seat of celibacy I will have revenge. Don’t you hate helping first, and losing the wings of chicken? And then, conversation is always flabby. Oh! in the East women are in their proper sphere, and one has — no conversation at all. My house here is a delightful matrimonial mansion. When I wed, my spouse and I will be so happy! — one in each wing.

I presume you are in motion from your Herefordshire station, and Drury must be gone back to Gerund Grinding. I have not been at Cambridge since I took my M.A. degree in 1808. *Eheu fugaces!* I look forward to meeting you and Scrope there with the feelings of other times. Capt. Hobhouse is at Enniscorthy in Juverna. I wish he was in England.

Yours ever,

B.

“*Heel-Tap*. Now, neighbours, have a good caution that this Master Mug does not cajole you; he is a damn’d palavering fellow.”

But there is no passage in the play which exactly corresponds with Byron’s quotation.

183 — To R.C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 10, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I rather think in one of the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold*

there is this line:

‘Tis said at times the sullen tear would start.

Now, a line or two after, I have a repetition of the epithet “*sullen reverie*,” so (if it be so) let us have “speechless reverie,” or “silent reverie;” but, at all events, do away the recurrence.

Yours ever,

B.

184 — To Francis Hodgson

Newstead Abbey, September 13, 1811.

My Dear Hodgson, — I thank you for your song, or, rather, your two songs, — your new song on love, and your *old song* on *religion*. I admire the *first* sincerely, and in turn call upon you to *admire* the following on Anacreon Moore’s new operatic farce, or farcical opera — call it which you will:

Good plays are scarce,
So Moore writes *Farce*;
Is Fame like his so brittle?
We knew before
That “*Little’s*” Moore,
But now ‘tis Moore that’s *Little*.

I won’t dispute with you on the Arcana of your new calling; they are Bagatelles like the King of Poland’s rosary. One remark, and I have done; the basis of your religion is *injustice*; the *Son of God*, the *pure*, the *immaculate*, the *innocent*, is sacrificed for the *Guilty*. This proves *His* heroism; but no more does away *man’s* guilt than a schoolboy’s volunteering to be flogged for another would exculpate the dunce from negligence, or preserve him from the Rod. You degrade the Creator, in the first place, by making Him a begetter of children; and in the next you convert Him into a Tyrant over an immaculate and injured Being, who is sent into existence to suffer death for the benefit of some millions of Scoundrels, who, after all, seem as likely to be damned as ever. As to miracles, I agree with Hume that it is more probable men should *lie* or be *deceived*, than that things out of the course of Nature should so happen. Mahomet wrought miracles, Brothers the prophet had *proselytes*, and so would Breslaw the conjuror, had he lived in the time of Tiberius.

Besides I trust that God is not a *Jew*, but the God of all Mankind; and as you

allow that a virtuous Gentile may be saved, you do away the necessity of being a Jew or a Christian.

I do not believe in any revealed religion, because no religion is revealed: and if it pleases the Church to damn me for not allowing a *nonentity*, I throw myself on the mercy of the “*Great First Cause, least understood*,” who must do what is most proper; though I conceive He never made anything to be tortured in another life, whatever it may in this. I will neither read *pro* nor *con*. God would have made His will known without books, considering how very few could read them when Jesus of Nazareth lived, had it been His pleasure to ratify any peculiar mode of worship. As to your immortality, if people are to live, why die? And our carcases, which are to rise again, are they worth raising? I hope, if mine is, that I shall have a better *pair of legs* than I have moved on these two-and-twenty years, or I shall be sadly behind in the squeeze into Paradise. Did you ever read “Malthus on Population”? If he be right, war and pestilence are our best friends, to save us from being eaten alive, in this “best of all possible Worlds.”

I will write, read, and think no more; indeed, I do not wish to shock your prejudices by saying all I do think. Let us make the most of life, and leave dreams to Emanuel Swedenborg. Now to dreams of another genus — Poesies. I like your song much; but I will say no more, for fear you should think I wanted to scratch you into approbation of my past, present, or future acrostics. I shall not be at Cambridge before the middle of October; but, when I go, I should certes like to see you there before you are dubbed a deacon. Write to me, and I will rejoin.

Yours ever, **Byron**

“Fully believing this to be the Man whom God has appointed, I engrave this likeness. William Sharp.”

“et Pangloss disait quelquefois à Candide; Tous les événements sont enchainés dans le meilleur des mondes possibles,” *etc.*

Hodgson replies (September 18, 1811):

“Your last letter has unfeignedly grieved me. Believing, as I do from my heart, that you would be better and happier by thoroughly examining the evidences for Christianity, how can I hear you say you will not read any book on the subject, without being pained? But God bless you under all circumstances. I will say no more. Only do not talk of ‘shocking my prejudices,’ or of ‘rushing to see me *before* I am a Deacon.’ I wish to see you at all times; and as to our

different opinions, we can easily keep them to ourselves.”

The next day he writes again:

“Let me make one other effort. You mentioned an opinion of Hume’s about miracles. For God’s sake, — hear me, Byron, for God’s sake — examine Paley’s answer to that opinion; examine the whole of Paley’s *Evidences*. The two volumes may be read carefully in less than a week. Let me for the last time by our friendship, implore you to read them.”

185 — To John Murray

Newstead Abbey, Notts., Sept. 14, 1811.

Sir, — Since your former letter, Mr. Dallas informs me that the MS. has been submitted to the perusal of Mr. Gifford, most contrary to my wishes, as Mr. D. could have explained, and as my own letter to you did, in fact, explain, with my motives for objecting to such a proceeding. Some late domestic events, of which you are probably aware, prevented my letter from being sent before; indeed, I hardly conceived you would have so hastily thrust my productions into the hands of a Stranger, who could be as little pleased by receiving them, as their author is at their being offered, in such a manner, and to such a Man.

My address, when I leave Newstead, will be to “Rochdale, Lancashire;” but I have not yet fixed the day of departure, and I will apprise you when ready to set off.

You have placed me in a very ridiculous situation, but it is past, and nothing more is to be said on the subject. You hinted to me that you wished some alterations to be made; if they have nothing to do with politics or religion, I will make them with great readiness.

I am, Sir, etc., etc., **Byron.**

“Fresh from the fencing rooms of Angelo and Jackson, he used to amuse himself by renewing his practice of *Carte et Tierce*, with his walking-cane directed against the bookshelves, while Murray was reading passages from the poem with occasional ejaculations of admiration, on which Byron would say, ‘You think that a good idea, do you, Murray?’ Then he would fence and lunge with his walking-stick at some special book which he had picked out on the shelves before him. As Murray afterwards said, ‘I was often very glad to get rid of him!’”

(Smiles's *Memoir of John Murray*, vol. i. p. 207).

186 — To R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 15, 1811.

My dear Sir, — My agent will not be here for at least a week, and even afterwards my letters will be forwarded to Rochdale. I am sorry that Murray should *groan* on my account, tho' *that* is better than the anticipation of applause, of which men and books are generally disappointed.

The notes I sent are *merely matter* to be divided, arranged, and published for *notes* hereafter, in proper places; at present I am too much occupied with earthly cares to waste time or trouble upon rhyme, or its modern indispensables, annotations.

Pray let me hear from you, when at leisure. I have written to abuse Murray for showing the MS. to Mr. G., who must certainly think it was done by my wish, though you know the contrary. — Believe me, Yours ever,
B .

187 — to John Murray

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 16, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I return the proof, which I should wish to be shown to Mr. Dallas, who understands typographical arrangements much better than I can pretend to do. The printer may place the notes in his *own way*, or any way, so that they are out of *my way*; I care nothing about types or margins.

If you have any communication to make, I shall be here at least a week or ten days longer. I am, Sir, etc., etc.,

Byron.

188 — To R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 16, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I send you a *motto*:

“L’univers est une espèce de livre, dont on n’a lu que la première page quand on n’a vu que son pays. J’en ai feuilleté un assez grand nombre, que j’ai trouvé également mauvaises. Cet examen ne m’a point été infructueux. Je haïssais ma patrie. Toutes les impertinences des peuples divers, parmi lesquels j’ai vécu, m’ont réconcilié avec elle. Quand je n’aurais tiré d’autre bénéfice de mes voyages que celui-là, je n’en regretterais ni les frais, ni les fatigues.”

“Le Cosmopolite.” If not too long, I think it will suit the book. The passage is from a little French volume, a great favourite with me, which I picked up in the Archipelago. I don’t think it is well known in England; Monbron is the author; but it is a work sixty years old.

Good morning! I won’t take up your time.

Yours ever,

Byron.

Byron’s quotation is the opening paragraph of the book. The author, who had travelled in England, returns to France a complete “Jacques Rôt-de-Bif.” He then visits Holland, the Low Countries, Constantinople, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England a second time. He finds that the charm has vanished, and that the English are no better than their neighbours. It is a cynical little book, abounding in such sayings as. “Make acquaintances, not friends; intimacy breeds disgust;” “The best fruit of travelling is the justification of instinctive dislikes.” Monbron, like Byron, ridicules the traveller’s passion for collecting broken statues and antiques.

189 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 17, 1811.

I can easily excuse your not writing, as you have, I hope, something better to do, and you must pardon my frequent invasions on your attention, because I have at this moment nothing to interpose between you and my epistles.

I cannot settle to any thing, and my days pass, with the exception of bodily exercise to some extent, with uniform indolence, and idle insipidity. I have been expecting, and still expect, my agent, when I shall have enough to occupy my reflections in business of no very pleasant aspect. Before my journey to

Rochdale, you shall have due notice where to address me — I believe at the post-office of that township. From Murray I received a second proof of the same pages, which I requested him to show you, that any thing which may have escaped my observation may be detected before the printer lays the corner-stone of an *errata* column.

I am now not quite alone, having an old acquaintance and schoolfellow with me, so *old*, indeed, that we have nothing *new* to say on any subject, and yawn at each other in a sort of *quiet inquietude*. I hear nothing from Cawthorn, or Captain Hobhouse; and *their quarto* — Lord have mercy on mankind! We come on like Cerberus with our triple publications. As for *myself*, by *myself*, I must be satisfied with a comparison to *Janus*.

I am not at all pleased with Murray for showing the MS.; and I am certain Gifford must see it in the same light that I do. His praise is nothing to the purpose: what could he say? He could not spit in the face of one who had praised him in every possible way. I must own that I wish to have the impression removed from his mind, that I had any concern in such a paltry transaction. The more I think, the more it disquiets me; so I will say no more about it. It is bad enough to be a scribbler, without having recourse to such shifts to extort praise, or deprecate censure. It is anticipating, it is begging, kneeling, adulating, — the devil! the devil! the devil! and all without my wish, and contrary to my express desire. I wish Murray had been tied to *Payne's* neck when he jumped into the Paddington Canal, and so tell him, — *that* is the proper receptacle for publishers. You have thought of settling in the country, why not try Notts.? I think there are places which would suit you in all points, and then you are nearer the metropolis. But of this anon.

I am, yours, etc.,

Byron.

“A literary friend of mine, walking out one lovely evening last summer, on the eleventh bridge of the Paddington canal, was alarmed by the cry of ‘one in jeopardy:’ he rushed along, collected a body of Irish haymakers (supping on buttermilk in an adjacent paddock), procured three rakes, one eel spear and a landing-net, and at last (*horresco referens*) pulled out — his own publisher. The unfortunate man was gone for ever, and so was a large quarto wherewith he had taken the leap, which proved, on inquiry, to have been Mr. Southey’s last work. Its ‘alacrity of sinking’ was so great, that it has never since been heard of;

though some maintain that it is at this moment concealed at Alderman Birch's pastry-premises, Cornhill. Be this as it may, the coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of '*Felo de Bibliopolâ*' against a quarto unknown,' and circumstantial evidence being since strong against the *Curse of Kehama* (of which the above words are an exact description), it will be tried by its peers next session, in Grub Street — Arthur, Alfred, Davideis, Richard Coeur de Lion, Exodus, Exodiad, Epigoniad, Calvary, Fall of Cambria, Siege of Acre, Don Roderick, and Tom Thumb the Great, are the names of the twelve jurors. The judges are Pye, Bowles, and the bell-man of St. Sepulchre's."

190 — to R.C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 17, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I have just discovered some pages of observations on the modern Greeks, written at Athens by me, under the title of *Noctes Atticæ*. They will do to *cut up* into notes, and to be *cut up* afterwards, which is all that notes are generally good for. They were written at Athens, as you will see by the date.

Yours ever,
B.

191 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept, 21, 1811.

I have shown my respect for your suggestions by adopting them; but I have made many alterations in the first proof, over and above; as, for example:

Oh Thou, in *Hellas* deem'd of heavenly birth,
etc., etc.

Since *shamed full oft* by *later lyres* on earth,
Mine, etc.

Yet there *I've wandered* by the vaunted rill;
and so on. So I have got rid of Dr. Lowth and "drunk" to boot, and very glad I am to say so. I have also sullenised the line as heretofore, and in short have been

quite conformable.

Pray write; you shall hear when I remove to Lancashire. I have brought you and my friend Juvenal Hodgson upon my back, on the score of revelation. You are fervent, but he is quite *glowing*; and if he take half the pains to save his own soul, which he volunteers to redeem mine, great will be his reward hereafter. I honour and thank you both, but am convinced by neither. Now for notes. Besides those I have sent, I shall send the observations on the Edinburgh Reviewer's remarks on the modern Greek, an Albanian song in the Albanian (*not Greek*) language, specimens of modern Greek from their New Testament, a comedy of Goldoni's translated, *one scene*, a prospectus of a friend's book, and perhaps a song or two, *all* in Romaic, besides their Pater Noster; so there will be enough, if not too much, with what I have already sent. Have you received the *Noctes Atticæ*?

I sent also an annotation on Portugal. Hobhouse is also forthcoming.

192 — to R. C. Dallas.

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 23, 1811.

Lisboa is the Portuguese word, consequently the very best. Ulissipont is pedantic; and as I have *Hellas* and *Eros* not long before, there would be something like an affectation of Greek terms, which I wish to avoid, since I shall have a perilous quantity of *modern* Greek in my notes, as specimens of the tongue; therefore *Lisboa* may keep its place. You are right about the *Hints*; they must not precede the *Romaunt*; but Cawthorn will be savage if they don't; however, keep *them* back, and *him* in *good humour*, if we can, but do not let him publish.

I have adopted, I believe, most of your suggestions, but "*Lisboa*" will be an exception to prove the rule. I have sent a quantity of notes, and shall continue; but pray let them be copied; no devil can read my hand. By the by, I do not mean to exchange the ninth verse of the "Good Night." I have no reason to suppose my dog better than his brother brutes, mankind; and *Argus* we know to be a fable. The *Cosmopolite* was an acquisition abroad. I do not believe it is to be found in England. It is an amusing little volume, and full of French flippancy. I read, though I do not speak the language.

I *will* be angry with Murray. It was a bookselling, back-shop, Paternoster-row, paltry proceeding; and if the experiment had turned out as it deserved, I would

have raised all Fleet Street, and borrowed the giant's staff from St. Dunstan's church, to immolate the betrayer of trust. I have written to him as he never was written to before by an author, I'll be sworn, and I hope you will amplify my wrath, till it has an effect upon him. You tell me always you have much to write about. Write it, but let us drop metaphysics; — on that point we shall never agree. I am dull and drowsy, as usual. I do nothing, and even that nothing fatigues me.
Adieu.

“And now I'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea;
But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands.”

193 — to Francis Hodgson

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 25, 1811.

My Dear Hodgson, — I fear that before the latest of October or the first of November, I shall hardly be able to make Cambridge. My everlasting agent puts off his coming like the accomplishment of a prophecy. However, finding me growing serious he hath promised to be here on Thursday, and about Monday we shall remove to Rochdale. I have only to give discharges to the tenantry here (it seems the poor creatures must be raised, though I wish it was not necessary), and arrange the receipt of sums, and the liquidation of some debts, and I shall be ready to enter upon new subjects of vexation. I intend to visit you in Granta, and hope to prevail on you to accompany me here or there or anywhere.

I am plucking up my spirits, and have begun to gather my little sensual comforts together. Lucy is extracted from Warwickshire; some very bad faces have been warned off the premises, and more promising substituted in their

stead; the partridges are plentiful, hares fairish, pheasants not quite so good, and the Girls on the Manor — — Just as I had formed a tolerable establishment my travels commenced, and on my return I find all to do over again; my former flock were all scattered; some married, not before it was needful. As I am a great disciplinarian, I have just issued an edict for the abolition of caps; no hair to be cut on any pretext; stays permitted, but not too low before; full uniform always in the evening; Lucinda to be commander — *vice* the present, about to be wedded (*mem.* she is 35 with a flat face and a squeaking voice), of all the makers and unmakers of beds in the household.

My tortoises (all Athenians), my hedgehog, my mastiff and the other live Greek, are all purely. The tortoises lay eggs, and I have hired a hen to hatch them. I am writing notes for *my* quarto (Murray would have it a *quarto*), and Hobhouse is writing text for *his* quarto; if you call on Murray or Cawthorn you will hear news of either. I have attacked De Pauw, Thornton, Lord Elgin, Spain, Portugal, the *Edinburgh Review*, travellers, Painters, Antiquarians, and others, so you see what a dish of Sour Crout Controversy I shall prepare for myself. It would not answer for me to give way, now; as I was forced into bitterness at the beginning, I will go through to the last. *Væ Victis!* If I fall, I shall fall gloriously, fighting against a host.

Felicissima Notte a Voss. Signoria,

B.

194 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Sept. 26, 1811.

My Dear Sir,—In a stanza towards the end of canto 1st, there is in the concluding line,

Some bitter bubbles up, and e'en on roses stings.
I have altered it as follows:

Full from the heart of joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

If you will point out the stanzas on Cintra which you wish recast, I will send you mine answer. Be good enough to address your letters here, and they will either be forwarded or saved till my return. My agent comes tomorrow, and we

shall set out immediately.

The press must not proceed of course without my seeing the proofs, as I have much to do. Pray, do you think any alterations should be made in the stanzas on Vathek?

I should be sorry to make any improper allusion, as I merely wish to adduce an example of wasted wealth, and the reflection which arose in surveying the most desolate mansion in the most beautiful spot I ever beheld.

Pray keep Cawthorn back; he was not to begin till November, and even that will be two months too soon. I am so sorry my hand is unintelligible; but I can neither deny your accusation, nor remove the cause of it. — It is a sad scrawl, certes. — A perilous quantity of annotation hath been sent; I think almost *enough*, with the specimens of Romaic I mean to annex.

I will have nothing to say to your metaphysics, and allegories of rocks and beaches; we shall all go to the bottom together, so “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow,” *etc.* I am as comfortable in my creed as others, inasmuch as it is better to sleep than to be awake.

I have heard nothing of Murray; I hope he is ashamed of himself. He sent me a vastly complimentary epistle, with a request to alter the two, and finish another canto. I sent him as civil an answer as if I had been engaged to translate by the sheet, declining altering anything in sentiment, but offered to tag rhymes, and mend them as long as he liked.

I will write from Rochdale when I arrive, if my affairs allow me; but I shall be so busy and savage all the time with the whole set, that my letters will, perhaps, be as pettish as myself. If so, lay the blame on coal and coal-heavers. Very probably I may proceed to town by way of Newstead on my return from Lancs. I mean to be at Cambridge in November, so that, at all events, we shall be nearer. I will not apologise for the trouble I have given and do give you, though I ought to do so; but I have worn out my politest periods, and can only say that I am much obliged to you.

Believe me, yours always,

Byron.

195 — to James Wedderburn Webster

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 10th, 1811.

Dear Webster, — I can hardly invite a gentleman to my house a second time who walked out of it the first in so singular a mood, but if you had thought proper to pay me a visit, you would have had a “Highland Welcome.”

I am only just returned to it out of Lancashire, where I have been on business to a Coal manor of mine near Rochdale, and shall leave it very shortly for Cambridge and London. My companions, or rather companion, (for Claridge alone has been with me) have not been very amusing, and, as to their “*Sincerity*,” they are doubtless sincere enough for a man who will never put them to the trial. Besides you talked so much of your conjugal happiness, that an invitation from home would have seemed like Sacrilege, and my rough Bachelor’s Hall would have appeared to little advantage after the “Bower of Armida” where you have been reposing.

I cannot boast of my social powers at any time, and just at present they are more stagnant than ever. Your Brother-in-law means to stand for Wexford, but I have reasons for thinking the Portsmouth interest will be against him; however I wish him success. Do *you* mean to stand for any place next election? What are your politics? I hope Valentia’s Lord is for the Catholics. You will find Hobhouse at Enniscorthy in the contested County.

Pray what has seized you? your last letter is the only one in which you do not rave upon matrimony. Are there no symptoms of a young W.W.? and shall I never be a Godfather? I believe I must be married myself soon, but it shall be a secret and a Surprise. However, knowing your exceeding discretion I shall probably entrust the secret to your silence at a proper period. You have, it is true, invited me repeatedly to Dean’s Court and now, when it is probable I might adventure there, you wish to be off. Be it so.

If you address your letters to this place they will be forwarded wherever I sojourn. I am about to meet some friends at Cambridge and on to town in November.

The papers are full of Dalrymple’s Bigamy (I know the man). What the Devil will he do with his *Spare-rib*? He is no beauty, but as lame as myself. He has more ladies than legs, what comfort to a cripple! *Sto sempre umilissimo servitore.* .

Byron.

“But ne’er magician’s wand

wrought change, with all Armida's fairy art,
Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart."

In the Catalogue of Byron's books, sold April 5, 1816, appear four editions of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, being those of 1776, 1785, 1813, and one undated.

196 — to R.C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, October 10th, 1811.

Dear Sir, — Stanzas 24, 26, 29, though *crossed* must *stand*, with their *alterations*. The other three are cut out to meet your wishes. We must, however, have a repetition of the proof, which is the first. I will write soon.

Yours ever,

B.

P.S. — Yesterday I returned from Lancs.

Footnote 2: The following are the three deleted stanzas:

XXV

“In golden characters, right well designed,
First on the list appeareth one ‘Junot;’
Then certain other glorious names we find;
(Which rhyme compelleth me to place below —)
Dull victors! baffled by a vanquished foe,
Wheedled by conynge tongues of laurels due,
Stand, worthy of each other, in a row
Sirs Arthur, Harry, and the dizzard Hew
Dalrymple, seely wight, sore dupe of ‘tother tew.”

XXVII

“But when Convention sent his handy work,
Pens, tongues, feet, hands, combined in wild uproar;
Mayor, Alderman, laid down th’ uplifted fork;
The bench of Bishops half forgot to snore;
Stern Cobbett, who for one whole week forbore
To question aught, once more with transport leapt,
And bit his dev’lish quill agen, and swore
With foe such treaty never should be kept.
Then burst the blatant beast, and roared and raged and — slept!!!”

XXVIII

“Thus unto heaven appealed the people; heaven,
Which loves the lieges of our gracious King,
Decreed that ere our generals were forgiven,
Inquiry should be held about the thing.
But mercy cloaked the babes beneath her wing;
And as they spared our foes so spared we them.
(Where was the pity of our sires for Byng?)
Yet knaves, not idiots, should the law condemn.
Then live ye, triumph gallants! and bless your judges’ phlegm.”

197 — to R.C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 11, 1811.

I have returned from Lancashire, and ascertained that my property there may be made very valuable, but various circumstances very much circumscribe my exertions at present. I shall be in town on business in the beginning of November, and perhaps at Cambridge before the end of this month; but of my movements you shall be regularly apprised. Your objections I have in part done away by alterations, which I hope will suffice; and I have sent two or three additional stanzas for both “*Fyttes*.” I have been again shocked with a *death*, and have lost one very dear to me in happier times; but “I have almost forgot the taste of grief,” and “supped full of horrors” till I have become callous, nor have I a tear left for an event which, five years ago, would have bowed down my head to the earth. It seems as though I were to experience in my youth the greatest misery of age. My friends fall around me, and I shall be left a lonely tree before I am withered. Other men can always take refuge in their families; I have no resource but my own reflections, and they present no prospect here or hereafter, except the selfish satisfaction of surviving my betters. I am indeed very wretched, and you will excuse my saying so, as you know I am not apt to cant of sensibility.

Instead of tiring yourself with *my* concerns, I should be glad to hear *your* plans of retirement. I suppose you would not like to be wholly shut out of society? Now I know a large village, or small town, about twelve miles off,

where your family would have the advantage of very genteel society, without the hazard of being annoyed by mercantile affluence; where *you* would meet with men of information and independence; and where I have friends to whom I should be proud to introduce you. There are, besides, a coffee-room, assemblies, etc., etc., which bring people together. My mother had a house there some years, and I am well acquainted with the economy of Southwell, the name of this little commonwealth. Lastly, you will not be very remote from me; and though I am the very worst companion for young people in the world, this objection would not apply to *you*, whom I could see frequently. Your expenses, too, would be such as best suit your inclinations, more or less, as you thought proper; but very little would be requisite to enable you to enter into all the gaieties of a country life. You could be as quiet or bustling as you liked, and certainly as well situated as on the lakes of Cumberland, unless you have a particular wish to be *picturesque*.

Pray, is your Ionian friend in town? You have promised me an introduction. You mention having consulted some friend on the MSS. Is not this contrary to our usual way? Instruct Mr. Murray not to allow his shopman to call the work *Child of Harrow's Pilgrimage!!!!* as he has done to some of my astonished friends, who wrote to inquire after my *sanity* on the occasion, as well they might. I have heard nothing of Murray, whom I scolded heartily. Must I write more notes? Are there not enough? Cawthorn must be kept back with the *Hints*. I hope he is getting on with Hobhouse's quarto. Good evening.

Yours ever, *etc.*

Byron.

"I have almost forgot the taste of fears:

...

I have supp'd full with horrors."

Macbeth, act v. sc. 5.

"Murray's shopman, taught, I presume, by himself, calls *Psyche* 'Pishy,' *The Four Slaves of Cythera* 'The Four do. of Cythera,' and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 'Child of Harrow's Pilgrimage.' This misnomerer Vendor of Books must have been misbegotten in some portentous union of the Malaprops and the Slipslops."

198 — To Francis Hodgson

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 13, 1811.

You will begin to deem me a most liberal correspondent; but as my letters are free, you will overlook their frequency. I have sent you answers in prose and verse to all your late communications; and though I am invading your ease again, I don't know why, or what to put down that you are not acquainted with already. I am growing *nervous* (how you will laugh!) — but it is true, — really, wretchedly, ridiculously, fine-ladically *nervous*. Your climate kills me; I can neither read, write, nor amuse myself, or any one else. My days are listless, and my nights restless; I have very seldom any society, and when I have, I run out of it. At “this present writing,” there are in the next room three *ladies*, and I have stolen away to write this grumbling letter. — I don't know that I sha'n't end with insanity, for I find a want of method in arranging my thoughts that perplexes me strangely; but this looks more like silliness than madness, as Scrope Davies would facetiously remark in his consoling manner. I must try the hartshorn of your company; and a session of Parliament would suit me well, — any thing to cure me of conjugating the accursed verb “*ennuyer*.”

When shall you be at Cambridge? You have hinted, I think, that your friend Bland is returned from Holland. I have always had a great respect for his talents, and for all that I have heard of his character; but of me, I believe he knows nothing, except that he heard my sixth form repetitions ten months together at the average of two lines a morning, and those never perfect. I remembered him and his *Slaves* as I passed between Capes Matapan, St. Angelo, and his Isle of Ceriga, and I always bewailed the absence of the *Anthology*. I suppose he will now translate Vondel, the Dutch Shakspeare, and *Gysbert van Amsteli* will easily be accommodated to our stage in its present state; and I presume he saw the Dutch poem, where the love of Pyramus and Thisbe is compared to the passion of Christ; also the love of Lucifer for Eve, and other varieties of Low Country literature.

No doubt you will think me crazed to talk of such things, but they are all in black and white and good repute on the banks of every canal from Amsterdam to Alkmaar.

Yours ever,

B.

My poesy is in the hands of its various publishers; but the *Hints from Horace* (to which I have subjoined some savage lines on Methodism, and ferocious notes

on the vanity of the triple Editory of the *Edin. Annual Register*), my *Hints*, I say, stand still, and why? — I have not a friend in the world (but you and Drury) who can construe Horace's Latin or my English well enough to adjust them for the press, or to correct the proofs in a grammatical way. So that, unless you have bowels when you return to town (I am too far off to do it for myself), this ineffable work will be lost to the world for — I don't know how many weeks.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage must wait till *Murray's* is finished. He is making a tour in Middlesex, and is to return soon, when high matter may be expected. He wants to have it in quarto, which is a cursed unsaleable size; but it is pestilent long, and one must obey one's bookseller. I trust Murray will pass the Paddington Canal without being seduced by Payne and Mackinlay's example, — I say Payne and Mackinlay, supposing that the partnership held good. Drury, the villain, has not written to me; "I am never (as Mrs. Lumpkin says to Tony) to be gratified with the monster's dear wild notes."

So you are going (going indeed!) into orders. You must make your peace with the Eclectic Reviewers — they accuse you of impiety, I fear, with injustice. Demetrius, the "Sieger of Cities," is here, with "Gilpin Horner."

The painter is not necessary, as the portraits he already painted are (by anticipation) very like the new animals. — Write, and send me your "Love Song" — but I want *paulo majora* from you. Make a dash before you are a deacon, and try a *dry* publisher.

Yours always,
B.

"Now full in sight the Paphian gardens smile,
And thence by many a green and summer isle,
Whose ancient walls and temples seem to sleep,
Enshadowed on the mirror of the deep,
They coast along Cythera's happy ground,
Gem of the sea, for love's delight renown'd."

"I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster!"

Oct. 14, 1811.

Dear Sir, — Stanza 9th, for Canto 2nd, somewhat altered, to avoid recurrence in a former stanza.

IX

There, thou! whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain: —
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy Memory flashes o'er my brain?
Well — I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast;
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may
Whate'er beside Futurity's behest;

or

Howe'er may be
For me 'twere bliss enough to see thy spirit blest!

I think it proper to state to you, that this stanza alludes to an event which has taken place since my arrival here, and not to the death of any *male* friend.

Byron.

200 — to R. C. Dallas

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 16, 1811.

I am on the wing for Cambridge. Thence, after a short stay, to London. Will you be good enough to keep an account of all the MSS. you receive, for fear of omission? Have you adopted the three altered stanzas of the latest proof? I can do nothing more with them. I am glad you like the new ones. Of the last, and of the *two*, I sent for a new edition, to-day a *fresh note*. The lines of the second sheet I fear must stand; I will give you reasons when we meet. Believe me, yours ever,

Byron

201 — to R. C. Dallas

Cambridge, Oct. 25, 1811.

Dear Sir, I send you a conclusion to the *whole*. In a stanza towards the end of Canto I. in the line,

Oh, known the earliest and *beloved* the most,

I shall alter the epithet to "*esteemed* the most." The present stanzas are for the end of Canto II. For the beginning of the week I shall be at No. 8, my old lodgings, in St. James' Street, where I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you.

Yours ever,

B.

202 — To Thomas Moore

Cambridge, October 27, 1811.

Sir, — Your letter followed me from Notts, to this place, which will account for the delay of my reply.

Your former letter I never had the honour to receive; — be assured in whatever part of the world it had found me, I should have deemed it my duty to return and answer it in person.

The advertisement you mention, I know nothing of. — At the time of your meeting with Mr. Jeffrey, I had recently entered College, and remember to have heard and read a number of squibs on the occasion; and from the recollection of these I derived all my knowledge on the subject, without the slightest idea of "giving the lie" to an address which I never beheld. When I put my name to the production, which has occasioned this correspondence, I became responsible to all whom it might concern, — to explain where it requires explanation, and, where insufficiently or too sufficiently explicit, at all events to satisfy. My situation leaves me no choice; it rests with the injured and the angry to obtain reparation in their own way.

With regard to the passage in question, *you* were certainly *not* the person towards whom I felt personally hostile. On the contrary, my whole thoughts were engrossed by one, whom I had reason to consider as my worst literary enemy, nor could I foresee that his former antagonist was about to become his champion. You do not specify what you would wish to have done: I can neither retract nor apologise for a charge of falsehood which I never advanced.

In the beginning of the week, I shall be at No. 8, St. James's Street. — Neither the letter nor the friend to whom you stated your intention ever made their appearance.

Your friend, Mr. Rogers, or any other gentleman delegated by you, will find me most ready to adopt any conciliatory proposition which shall not compromise my own honour, — or, failing in that, to make the atonement you deem it necessary to require.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Byron.

The review of Moore's *Odes, Epistles, and Other Poems* (1806), which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1806, provoked Moore to challenge Jeffrey. Their duel with "leadless pistols" led, not only to Moore's friendship with Jeffrey, but, indirectly, as is seen from the following letters, to Moore's acquaintance with Byron. Moore himself contributed to the *Edinburgh*, between the years 1814 and 1834, essays on multifarious subjects, from poetry to German Rationalism, from the Fathers to French official life. In 1807 the first of the *Irish Melodies* was published; they continued to appear at irregular intervals till 1834, when 122 had been printed. A master of the art of versification, Moore sings, with graceful fancy, in a tone of mingled mirth and melancholy, his love of his country, of the wine of other countries, and the women of all countries. But, except in his patriotism, he shows little depth of feeling. The *Melodies* are the work of a brilliantly clever man, endowed with an exquisite musical ear, and a temperament that is rather susceptible than intense. With them may be classed his *National Airs* (1815) and *Sacred Song* (1816).

Moore had already found one field in which he excelled; it was not long before he discovered another. His serious satires, *Corruption* (1808), *Intolerance* (1808), and *The Sceptic* (1809), failed. His nature was neither deep enough nor strong enough for success in such themes. In the ephemeral strife of party

politics he found his real province. Nothing can be better of their kind than the metrical lampoons collected in *Intercepted Letters, or the Twopenny Post-bag*, by Thomas Brown the Younger (1813). In his hands the bow and arrows of Cupid become formidable weapons of party warfare; nor do their ornaments impede the movements of the archer. The shaft is gaily winged and brightly polished; the barb sharp and dipped in venom; and the missile hums music as it flies to its mark. Moore's satire is the satire of the Clubs at its best; but it is scarcely the satire of literature. *The Twopenny Post-bag* was the parent of many similar productions, beginning with *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), and ending with *Fables for the Holy Alliance* (1823), which he dedicated to Byron.

As a serious poet, and the author of *Lalla Rookh* (1817), *The Loves of the Angels* (1823), and *Alciphron* (1839), Moore was perhaps overrated by his contemporaries. In spite of their brightness of fancy, metrical skill, and brilliant cleverness, they lack the greater elements of the highest poetry.

Moore's prose work begins, apart from his contributions to periodical literature, with the *Memoirs of Captain Rock* (1824), *The Epicurean* (1827), *The Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion* (1834), *The History of Ireland* (1846); and a succession of biographies — the life of *Sheridan* (1825), of *Byron* (1830), and *Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (1831) — complete the list. In the midst of his biographical work, Moore was advised by Lord Lansdowne to write nine lives at once, and print them together under the title of *The Cat*.

In 1811 Moore married Miss Elizabeth Dyke (born 1793), an actress who fascinated him at the Kilkenny private theatricals in 1809. To the outer world, Mrs. Moore's bird, as she called him, was a sprightly little songster, who lived in a whirl of dinners, suppers, concerts, and theatricals. These, as well as his private anxieties and misfortunes, are recorded in the eight volumes of his *Memoirs, Journals, and Correspondence*, which were edited by Lord John Russell, in 1853. Moore was an excellent son, a good husband, an affectionate father, and to Byron a loyal friend, neither envious nor subservient. Clare, Hobhouse, and Moore were (Lady Blessington's *Conversations*, 2nd edition, 1850, pp. 393, 394) the only persons whose friendship Byron never disclaimed. He spoke of Moore (*ibid.*, pp. 322, 323) as

“a delightful companion, gay without being boisterous, witty without effort, comic without coarseness, and sentimental without being lachrymose. He reminds one of the fairy who, whenever she spoke, let diamonds fall from her lips. My tête-à-tête suppers with Moore are among the most agreeable impressions I retain of the hours passed in London.”

In July, 1806, in consequence of the article in the *Edinburgh Review* on his

recent volume of *Poems*, Moore sent, through his friend Hume, a challenge to Jeffrey, who was seconded by Francis Horner, and a meeting was arranged. Moore, who had only once in his life discharged a firearm of any kind, and then nearly blew his thumb off, borrowed a case of pistols from William Spencer, and bought in Bond Street enough powder and bullets for a score of duels. The parties met at Chalk Farm; the seconds loaded the pistols, placed the men at their posts, and were about to give the signal to fire, when the police officers, rushing upon them from behind a hedge, knocked Jeffrey's weapon from his hand, disarmed Moore, and conveyed the whole party to Bow Street. They were released on bail; but, on Moore returning to claim the borrowed pistols, the officer refused to give them up, because only Moore's pistol was loaded with ball. Horner, however, gave evidence that he had seen both pistols loaded; and there, but for the reports circulated in the newspapers, the affair would have ended. But the joke was too good to be allowed to drop, and, in spite of Moore's published letter, he was for months a target for the wits (*Memoirs, Journals, and Correspondence*, vol. i. pp. 199-208).

In *English Bards, etc.*, lines 466, 467, and his *note*, Byron made merry over "Little's leadless pistol," with the result that, when the second edition of the satire was published, with his name attached, Moore sent him the following letter:

"Dublin, January 1, 1810.

"My Lord, — Having just seen the name of 'Lord Byron' prefixed to a work entitled *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, in which, as it appears to me, *the lie is given* to a public statement of mine, respecting an affair with Mr. Jeffrey some years since, I beg you will have the goodness to inform me whether I may consider your Lordship as the author of this publication.

"I shall not, I fear, be able to return to London for a week or two; but, in the mean time, I trust your Lordship will not deny me the satisfaction of knowing whether you avow the insult contained in the passages alluded to.

"It is needless to suggest to your Lordship the propriety of keeping our correspondence secret.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your Lordship's very humble servant,

"Thomas Moore.

"22, Molesworth Street."

Owing to Byron's absence abroad, the letter never reached him; it was, in fact, kept back by Hodgson. On his return to England, Moore, who in the

interval had married, sent him a second letter, restating the nature of the insult he had received in *English Bards*.

“‘It is now useless,’ I continued (*Life*, p. 143), ‘to speak of the steps with which it was my intention to follow up that letter. The time which has elapsed since then, though it has done away neither the injury nor the feeling of it, has, in many respects, materially altered my situation; and the only object which I have now in writing to your Lordship is to preserve some consistency with that former letter, and to prove to you that the injured feeling still exists, however circumstances may compel me to be deaf to its dictates, at present. When I say “injured feeling,” let me assure your Lordship that there is not a single vindictive sentiment in my mind towards you. I mean but to express that uneasiness, under (what I consider to be) a charge of falsehood, which must haunt a man of any feeling to his grave, unless the insult be retracted or atoned for; and which, if I did *not* feel, I should, indeed, deserve far worse than your Lordship’s satire could inflict upon me.’ In conclusion I added, that so far from being influenced by any angry or resentful feeling towards him, it would give me sincere pleasure if, by any satisfactory explanation, he would enable me to seek the honour of being henceforward ranked among his acquaintance.”

Byron’s of October 27, 1811. was written in reply to this second letter from Moore.

203 — to R. C. Dallas

8, St. James’s Street, 29th October, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I arrived in town last night, and shall be very glad to see you when convenient.

Yours very truly,

Byron.

204 — to Thomas Moore

8, St. James’s Street, October 29, 1811.

Sir, — Soon after my return to England, my friend, Mr. Hodgson, apprised me that a letter for me was in his possession; but a domestic event hurrying me from London immediately after, the letter (which may most probably be your own) is still *unopened in his keeping*. If, on examination of the address, the similarity of the handwriting should lead to such a conclusion, it shall be opened in your presence, for the satisfaction of all parties. Mr. H. is at present out of town; — on Friday I shall see him, and request him to forward it to my address.

With regard to the latter part of both your letters, until the principal point was discussed between us, I felt myself at a loss in what manner to reply. Was I to anticipate friendship from one, who conceived me to have charged him with falsehood? Were not *advances*, under such circumstances, to be misconstrued, — not, perhaps, by the person to whom they were addressed, but by others? In *my* case such a step was impracticable. If you, who conceived yourself to be the offended person, are satisfied that you had no cause for offence, it will not be difficult to convince me of it. My situation, as I have before stated, leaves me no choice. I should have felt proud of your acquaintance, had it commenced under other circumstances; but it must rest with you to determine how far it may proceed after so *auspicious* a beginning.

I have the honour to be, *etc.*

As your Lordship does not show any wish to proceed beyond the rigid formulary of explanation, it is not for me to make any further advances. We Irishmen, in businesses of this kind, seldom know any medium between decided hostility and decided friendship; but, as any approaches towards the latter alternative must now depend entirely on your Lordship, I have only to repeat that I am satisfied with your letter, and that I have the honour to be,” *etc., etc.*

205 — to Thomas Moore

8, St. James's Street, October 30, 1811.

Sir, — You must excuse my troubling you once more upon this very unpleasant subject. It would be a satisfaction to me, and I should think to yourself, that the unopened letter in Mr. Hodgson's possession (supposing it to prove your own) should be returned *in statu quo* to the writer; particularly as you expressed yourself “not quite easy under the manner in which I had dwelt on its miscarriage.”

A few words more, and I shall not trouble you further. I felt, and still feel, very much flattered by those parts of your correspondence, which held out the prospect of our becoming acquainted. If I did not meet them in the first instance as perhaps I ought, let the situation I was placed in be my defence. You have *now* declared yourself *satisfied*, and on that point we are no longer at issue. If, therefore, you still retain any wish to do me the honour you hinted at, I shall be most happy to meet you, when, where, and how you please, and I presume you will not attribute my saying thus much to any unworthy motive.

I have the honour to remain, *etc.*

“Piqued,” says Moore (*Life*, 144), “at the manner in which my efforts towards a more friendly understanding were received,”

he had briefly expressed his satisfaction at Byron’s explanation, and added that the correspondence might close.

206 — to R. C. Dallas

8, St. James’s Street, October 31, 1811.

Dear Sir, — I have already taken up so much of your time that there needs no excuse on your part, but a great many on mine, for the present interruption. I have altered the passages according to your wish. With this note I send a few stanzas on a subject which has lately occupied much of my thoughts. They refer to the death of one to whose name you are a *stranger*, and, consequently, cannot be interested. I mean them to complete the present volume. They relate to the same person whom I have mentioned in Canto 2nd, and at the conclusion of the poem.

I by no means intend to identify myself with *Harold*, but to *deny* all connection with him. If in parts I may be thought to have drawn from myself, believe me it is but in parts, and I shall not own even to that. As to the *Monastic dome*, etc., I thought those circumstances would suit him as well as any other, and I could describe what I had seen better than I could invent. I would not be such a fellow as I have made my hero for all the world.

Yours ever,

B.

207 — to Thomas Moore

8, St. James's Street, November 1, 1811.

Sir, — As I should be very sorry to interrupt your Sunday's engagement, if Monday, or any other day of the ensuing week, would be equally convenient to yourself and friend, I will then have the honour of accepting his invitation.

Of the professions of esteem with which Mr. Rogers has honoured me, I cannot but feel proud, though undeserving. I should be wanting to myself, if insensible to the praise of such a man; and, should my approaching interview with him and his friend lead to any degree of intimacy with both or either, I shall regard our past correspondence as one of the happiest events of my life. I have the honour to be,

Your very sincere and obedient servant,

Byron.

“Neither Moore nor myself had ever seen Byron when it was settled that he should dine at my house to meet Moore; nor was he known by sight to Campbell, who, happening to call upon me that morning, consented to join the party. I thought it best that I alone should be in the drawing-room when Byron entered it; and Moore and Campbell accordingly withdrew. Soon after his arrival, they returned; and I introduced them to him severally, naming them as Adam named the beasts. When we sat down to dinner, I asked Byron if he would take soup? ‘No; he never took soup.’ ‘Would he take some fish?’ ‘No; he never took fish.’ Presently I asked if he would eat some mutton? ‘No; he never ate mutton.’ I then asked if he would take a glass of wine? ‘No; he never tasted wine.’ It was now necessary to inquire what he *did* eat and drink; and the answer was, ‘Nothing but hard biscuits and soda-water.’ Unfortunately, neither hard biscuits nor soda-water were at hand; and he dined upon potatoes bruised down on his plate and drenched with vinegar. My guests stayed very late, discussing the merits of Walter Scott and Joanna Baillie. Some days after, meeting Hobhouse, I said to him, ‘How long will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?’ He replied, ‘Just as long as you continue to notice it.’ I did not then know, what I now know to be a fact, that Byron, after leaving my house, had gone to a Club in St. James's Street and eaten a hearty meat-supper”

(*Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*, pp. 231, 232). Moore's (*Life*, p. 145) first impressions of Byron were

“the nobleness of his air, his beauty, the gentleness of his voice and manners,

and — what was naturally not the least attraction — his marked kindness to myself. Being in mourning for his mother, the colour, as well of his dress, as of his glossy, curling, and picturesque hair, gave more effect to the pure, spiritual paleness of his features, in the expression of which, when he spoke, there was a perpetual play of lively thought, though melancholy was their habitual character when in repose.”

“the town mouse a sleek, well-fed, sly, *white* mouse, and the country mouse with its rough, weather-worn face and grey hairs; the town mouse displaying its delicate little rolls and pyramids of glistening strawberries, the country mouse exulting in its hollow tree, its crust of bread and liberty, and rallying its brother on his late hours and frequent dinners.”

One of his earliest recollections was the sight of a rebel’s head upon a pole at Temple Bar. He had talked with a Thames boatman who remembered Pope; had seen Garrick in *The Suspicious Husband*; had heard Sir Joshua Reynolds deliver his last lecture as President of the Royal Academy; had seen John Wesley “lying in state” in the City Road; had gone to call on Dr. Johnson, but, when his hand was on the knocker, found his courage fled. He lived to be offered the laureateship in 1850, on the death of Wordsworth, and to decline it in favour of Tennyson.

“Time was,” wrote Mathias (*Pursuits of Literature*, note, p. 360, ed. 1808), “when bankers were as stupid as their guineas could make them; they were neither orators, nor painters, nor poets. But now. .. Mr. Rogers dreams on Parnassus; and, if I am rightly informed, there is a great demand among his brethren for the *Pleasures of Memory*.”

Rogers began to write poetry at an early age, and continued to write it all his life. His *Ode to Superstition* was published in 1786; the *Pleasures of Memory*, in 1792; the *Epistle to a Friend*, in 1798; *Columbus*, in 1812; *Jacqueline*, in 1813; *Human Life*, in 1819; *Italy*, in 1822-34. His later years were occupied in revising, correcting, or amplifying his published poems, and in preparing the notes to *Italy*, which are admirable studies in compactness and precision of language. A disciple of Pope, an imitator of Goldsmith, Rogers was rather a skilful adapter than an original poet. His chief talent was his taste; if he could not originate, he could appreciate. The fastidious care which he lavished on his work has preserved it. In his commonplace-book he has entered the number of years which he spent in composing and revising his poems. His *Pleasures of Memory* occupied seven years, *Columbus* fourteen, and *Italy* fifteen. An excellent judge of art, he employed Flaxman, Stothard, and Turner at a time when their powers

were little appreciated by his fellow-countrymen. Of his taste Byron speaks enthusiastically in his *Journal* (see p. 331). But the following passage (hitherto unpublished) from his *Detached Thoughts* (Ravenna, 1821) gives his later opinion of the man:

“When Sheridan was on his death-bed, Rogers aided him with purse and person. This was particularly kind of Rogers, who always spoke ill of Sheridan (to me, at least), but, indeed, he does that of everybody to anybody. Rogers is the reverse of the line:

‘The *best good man* with the *worst* natured Muse,’

being:

‘The *worst good man* with the *best* natured Muse.’

His Muse being all Sentiment and Sago and Sugar, while he himself is a venomous talker. I say ‘worst good man’ because he is (perhaps) a *good* man; at least he does good now and then, as well he may, to purchase himself a shilling’s worth of salvation for his slanders. They are so *little*, too — small talk — and old Womanny, and he is malignant too — and envious — and — he be damned!”

In a manuscript note to these passages Sir Walter Scott writes,

“I never heard Rogers say a single word against Byron, which is rather odd too. Byron wrote a bitter and undeserved satire on Rogers. This conduct must have been motived by something or other.”

Speaking of Rogers and Sheridan, he says,

“He certainly took pennyworths out of his friend’s character. I sat three hours for my picture to Sir Thomas Lawrence, during which the whole conversation was filled up by Rogers with stories of Sheridan, for the least of which, if true, he deserved the gallows. One respected his committing a rape on his sister-in-law on the day of her husband’s funeral. Others were worse.”

In politics Rogers was a Whig, in religion a Presbyterian. But he meddled little with either. In private life he was as kindly in action as he was caustic in speech. A sensitive man himself, he studied to be satirical to others. When Ward condemned *Columbus* in the *Quarterly Review*, Rogers repaid his critic in the stinging epigram:

“Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it; —
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.”

Byron warmly admired Rogers’s poetry. To him he dedicated *The Giaour*, in “admiration for his genius, respect for his character, and gratitude for his friendship.”

The *Quarterly Review*, in an article on *The Corsair* and *Lara*, mentions “the highly refined, but somewhat insipid, pastoral tale of *Jacqueline*.”

Byron, on reading the review, said to Lady Byron,

“The man’s a fool. *Jacqueline* is as superior to *Lara* as Rogers is to me”

(*Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*, p. 154, note).

“The *Pleasures of Memory*,” he said (Lady Blessington’s *Conversations*, p. 153), “is a very beautiful poem, harmonious, finished, and chaste; it contains not a single meretricious ornament. If Rogers has not fixed himself in the higher fields of Parnassus, he has, at least, cultivated a very pretty flower-garden at its base.”

But he goes on to speak of the poem (p. 354) as

“a *hortus siccus* of pretty flowers,” and an illustration of “the difference between inspiration and versification.”

If Rogers ever saw Byron’s *Question and Answer* (1818), he was generous enough to forget the satire. In *Italy* he paid a noble tribute to the genius of the dead poet —

“He is now at rest;
And praise and blame fall on his ear alike,
Now dull in death. Yes, Byron, thou art gone,
Gone like a star that through the firmament
Shot and was lost, in its eccentric course
Dazzling, perplexing. Yet thy heart, methinks,
Was generous, noble — noble in its scorn
Of all things low or little; nothing there
Sordid or servile. If imagined wrongs
Pursued thee, urging thee sometimes to do
Things long regretted, oft, as many know,
None more than I, thy gratitude would build
On slight foundations; and, if in thy life
Not happy, in thy death thou surely wert,
Thy wish accomplished; dying in the land
Where thy young mind had caught ethereal fire,
Dying in Greece, and in a cause so glorious!
They in thy train — ah, little did they think,
As round we went, that they so soon should sit
Mourning beside thee, while a Nation mourned,
Changing her festal for her funeral song;

That they so soon should hear the minute-gun,
As morning gleamed on what remained of thee,
Roll o'er the sea, the mountains, numbering
Thy years of joy and sorrow.
Thou art gone;
And he who would assail thee in thy grave,
Oh, let him pause! For who among us all,
Tried as thou wert — even from thy earliest years,
When wandering, yet unspoilt, a Highland boy —
Tried as thou wert, and with thy soul of flame;
Pleasure, while yet the down was on thy cheek,
Uplifting, pressing, and to lips like thine,
Her charmed cup — ah, who among us all
Could say he had not erred as much, and more?"

208 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James's Street, November 17, 1811.

Dear Hodgson, — I have been waiting for the letter which was to have been sent by you *immediately*, and must again jog your memory on the subject. I believe I wrote you a full and true account of poor — 's proceedings. Since his reunion to — , I have heard nothing further from him. What a pity! a man of talent, past the heyday of life, and a clergyman, to fall into such imbecility. I have heard from Hobhouse, who has at last sent more copy to Cawthorn for his *Travels*. I franked an enormous cover for you yesterday, seemingly to convey at least twelve cantos on any given subject. I fear the I aspect of it was too *epic* for the post. From this and other coincidences I augur a publication on your part, but what, or when, or how much, you must disclose immediately.

I don't know what to say about coming down to Cambridge at present, but live in hopes. I am so completely superannuated there, and besides feel it something brazen in me to wear my magisterial habit, after all my buffooneries, that I hardly think I shall venture again. And being now an disciple I won't come within wine-shot of such determined toppers as your collegiates. I have not yet subscribed to Bowen. I mean to cut Harrow "*enim unquam*" as somebody classically said for a farewell sentence. I am superannuated there too, and, in short, as old at twenty-three as many men at seventy.

Do write and send this letter that hath been so long in your custody. It is

important that Moore should be certain that I never received it, if it be *his*. Are you drowned in a bottle of Port? or a Kilderkin of Ale? that I have never heard from you, or are you fallen into a fit of perplexity? Cawthorn has declined, and the MS. is returned to him. This is all at present from yours in the faith,

“I enclose you the long-delayed letter, which, from the similarity of hands alone, Davies and I will go shares in a bet of ten to one is the cartel in question.”

209 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James's Street, December 4, 1811.

My Dear Hodgson, — I have seen Miller, who will see Bland, but I have no great hopes of his obtaining the translation from the crowd of candidates. Yesterday I wrote to Harness, who will probably tell you what I said on the subject. Hobhouse has sent me my Romaic MS., and I shall require your aid in correcting the press, as your Greek eye is more correct than mine. But these will not come to type this month, I dare say. I have put some soft lines on ye Scotch in the *Curse of Minerva*; take them;

“Yet Caledonia claims some native worth,” *etc.*

If you are not content now, I must say with the Irish drummer to the deserter who called out,

“Flog high, flog low”

“The de'il burn ye, there's no pleasing you, flog where one will.”

Have you given up wine, even British wine?

I have read Watson to Gibbon. He proves nothing, so I am where I was, verging towards Spinoza; and yet it is a gloomy Creed, and I want a better, but there is something Pagan in me that I cannot shake off. In short, I deny nothing, but doubt everything. The post brings me to a conclusion. Bland has just been here. Yours ever,

BN.

210 — to William Harness

8, St. James's Street, Dec. 6, 1811.

My Dear Harness, — I write again, but don't suppose I mean to lay such a tax on your pen and patience as to expect regular replies. When you are inclined, write: when silent, I shall have the consolation of knowing that you are much better employed. Yesterday, Bland and I called on Mr. Miller, who, being then out, will call on Bland to-day or tomorrow. I shall certainly endeavour to bring them together. — You are censorious, child; when you are a little older, you will learn to dislike every body, but abuse nobody.

With regard to the person of whom you speak, your own good sense must direct you. I never pretend to advise, being an implicit believer in the old proverb. This present frost is detestable. It is the first I have felt for these three years, though I longed for one in the oriental summer, when no such thing is to be had, unless I had gone to the top of Hymettus for it.

I thank you most truly for the concluding part of your letter. I have been of late not much accustomed to kindness from any quarter, and am not the less pleased to meet with it again from one where I had known it earliest. I have not changed in all my ramblings, — Harrow, and, of course, yourself, never left me, and the

“Dulces reminiscitur Argos”

attended me to the very spot to which that sentence alludes in the mind of the fallen Argive. — Our intimacy began before we began to date at all, and it rests with you to continue it till the hour which must number it and me with the things that were.

Do read mathematics. — I should think *X plus Y* at least as amusing as the *Curse of Kehama*, and much more intelligible. Master Southey's poems *are*, in fact, what parallel lines might be — viz. prolonged *ad infinitum* without meeting anything half so absurd as themselves.

“What news, what news? Queen Orraca,
What news of scribblers five?
S — — , W — — , C — — , L — — d, and L — — e?
All damn'd, though yet alive.”

Coleridge is lecturing.

“Many an old fool,” said Hannibal to some such lecturer, “but such as this, never.”

Ever yours, *etc.*

“What news, O King Affonso,

What news of the Friars five?
Have they preached to the Miramamolin;
And are they still alive?"

The blanks stand for Scott or Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lloyd, and Lamb(e), with the lines from *New Morality* in his mind:

"Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd and Lamb and Co.,
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux."

Collier, in his notes of Coleridge's conversation (November I, 1811), gives the substance, in all probability, of the attack on Campbell alluded to in the next letter. Coleridge said that

"neither Southey, Scott, nor Campbell would by their poetry survive much beyond the day when they lived and wrote. Their works seemed to him not to have the seeds of vitality, the real germs of long life. The two first were entertaining as tellers of stories in verse; but the last, in his *Pleasures of Hope*, obviously had no fixed design, but when a thought (of course, not a very original one) came into his head, he put it down in couplets, and afterwards strung the *disjecta membra* (not *poetæ*) together. Some of the best things in it were borrowed; for instance the line:

'And freedom shriek'd when Kosciusko fell,'

was taken from a much-ridiculed piece by Dennis, a pindaric on William III.:

'Fair Liberty shriek'd out aloud, aloud Religion groaned.'

It is the same production in which the following much-laughed-at specimen of bathos is found:

'Nor Alps nor Pyreneans keep him out,
Nor fortified redoubt.'

Coleridge had little toleration for Campbell, and considered him, as far as he had gone, a mere verse-maker "

(Ashe's Introduction to *Lectures on Shakspeare*, pp. 16, 17).

"I have seen many old fools often, but such an old fool as Phormio, never
(*Multos se deliros senes sæpe vidisse; sed qui magis, quam Phormio, deliraret, vidisse neminem*)"

(Cicero, *De Oratore*, ii. 18).

211 — to James Wedderburn Webster

8, St. James's St., Dec. 7th, 1811.

My Dear W., — I was out of town during the arrival of your letters, but forwarded all on my return.

I hope you are going on to your satisfaction, and that her Ladyship is about to produce an heir with all his mother's Graces and all his Sire's good qualities. You know I am to be a Godfather. Byron Webster! a most heroic name, say what you please.

Don't be alarmed; my "*caprice*" won't lead me in to Dorset. No, *Bachelors* for me! I consider you as dead to us, and all my future *devoirs* are but tributes of respect to your *Memory*. Poor fellow! he was a facetious companion and well respected by all who knew him; but he is gone. Sooner or later we must all come to it.

I see nothing of you in the *papers*, the only place where I don't wish to see you; but you will be in town in the Winter. What dost thou do? shoot, hunt, and "wind up y'e Clock" as Caleb Quotem says?

That thou art vastly happy, I doubt not.

I see your brother in law at times, and like him much; but we miss you much; I shall leave town in a fortnight to pass my Xmas in Notts.

Good afternoon, Dear W.

Believe me, Yours ever most truly,

B.

"I'm parish clerk and sexton here,
My name is Caleb Quotem,
I'm painter, glazier, auctioneer,
In short, I am factotum."

...

"At night by the fire, like a good, jolly cock,
When my day's work is done and all over,
I tipple, I smoke, and I wind up the clock,
With my sweet Mrs. Quotem in clover.

212 — to William Harness

St. James's Street, Dec. 8, 1811.

Behold a most formidable sheet, without gilt or black edging, and consequently very vulgar and indecorous, particularly to one of your precision; but this being Sunday, I can procure no better, and will atone for its length by not filling it. Bland I have not seen since my last letter; but on Tuesday he dines with me, and will meet Moore, the epitome of all that is exquisite in poetical or personal accomplishments. How Bland has settled with Miller, I know not. I have very little interest with either, and they must arrange their concerns according to their own gusto. I have done my endeavours, *at your request*, to bring them together, and hope they may agree to their mutual advantage.

Coleridge has been lecturing against Campbell.

Rogers was present, and from him I derive the information. We are going to make a party to hear this Manichean of poesy. Pole is to marry Miss Long, and will be a very miserable dog for all that. The present ministers are to continue, and his Majesty *does* continue in the same state; so there's folly and madness for you, both in a breath.

I never heard but of one man truly fortunate, and he was Beaumarchais, the author of *Figaro*, who buried two wives and gained three lawsuits before he was thirty.

And now, child, what art thou doing? *Reading, I trust*. I want to see you take a degree. Remember, this is the most important period of your life; and don't disappoint your papa and your aunt, and all your kin — besides myself. Don't you know that all male children are begotten for the express purpose of being graduates? and that even I am an A.M., though how I became so the Public Orator only can resolve. Besides, you are to be a priest; and to confute Sir William Drummond's late book about the Bible (printed, but not published), and all other infidels whatever. Now leave Master H.'s gig, and Master S.'s Sapphics, and become as immortal as Cambridge can make you.

You see, *Mio Carissimo*, what a pestilent correspondent I am likely to become; but then you shall be as quiet at Newstead as you please, and I won't disturb your studies as I do now. When do you fix the day, that I may take you up according to contract? Hodgson talks of making a third in our journey; but we can't stow him, inside at least. Positively you shall go with me as was agreed,

and don't let me have any of your *politesse* to H. on the occasion. I shall manage to arrange for both with a little contrivance. I wish H. was not quite so fat, and we should pack better. You will want to know what I am doing — chewing tobacco.

You see nothing of my allies, Scrope Davies and Matthews — they don't suit you; and how does it happen that I — who am a pipkin of the same pottery — continue in your good graces? Good night, — I will go on in the morning.

Dec. 9th. — In a morning I am always sullen, and to-day is as sombre as myself. Rain and mist are worse than a sirocco, particularly in a beef-eating and beer-drinking country. My bookseller, Cawthorne, has just left me, and tells me, with a most important face, that he is in treaty for a novel of Madame D'Arblay's, for which 1000 guineas are asked! He wants me to read the MS. (if he obtains it), which I shall do with pleasure; but I should be very cautious in venturing an opinion on her whose *Cecilia* Dr. Johnson superintended.

If he lends it to me, I shall put it in the hands of Rogers and Moore, who are truly men of taste. I have filled the sheet, and beg your pardon; I will not do it again. I shall, perhaps, write again; but if not, believe, silent or scribbling, that I am,

My dearest William, ever, *etc.*

“As dreadful as the Manichean God,
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.”

“Long may Long-Tilney-Wellesley-Long-Pole live.”

For Byron's allusion to him in *The Waltz*, see *Poems*, 1898, vol. i. p. 484, note 1. Having run through his wife's large fortune by his extravagant expenditure at Wanstead Park and elsewhere, he was obliged, in 1822, to escape from his creditors to the Continent. There (1823-25) he lived with Mrs. Bligh, wife of Captain Bligh, of the Coldstream Guards. His wife died in 1825, after filing a bill for divorce, and making her children wards of Chancery. Wellesley subsequently (1828) married Mrs. Bligh; but the second wife was as ill treated as the first, and he left her so destitute that she was a frequent applicant for relief at the metropolitan police-courts. He died of heart-disease in July, 1857, a pensioner on the charity of his cousin, the second Duke of Wellington.

“When you go to Naples,” said Byron to Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, pp. 238, 239), “you must make acquaintance with Sir William Drummond, for

he is certainly one of the most erudite men and admirable philosophers now living. He has all the wit of Voltaire, with a profundity that seldom appertains to wit, and writes so forcibly, and with such elegance and purity of style, that his works possess a peculiar charm. Have you read his *Academical Questions*? If not, get them directly, and I think you will agree with me, that the preface to that work alone would prove Sir William Drummond an admirable writer. He concludes it by the following sentence, which I think one of the best in our language:

‘Prejudice may be trusted to guard the outworks for a short space of time, while Reason slumbers in the citadel; but if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for herself. Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty support each other; he who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not is a slave.’

Is not the passage admirable? How few could have written it! and yet how few read Drummond’s works! They are too good to be popular. His *Odin* is really a fine poem, and has some passages that are beautiful, but it is so little read that it may be said to have dropped still-born from the press — a mortifying proof of the bad taste of the age. His translation of Persius is not only very literal, but preserves much of the spirit of the original;... he has escaped all the defects of translators, and his Persius resembles the original as nearly, in feeling and sentiment, as two languages so dissimilar in idiom will admit.”

“I am indescribably occupied,” she writes to Dr. Burney, October 12, 1813, “in giving more and more last touches to my work, about which I begin to grow very anxious. I am to receive merely £500 upon delivery of the MS.; the two following £500 by instalments from nine months to nine months, that is, in a year and a half from the day of publication. If all goes well, the whole will be £3000, but only at the end of the sale of eight thousand copies.”

The book failed; but rumour magnified the sum received by the writer. Mrs. Piozzi, shortly after the publication of *The Wanderer* and of Byron’s lines, “Weep, daughter of a royal line,” writes to Samuel Lysons, February 17, 1814:

“Come now, do send me a kind letter and tell me if Madame d’Arblaye gets £3000 for her book or no, and if Lord Byron is to be called over about some verses he has written, as the papers hint.”

(*Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains*, vol. ii. p. 246).

London, Dec. 8, 1811.

I sent you a sad *Tale of Three Friars* the other day, and now take a dose in another style. I wrote it a day or two ago, on hearing a song of former days.

“Away, away, ye notes of woe,” etc., etc.

I have gotten a book by Sir W. Drummond (printed, but not published), entitled *Ædipus Judaicus* in which he attempts to prove the greater part of the Old Testament an allegory, particularly Genesis and Joshua. He professes himself a theist in the preface, and handles the literal interpretation very roughly. I wish you could see it. Mr. Ward has lent it me, and I confess to me it is worth fifty Watsons.

You and Harness must fix on the time for your visit to Newstead; I can command mine at your wish, unless any thing particular occurs in the interim. Master William Harness and I have recommenced a most fiery correspondence; I like him as Euripides liked Agatho, or Darby admired Joan, as much for the past as the present. Bland dines with me on Tuesday to meet Moore. Coleridge has attacked the *Pleasures of Hope*, and all other pleasures whatsoever. Mr. Rogers was present, and heard himself indirectly *rowed* by the lecturer. We are going in a party to hear the new Art of Poetry by this reformed schismatic; and were I one of these poetical luminaries, or of sufficient consequence to be noticed by the man of lectures, I should not hear him without an answer. For you know,

“an a man will be beaten with brains, he shall never keep a clean doublet.”

Campbell will be desperately annoyed. I never saw a man (and of him I have seen very little) so sensitive; — what a happy temperament! I am sorry for it; what can *he* fear from criticism? I don’t know if Bland has seen Miller, who was to call on him yesterday.

To-day is the Sabbath, — a day I never pass pleasantly, but at Cambridge; and, even there, the organ is a sad remembrancer. Things are stagnant enough in town; as long as they don’t retrograde, ‘tis all very well. Hobhouse writes and writes and writes, and is an author. I do nothing but eschew tobacco. I wish parliament were assembled, that I may hear, and perhaps some day be heard; — but on this point I am not very sanguine. I have many plans; — sometimes I think of the East again, and dearly beloved Greece. I am well, but weakly. Yesterday Kinnaird told me I looked very ill, and sent me home happy.

You will never give up wine. See what it is to be thirty! if you were six years younger, you might leave off anything. You drink and repent; you repent and drink.

Is Scrope still interesting and invalid? And how does Hinde with his cursed chemistry? To Harness I have written, and he has written, and we have all

written, and have nothing now to do but write again, till Death splits up the pen and the scribbler.

The Alfred has three hundred and fifty-four candidates for six vacancies. The cook has run away and left us liable, which makes our committee very plaintive. Master Brook, our head serving-man, has the gout, and our new cook is none of the best. I speak from report, — for what is cookery to a leguminous-eating Ascetic? So now you know as much of the matter as I do. Books and quiet are still there, and they may dress their dishes in their own way for me. Let me know your determination as to Newstead, and believe me, Yours ever,

“Ward is one of the best-informed men I know, and, in a *tête-à-tête*, is one of the most agreeable companions. He has great originality, and, being *très distrait*, it adds to the piquancy of his observations, which are sometimes somewhat *trop naïve*, though always amusing. This *naïveté* of his is the more piquant from his being really a good-natured man, who unconsciously thinks aloud. Interest Ward on a subject, and I know no one who can talk better. His expressions are concise without being poor, and terse and epigrammatic without being affected,” *etc.*

Of somewhat the same opinion was Lady H. Leveson Gower (*Letters of Harriet, Countess Granville*, vol. i. pp. 41, 42):

“The charm of Mr. Ward’s conversation is exactly what Mr. Luttrell wants, a sort of *abandon*, and being entertaining because it is his nature and he cannot help it. I only mean Mr. Ward in his happier hour, for what I have said of him is the very reverse of what he is when vanity or humour seize upon him.”

“In the evening at Coleridge’s lecture. Conclusion of Milton. Not one of the happiest of Coleridge’s efforts. Rogers was there, and with him was Lord Byron. He was wrapped up, but I recognized his club foot, and, indeed, his countenance and general appearance.”

Footnote 4:

Benedict

No; if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him.

Much Ado about Nothing, act v. sc. 4.

Campbell also apparently read his lectures aloud at private houses. Miss Berry (*Journal*, vol. ii. p. 502) mentions a dinner-party on June 26, 1812, at the Princess of Wales's, where she heard him read his "first discourse," delivered at the Institution. Again (*ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 6), she dined with Madame de Stael, March 9, 1814:

"Nobody but Campbell the poet, Rocca, and her own daughter. After dinner, Campbell read to us a discourse of his upon English poetry, and upon some of the great poets. There are always signs of a poet and critic of genius in all he does, often encumbered by too ornate a style."

Campbell's best work was done between 1798 and 1810. Within that period were published *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), and such other shorter poems as *Hohenlinden*, *Ye Mariners of England*, *The Battle of the Baltic*, and *O'Connor's Child*. His *Ritter Bann*, a reminiscence of his sojourn abroad (1800-1), was not published till later; both it and *The Last Man* were published in the *New Monthly Magazine*, during the period of his editorship. An excellent judge of verse, he collected *Specimens of the British Poets* (1819), to which he added a valuable essay on poetry and short biographies. His *Theodoric* (1824), *Pilgrim of Glencoe* (1842), and *Lives of Mrs. Siddons, Petrarch, and Shakespeare* added nothing to his reputation.

The judgment of contemporary poets in the main agreed with Coleridge's estimate of Campbell's work.

"There are some of Campbell's lyrics," said Rogers (*Table-Talk*, etc., pp. 254, 255), which will never die. His *Pleasures of Hope* is no great favourite with me. The feeling throughout his *Gertrude* is very beautiful."

Wordsworth also thought the *Pleasures of Hope*

"strangely overrated; its fine words and sounding lines please the generality of readers, who never stop to ask themselves the meaning of a passage."

Byron, who calls Campbell "a warm-hearted and honest man," thought that his

“‘Lochiel’ and ‘Mariners’ are spirit-stirring productions; his *Gertrude of Wyoming* is beautiful; and some of the episodes in his *Pleasures of Hope* pleased me so much that I know them by heart”

(Lady Blessington’s *Conversations with Lord Byron*, p. 353).

George Ticknor, who met Campbell in 1815 (*Life*, vol. i. p. 63), says,

“He is a short, small man, and has one of the roundest and most lively faces I have seen amongst this grave people. His manners seemed as open as his countenance, and his conversation as spirited as his poetry. He could have kept me amused till morning.”

Shortly afterwards, Ticknor went to see him at Sydenham (*ibid.*, p. 65):

“Campbell had the same good spirits and love of merriment as when I met him before, — the same desire to amuse everybody about him; but still I could see, as I partly saw then, that he labours under the burden of an extraordinary reputation, too easily acquired, and feels too constantly that it is necessary for him to make an exertion to satisfy expectation. The consequence is that, though he is always amusing, he is not always quite natural.”

Sir Walter Scott made a similar remark about the numbing effect of Campbell’s reputation upon his literary work; his deference to critics ruined his individuality. It was Scott’s admiration for *Hohenlinden* which induced Campbell to publish the poem. The two men, travelling in a stage-coach alone, beguiled the way by repeating poetry. At last Scott asked Campbell for something of his own. He replied that there was one thing he had never printed, full of “drums and trumpets and blunderbusses and thunder,” and that he did not know if there was any good in it. He then repeated *Hohenlinden*. When he had finished, Scott broke out with,

“But, do you know, that’s devilish fine! Why, it’s the finest thing you ever wrote, and it *must* be printed!”

Kinnaird was Byron’s “trusty and trustworthy trustee and banker, and crown and sheet anchor.” It was at his suggestion that Byron wrote the *Hebrew Melodies* and the *Monody on the Death of Sheridan*. Talking of Kinnaird to Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, p. 215), Byron said,

“My friend Dug is a proof that a good heart cannot compensate for an irritable temper; whenever he is named, people dwell on the last and pass over the first; and yet he really has an excellent heart, and a sound head, of which I, in common with many others of his friends, have had various proofs. He is clever, too, and well informed, and I do think would have made a figure in the world, were it not for his temper, which gives a dictatorial tone to his manner, that is

offensive to the *amour propre* of those with whom he mixes.”

“I was a member of the Alfred. It was pleasant; a little too sober and literary, and bored with Sotheby and Sir Francis d’Ivernois; but one met Peel, and Ward, and Valentia, and many other pleasant or known people; and it was, upon the whole, a decent resource in a rainy day, in a dearth of parties, or parliament, or in an empty season.”

It was, says Mr. Wheatley (*London Past and Present*), known as the *Half-read*.

In a manuscript note, now for the first time printed as written, on the above passage from Byron’s *Detached Thoughts*, Sir Walter Scott writes,

“The Alfred, like all other clubs, was much haunted with boars, a tusky monster which delights to range where men most do congregate. A boar, or bore, is always remarkable for something respectable, such as wealth, character, high birth, acknowledged talent, or, in short, for something that forbids people to turn him out by the shoulders, or, in other words, to cut him dead. Much of this respectability is supplied by the mere circumstance of belonging to a certain society of clubists, within whose districts the bore obtains free-warren, and may wallow or grunt at pleasure. Old stagers in the club know and avoid the fated corner and arm-chair which he haunts; but he often rushes from his lair on the inexperienced.”

214 — to Thomas Moore

December 11, 1811.

My Dear Moore, — If you please, we will drop our former monosyllables, and adhere to the appellations sanctioned by our godfathers and godmothers. If you make it a point, I will withdraw your name; at the same time there is no occasion, as I have this day postponed your election *sine die*, till it shall suit your wishes to be amongst us. I do not say this from any awkwardness the erasure of your proposal would occasion to *me*, but simply such is the state of the case; and, indeed, the longer your name is up, the stronger will become your probability of success, and your voters more numerous. Of course you will decide — your wish shall be my law. If my zeal has already outrun discretion, pardon me, and attribute my officiousness to an excusable motive.

I wish you would go down with me to Newstead. Hodgson will be there, and a young friend, named Harness, the earliest and dearest I ever had from the third

form at Harrow to this hour. I can promise you good wine, and, if you like shooting, a manor of 4000 acres, fires, books, your own free will, and my own very indifferent company. *Balnea, vina, Venus.*

Hodgson will plague you, I fear, with verse; — for my own part I will conclude, with Martial, *nil recitabo tibi*; and surely the last inducement, is not the least. Ponder on my proposition, and believe me, my dear Moore,
Yours ever,

Byron.

“*Balnea, vina, Venus corrumpunt corpora nostra.*”

The words are thus given in Grüter (*Corpus Inscriptionum* (1603), p. DCCCCXII. 10.

“*Plus ego polliceor: nil recitabo tibi.*”

215 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James's Street, Dec. 12, 1811.

Why, Hodgson! I fear you have left off wine and me at the same time, — I have written and written and written, and no answer! My dear Sir Edgar, water disagrees with you — drink sack and write. Bland did not come to his appointment, being unwell, but Moore supplied all other vacancies most delectably. I have hopes of his joining us at Newstead. I am sure you would like him more and more as he developes, — at least I do.

How Miller and Bland go on, I don't know. Cawthorne talks of being in treaty for a novel of Madame D'Arblay's, and if he obtains it (at 1500 guineas!!) wishes me to see the MS. This I should read with pleasure, — not that I should ever dare to venture a criticism on her whose writings Dr. Johnson once revised, but for the pleasure of the thing. If my worthy publisher wanted a sound opinion, I should send the MS. to Rogers and Moore, as men most alive to true taste. I have had frequent letters from Wm. Harness, and *you* are silent; certes, you are not a schoolboy. However, I have the consolation of knowing that you are better employed, *viz.* reviewing. You don't deserve that I should add another syllable, and I won't.

Yours, *etc.*

P.S. — I only wait for your answer to fix our meeting.

216 — to R. C. Dallas

[Undated, Dec.? 1811]

Dear Sir, — I have only this scrubby paper to write on — excuse it. I am certain that I sent some more notes on Spain and Portugal, particularly one on the latter. Pray rummage, and don't mind my *politics*. I believe I leave town next week. Are you better? I hope so.

Yours ever,
B.

217 — to William Harness

8, St. James's Street, Dec. 15, 1811.

I wrote you an answer to your last, which, on reflection, pleases me as little as it probably has pleased yourself. I will not wait for your rejoinder; but proceed to tell you, that I had just then been greeted with an epistle of — — 's, full of his petty grievances, and this at the moment when (from circumstances it is not necessary to enter upon) I was bearing up against recollections to which *his* imaginary sufferings are as a scratch to a cancer. These things combined, put me out of humour with him and all mankind. The latter part of my life has been a perpetual struggle against affections which embittered the earliest portion; and though I flatter myself I have in a great measure conquered them, yet there are moments (and this was one) when I am as foolish as formerly. I never said so much before, nor had I said this now, if I did not suspect myself of having been rather savage in my letter, and wish to inform you this much of the cause. You know I am not one of your dolorous gentlemen: so now let us laugh again.

Yesterday I went with Moore to Sydenham to visit Campbell. He was not visible, so we jogged homeward merrily enough. Tomorrow I dine with Rogers, and am to hear Coleridge, who is a kind of rage at present. Last night I saw Kemble in *Coriolanus*; — he *was glorious*, and exerted himself wonderfully. By good luck I got an excellent place in the best part of the house, which was more than overflowing. Clare and Delawarr, who were there on the same speculation,

were less fortunate. I saw them by accident, — we were not together. I wished for you, to gratify your love of Shakspeare and of fine acting to its fullest extent. Last week I saw an exhibition of a different kind in a Mr. Coates, at the Haymarket, who performed Lothario in a *damned* and damnable manner.

I told you the fate of B[land] and H[odgson] in my last. So much for these sentimentalists, who console themselves in their stews for the loss — the never to be recovered loss — the despair of the refined attachment of a couple of drabs! You censure *my* life, Harness, — when I compare myself with these men, my elders and my betters, I really begin to conceive myself a monument of prudence — a walking statue — without feeling or failing; and yet the world in general hath given me a proud pre-eminence over them in profligacy. Yet I like the men, and, God knows, ought not to condemn their aberrations. But I own I feel provoked when they dignify all this by the name of *love* — romantic attachments for things marketable for a dollar!

Dec. 16th. — I have just received your letter; — I feel your kindness very deeply. The foregoing part of my letter, written yesterday, will, I hope, account for the tone of the former, though it cannot excuse it. I do *like* to hear from you — more than *like*. Next to seeing you, I have no greater satisfaction. But you have other duties, and greater pleasures, and I should regret to take a moment from either. H — — was to call to-day, but I have not seen him. The circumstances you mention at the close of your letter is another proof in favour of my opinion of mankind. Such you will always find them — selfish and distrustful. I except none. The cause of this is the state of society. In the world, every one is to stir for himself — it is useless, perhaps selfish, to expect any thing from his neighbour. But I do not think we are born of this disposition; for you find *friendship* as a schoolboy, and *love* enough before twenty.

I went to see — — ; he keeps me in town, where I don't wish to be at present. He is a good man, but totally without conduct. And now, my dearest William, I must wish you good morrow, and remain ever,
Most sincerely and affectionately yours, *etc.*

“On this occasion, another of the noble poet's peculiarities was, somewhat startlingly, introduced to my notice. When we were on the point of setting out from his lodgings in St. James's Street, it being then about midday, he said to the servant, who was shutting the door of the *vis-a-vis*, ‘Have you put in the pistols?’ and was answered in the affirmative. It was difficult, — more especially taking into account the circumstances under which we had just become acquainted, —

to keep from smiling at this singular noonday precaution.”

“Many gentlemen have been weak enough to fancy themselves actors, but no one ever persevered in obtruding himself for so long a time on the notice of the public in spite of laughter, hissing, etc.”

On December 9, 1811, he appeared at the Haymarket as “Lothario” in Rowe’s *Fair Penitent*. Mathews, at Covent Garden, imitated his performance, in Bate Dudley’s *At Home*, as “Mr. Romeo Rantall,” appearing in the

“pink silk vest and cloak, white satin breeches and stockings, Spanish hat, with a rich high plume of ostrich feathers,”

in which Coates had played “Lothario”.

Memoirs of Charles Mathews, vol. ii. pp. 238, 239).

218 — to Robert Rushton

8, St. James’s Street, Jan. 21, 1812.

Though I have no objection to your refusal to carry *letters* to Mealey’s, you will take care that the letters are taken by *Spero* at the proper time. I have also to observe, that Susan is to be treated with civility, and not *insulted* by any person over whom I have the smallest controul, or, indeed, by any one whatever, while I have the power to protect her. I am truly sorry to have any subject of complaint against *you*; I have too good an opinion of you to think I shall have occasion to repeat it, after the care I have taken of you, and my favourable intentions in your behalf. I see no occasion for any communication whatever between *you* and the *women*, and wish you to occupy yourself in preparing for the situation in which you will be placed. If a common sense of decency cannot prevent you from conducting yourself towards them with rudeness, I should at least hope that your *own interest*, and regard for a master who has *never* treated you with unkindness, will have some weight.

Yours, etc., **Byron.**

P.S. — I wish you to attend to your arithmetic, to occupy yourself in surveying, measuring, and making yourself acquainted with every particular relative to the *land* of Newstead, and you will *write* to me *one letter every week*, that I may know how you go on.

“Pray don’t forget me, as I shall never cease thinking of you, my Dearest *and*

only Friend, (signed) S. H. V.”

To this Byron has added this note:

“This was written on the 11th of January, 1812; on the 28th I received ample proof that the Girl had forgotten *me* and *herself* too. Heigho! B.”

The letters show, writes Moore (*Life*, p. 152),

“how gravely and coolly the young lord could arbitrate on such an occasion, and with what considerate leaning towards the servant whose fidelity he had proved, in preference to any new liking or fancy by which it might be suspected he was actuated toward the other.”

In a MS. book written by Mrs. Heath of Newstead (*née* Rebekah Beardall), it is stated that the elder Rushton had as his farm-servant Fletcher, afterwards Byron’s valet. Byron watched Fletcher and young Robert Rushton ploughing, took a fancy to both, and engaged them as his servants. Rushton accompanied Byron to Geneva, but afterwards entered the service of James Wedderburn Webster (see p. 2, 1). In 1827 he married a woman of the name of Bagnall, and with her help kept a school at Arnold, near Nottingham. Subsequently he took a farm on the Newstead estate, named Hazelford, and shortly afterwards died, leaving a widow and three children.

219 — to Robert Rushton

8, St. James’s Street, January 25, 1812.

Your refusal to carry the letter was not a subject of remonstrance: it was not a part of your business; but the language you used to the girl was (as *she* stated it) highly improper.

You say, that you also have something to complain of; then state it to me immediately: it would be very unfair, and very contrary to my disposition, not to hear both sides of the question.

If any thing has passed between you *before* or since my last visit to Newstead, do not be afraid to mention it. I am sure *you* would not deceive me, though *she* would. Whatever it is, *you*, shall be forgiven. I have not been without some suspicions on the subject, and am certain that, at your time of life, the blame could not attach to you. You will not *consult*, any one as to your answer, but write to me immediately. I shall be more ready to hear what you have to advance, as I do not remember ever to have heard a word from you before *against*, any human being, which convinces me you would not maliciously assert an untruth. There is not any one who can do the least injury to you, while you

conduct yourself properly. I shall expect your answer immediately. Yours, etc.,

Byron.

220 — to Thomas Moore

January 29, 1812.

My Dear Moore, — I wish very much I could have seen you; I am in a state of ludicrous tribulation. — —

Why do you say that I dislike your poesy? I have expressed no such opinion, either in *print* or elsewhere. In scribbling myself, it was necessary for me to find fault, and I fixed upon the trite charge of immorality, because I could discover no other, and was so perfectly qualified in the innocence of my heart, to “pluck that mote from my neighbour’s eye.”

I feel very, very much obliged by your approbation; but, at *this moment*, praise, even *your* praise, passes by me like “the idle wind.” I meant and mean to send you a copy the moment of publication; but now I can think of nothing but damned, deceitful, — delightful woman, as Mr. Liston says in the *Knight of Snowdon*?

Believe me, my dear Moore,

Ever yours, most affectionately, **Byron.**

“Having compared Rogers’s poems to a flower-garden, to what shall I compare Moore’s? — to the Valley of Diamonds, where all is brilliant and attractive, but where one is so dazzled by the sparkling on every side that one knows not where to fix, each gem beautiful in itself, but overpowering to the eye from their quantity.”

“Oh, woman! woman! deceitful, damnable, (*changing into a half-smile*) delightful woman! do all one can, there’s nothing else worth thinking of.”

221 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James's Street, Feb. 1, 1812.

My Dear Hodgson, — I am rather unwell with a vile cold, caught in the House of Lords last night. Lord Sligo and myself, being tired, *paired off*, being of opposite sides, so that nothing was gained or lost by *our* votes. I did not speak: but I might as well, for nothing could have been inferior to the Duke of Devonshire, Marquis of Downshire, and the Earl of Fitzwilliam. The Catholic Question comes on this month, and perhaps I may then commence. I must “screw my courage to the sticking-place,” and we’ll *not* fail.

Yours ever, B.

222 — to Samuel Rogers

February 4, 1812.

My Dear Sir, — With my best acknowledgments to Lord Holland, I have to offer my perfect concurrence in the propriety of the question previously to be put to ministers. If their answer is in the negative, I shall, with his Lordship’s approbation, give notice of a motion for a Committee of Inquiry. I would also gladly avail myself of his most able advice, and any information or documents with which he might be pleased to intrust me, to bear me out in the statement of facts it may be necessary to submit to the House.

From all that fell under my own observation during my Christmas visit to Newstead, I feel convinced that, if *conciliatory* measures are not very soon adopted, the most unhappy consequences may be apprehended.

Nightly outrage and daily depredation are already at their height; and not only the masters of frames, who are obnoxious on account of their occupation, but persons in no degree connected with the malecontents or their oppressors, are liable to insult and pillage.

I am very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken on my account, and beg you to believe me,

Ever your obliged and sincere, *etc.*

1. rendered the offence of frame-breaking punishable by death; and
2. compelled persons in whose houses the frames were broken to give

information to the magistrates

. On the second reading of the Bill (February 27, 1812), Byron spoke against it in his first speech in the House of Lords (see). The Bill passed its third reading on March 5, and became law as 52 Geo. III. c. 16. Byron did not confine his opposition to a speech in the House of Lords. He also addressed “An Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill,” which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* on Monday, March 2, 1812. The following letter to Perry, the editor, is published by permission of Messrs. Ellis and Elvey, in whose possession is the original:

“Sir, — I take the liberty of sending an alteration of the two last lines of Stanza 2’d which I wish to run as follows,

‘Gibbets on Sherwood will *heighten* the Scenery
Shewing how Commerce, *how* Liberty thrives!’

I wish you could insert it tomorrow for a particular reason; but I feel much obliged by your inserting it at all. Of course, do not put *my name* to the thing.

Believe me, Your obliged and very obed’t Serv’t,

Byron. 8, St. James Street, Sunday,
March 1st, 1812.”

223 — To Master John Cowell

8, St. James’s Street, February 12, 1812.

My Dear John, — You have probably long ago forgotten the writer of these lines, who would, perhaps, be unable to recognize *yourself*, from the difference which must naturally have taken place in your stature and appearance since he saw you last. I have been rambling through Portugal, Spain, Greece, etc., etc., for some years, and have found so many changes on my return, that it would be very unfair not to expect that you should have had your share of alteration and improvement with the rest. I write to request a favour of you: a little boy of eleven years, the son of Mr. — — , my particular friend, is about to become an Etonian, and I should esteem any act of protection or kindness to him as an obligation to myself: let me beg of you then to take some little notice of him at first, till he is able to shift for himself.

I was happy to hear a very favourable account of you from a schoolfellow a

few weeks ago, and should be glad to learn that your family are as well as I wish them to be. I presume you are in the upper school; — as an *Etonian*, you will look down upon a *Harrow* man; but I never, even in my boyish days, disputed your superiority, which I once experienced in a cricket match, where I had the honour of making one of eleven, who were beaten to their hearts' content by your college in *one innings*.

Believe me to be, with great truth, etc., etc.,

B.

“Breakfasted with Mr. Cowell,” writes Moore, in his *Diary*, June 11, 1828, “having made his acquaintance for the purpose of gaining information about Lord Byron. Knew Byron for the first time when he himself was a little boy, from being in the habit of playing with B.’s dogs. Byron wrote to him to school to bid him mind his prosody. Gave me two or three of his letters to him. Saw a good deal of B. at Hastings; mentioned the anecdote about the ink-bottle striking one of the lead Muses. These Muses had been brought from Holland; and there were, I think, only eight of them arrived safe. Fletcher had brought B. a large jar of ink, and, not thinking it was full, B. had thrust his pen down to the very bottom; his anger at finding it come out all besmeared with ink made him chuck the jar out of the window, when it knocked down one of the Muses in the garden, and deluged her with ink. In 1813, when B. was at Salt Hill, he had Cowell over from Eton, and *pouched* him no less than ten pounds. Cowell has ever since kept one of the notes. Told me a curious anecdote of Byron’s mentioning to him, as if it had made a great impression on him, their seeing Shelley (as they thought) walking into a little wood at Lerici, when it was discovered afterwards that Shelley was at that time in quite another direction. ‘This,’ said Byron, in a sort of awe-struck voice, ‘was about ten days before his death.’ Cowell’s imitation of his look and manner very striking. Thinks that in Byron’s speech to Fletcher, when he was dying, threatening to appear to him, there was a touch of that humour and fun which he was accustomed to mix up with everything”.

(*Memoirs, Journals, etc.*, vol. v. pp. 302, 303).

224 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James’s Street, February 16, 1812.

Dear Hodgson, — I send you a proof. Last week I was very ill and confined to bed with stone in the kidney, but I am now quite recovered. The women are gone to their relatives, after many attempts to explain what was already too

clear. If the stone had got into my heart instead of my kidneys, it would have been all the better. However, I have quite recovered *that* also, and only wonder at my folly in excepting my own strumpets from the general corruption, — albeit a two months' weakness is better than ten years. I have one request to make, which is, never mention a woman again in any letter to me, or even allude to the existence of the sex. I won't even read a word of the feminine gender; — it must all be *propria quæ maribus*.

In the spring of 1813 I shall leave England for ever. Every thing in my affairs tends to this, and my inclinations and health do not discourage it. Neither my habits nor constitution are improved by your customs or your climate. I shall find employment in making myself a good Oriental scholar. I shall retain a mansion in one of the fairest islands, and retrace, at intervals, the most interesting portions of the East. In the mean time, I am adjusting my concerns, which will (when arranged) leave me with wealth sufficient even for home, but enough for a principality in Turkey. At present they are involved, but I hope, by taking some necessary but unpleasant steps, to clear every thing. Hobhouse is expected daily in London: we shall be very glad to see him; and, perhaps, you will come up and “drink deep ere he depart,” if not, “Mahomet must go to the mountain;” — but Cambridge will bring sad recollections to him, and worse to me, though for very different reasons. I believe the only human being, that ever loved me in truth and entirely, was of, or belonging to, Cambridge, and, in that, no change can now take place. There is one consolation in death — where he sets his seal, the impression can neither be melted nor broken, but endureth for ever.

Yours always,

B.

P.S. — I almost rejoice when one I love dies young, for I could never bear to see them old or altered.

“Mahomet made the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled; Mahomet called the hill to come to him, again and again; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said, ‘If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill.’“

London, February 21, 1812.

My Dear Hodgson, — There is a book entituled *Galt, his Travels in ye Archipelago*, daintily printed by Cadell and Davies, ye which I could desiderate might be criticised by you, inasmuch as ye author is a well-respected esquire of mine acquaintance, but I fear will meet with little mercy as a writer, unless a friend passeth judgment. Truth to say, ye boke is ye boke of a cock-brained man, and is full of devises crude and conceitede, but peradventure for my sake this grace may be vouchsafed unto him. Review him myself I can not, will not, and if you are likewise hard of heart, woe unto ye boke! ye which is a comely quarto.

Now then! I have no objection to review, if it pleases Griffiths to send books, or rather *you*, for you know the sort of things I like to [play] with. You will find what I say very serious as to my intentions. I have every reason to induce me to return to Ionia.

Believe me, yours always,

B.

“praised the *Annals of the Parish* very highly, as also *The Entail*,... some scenes of which, he said, had affected him very much.

‘The characters in Mr. Galt’s novels have an identity,’ added Byron, ‘that reminds me of Wilkie’s pictures’“

(Lady Blessington’s *Conversations with Lord Byron*, p. 74).

“When I knew Galt, years ago,” said Byron to Lady Blessington, I was not in a frame of mind to form an impartial opinion of him: his mildness and equanimity struck me even then; but, to say the truth, his manner had not deference enough for my then aristocratical taste, and finding I could not awe him into a respect sufficiently profound for my sublime self, either as a peer or an author, I felt a little grudge towards him that has now completely worn off,” etc., etc.

(*ibid.*, p. 249).

“I have already read a review of *Safie* in the *British Critic*, and will undertake it in the *Monthly* if Griffiths, with whom I am in very bad odour from my late shameful idleness, will allow me. Oh that you would write a good smart critique of something to get both *yourself and me* in high repute at Turnham Green!!!!”

In Byron’s *Detached Thoughts* occurs the following passage:

“I have been a reviewer. In the *Monthly Review* I wrote some articles which were inserted. This was in the latter part of 1811. In 1807, in a Magazine called *Monthly Literary Recreations*, I reviewed Wordsworth’s trash of that time.

Excepting these, I cannot accuse myself of anonymous Criticism (that I recollect), though I have been *offered* more than one review in our principal Journals.”

In the Bodleian Library is a copy of the *Monthly Review*, in which Griffiths has entered the initials of the authors of each article. Two articles from the *Review*, attributed to Byron on this authority, are given in .

226 — to Lord Holland

8, St. James’s Street, February 25, 1812.

My Lord, — With my best thanks, I have the honour to return the Notts. letter to your Lordship. I have read it with attention, but do not think I shall venture to avail myself of its contents, as my view of the question differs in some measure from Mr. Coldham’s. I hope I do not wrong him, but *his* objections to the bill appear to me to be founded on certain apprehensions that he and his coadjutors might be mistaken for the “*original advisers*” (to quote him) of the measure. For my own part, I consider the manufacturers as a much injured body of men, sacrificed to the views of certain individuals who have enriched themselves by those practices which have deprived the frame-workers of employment. For instance; — by the adoption of a certain kind of frame, one man performs the work of seven — six are thus thrown out of business. But it is to be observed that the work thus done is far inferior in quality, hardly marketable at home, and hurried over with a view to exportation. Surely, my Lord, however we may rejoice in any improvement in the arts which may be beneficial to mankind, we must not allow mankind to be sacrificed to improvements in mechanism. The maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor is an object of greater consequence to the community than the enrichment of a few monopolists by any improvement in the implements of trade, which deprives the workman of his bread, and renders the labourer “unworthy of his hire.”

My own motive for opposing the bill is founded on its palpable injustice, and its certain inefficacy. I have seen the state of these miserable men, and it is a disgrace to a civilized country. Their excesses may be condemned, but cannot be subject of wonder. The effect of the present bill would be to drive them into

actual rebellion. The few words I shall venture to offer on Thursday will be founded upon these opinions formed from my own observations on the spot. By previous inquiry, I am convinced these men would have been restored to employment, and the county to tranquillity. It is, perhaps, not yet too late, and is surely worth the trial. It can never be too late to employ force in such circumstances. I believe your Lordship does not coincide with me entirely on this subject, and most cheerfully and sincerely shall I submit to your superior judgment and experience, and take some other line of argument against the bill, or be silent altogether, should you deem it more advisable. Condemning, as every one must condemn, the conduct of these wretches, I believe in the existence of grievances which call rather for pity than punishment. I have the honour to be, with great respect, my Lord, your Lordship's

Most obedient and obliged servant,

Byron.

P.S. — I am a little apprehensive that your Lordship will think me too lenient towards these men, and half a *frame-breaker myself*.

227 — to Francis Hodgson

8, St. James's Street, March 5, 1812.

My Dear Hodgson, — We are not answerable for reports of speeches in the papers; they are always given incorrectly, and on this occasion more so than usual, from the debate in the Commons on the same night. The *Morning Post* should have said *eighteen years*. However, you will find the speech, as spoken, in the Parliamentary Register, when it comes out. Lords Holland and Grenville, particularly the latter, paid me some high compliments in the course of their speeches, as you may have seen in the papers, and Lords Eldon and Harrowby answered me. I have had many marvellous eulogies repeated to me since, in person and by proxy, from divers persons *ministerial* — yea, *ministerial!* — as well as oppositionists; of them I shall only mention Sir F. Burdett. *He* says it is the best speech by a *lord* since the "*Lord knows when,*" probably from a fellow-feeling in the sentiments. Lord H. tells me I shall beat them all if I persevere; and Lord G. remarked that the construction of some of my periods are very like *Burke's!!* And so much for vanity. I spoke very violent sentences with a sort of modest impudence, abused every thing and every body, and put the Lord

Chancellor very much out of humour: and if I may believe what I hear, have not lost any character by the experiment. As to my delivery, loud and fluent enough, perhaps a little theatrical. I could not recognize myself or any one else in the newspapers.

I hire myself unto Griffiths, and my poesy comes out on Saturday. Hobhouse is here; I shall tell him to write. My stone is gone for the present, but I fear is part of my habit. We *all* talk of a visit to Cambridge.

Yours ever,

B.

“There never was a maxim of greater wisdom than that uttered by the noble lord [Byron] who had so ably addressed their lordships that night for the first time”

(*Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 977). Moore quotes a passage from Byron’s *Detached Thoughts*:

“Sheridan’s liking for me (whether he was not mystifying me I do not know, but Lady Caroline Lamb and others told me that he said the same both before and after he knew me) was founded upon *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*. He told me that he did not care about poetry (or about mine — at least, any but *that* poem of mine), but he was sure, from *that* and other symptoms, I should make an orator, if I would but take to speaking, and grow a parliament man. He never ceased harping upon this to me to the last; and I remember my old tutor, Dr. Drury, had the same notion when I was a *boy*; but it never was my turn of inclination to try. I spoke once or twice, as all young peers do, as a kind of introduction into public life; but dissipation, shyness, haughty and reserved opinions, together with the short time I lived in England after my majority (only about five years in all), prevented me from resuming the experiment. As far as it went, it was not discouraging, particularly my *first* speech (I spoke three or four times in all); but just after it, my poem of *Childe Harold* was published, and nobody ever thought about my *prose* afterwards, nor indeed did I; it became to me a secondary and neglected object, though I sometimes wonder to myself if I should have succeeded.”

“Dear Sir, — In the report of my speech (which by the bye is given very incorrectly) in the *M[orning] Herald*, *Day*, and *B[ritish] Press*, they state that I mentioned *Bristol*, a place I never saw in my life and knew nothing of whatever, nor *mentioned* at all last night. Will you be good enough to send to these *papers*

immediately, and have the mistake corrected, or I shall get into a scrape with the Bristol people?

“I am, yours very truly,

“B.”

228 — to Lord Holland

St. James's Street, March 5, 1812.

My Lord, — May I request your Lordship to accept a copy of the thing which accompanies this note?

You have already so fully proved the truth of the first line of Pope's couplet,
“Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,”

that I long for an opportunity to give the lie to the verse that follows. If I were not perfectly convinced that any thing I may have formerly uttered in the boyish rashness of my misplaced resentment had made as little impression as it deserved to make, I should hardly have the confidence — perhaps your Lordship may give it a stronger and more appropriate appellation — to send you a quarto of the same scribbler. But your Lordship, I am sorry to observe to-day, is troubled with the gout; if my book can produce a *laugh* against itself or the author, it will be of some service. If it can set you to *sleep*, the benefit will be yet greater; and as some facetious personage observed half a century ago, that “poetry is a mere drug,”

I offer you mine as a humble assistant to the *eau medicinale*. I trust you will forgive this and all my other buffooneries, and believe me to be, with great respect,

Your Lordship's obliged and sincere servant,

Byron.

“To Augusta, my dearest sister, and my best friend, who has ever loved me much better than I deserved, this volume is presented by her *father's* son, and most affectionate brother, B.”

The effect which the poem instantly produced is best expressed in Byron's own memorandum:

“I awoke one morning and found myself famous.”

He was only just twenty-three years old.

“The subject,” says Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire (*Two Duchesses*, pp. 375, 376), “of conversation, of curiosity, of enthusiasm almost, one might say, of the moment is not Spain or Portugal, Warriors or Patriots, but Lord Byron!” “He returned,” she continues, “sorry for the severity of some of his lines (in the *English Bards*), and with a new poem, *Childe Harold*, which he published. This poem is on every table, and himself courted, visited, flattered, and praised whenever he appears. He has a pale, sickly, but handsome countenance, a bad figure, and, in short, he is really the only topic almost of every conversation — the men jealous of him, the women of each other.”

“Lord Byron,” writes Lady Harriet Leveson Gower to the Duke of Devonshire, May 10, 1812 (*Letters of Harriet, Countess Granville*, vol. i. p. 34), “is still upon a pedestal, and Caroline William doing homage. I have made acquaintance with him. He is agreeable, but I feel no wish for any further intimacy. His countenance is fine when it is in repose; but the moment it is in play, suspicious, malignant, and consequently repulsive. His manner is either remarkably gracious and conciliatory, with a tinge of affectation, or irritable and impetuous, and then, I am afraid, perfectly natural.”

Rogers (*Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*, pp. 232, 233) says, “After Byron had become the *rage*, I was frequently amused at the manoeuvres of certain noble ladies to get acquainted with him by means of me; for instance, I would receive a note from Lady — — , requesting the pleasure of my company on a particular evening, with a postscript, ‘Pray, could you not contrive to bring Lord Byron with you?’ Once, at a great party given by Lady Jersey, Mrs. Sheridan ran up to me and said, ‘Do, as a favour, try if you can place Lord Byron beside me at supper!’”

“Forgiveness to the injured does belong,
But they ne’er pardon, who have done the wrong.”

Dryden’s *Conquest of Grenada*, part ii. act i. sc. 2.

“A wife’s a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.”

CHAPTER VI — MARCH, 1812-MAY, 1813

THE IDOL OF SOCIETY — THE DRURY LANE ADDRESS — SECOND SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

229 — to Thomas Moore

With regard to the passage on Mr. Way's loss, no unfair play was hinted at, as may be seen by referring to the book; and it is expressly added that the managers *were ignorant* of that transaction. As to the prevalence of play at the Argyle, it cannot be denied that there were *billiards* and *dice*; — Lord B. has been a witness to the use of both at the Argyle Rooms. These, it is presumed, come under the denomination of play. If play be allowed, the President of the Institution can hardly complain of being termed the "Arbiter of Play," — or what becomes of his authority?

Lord B. has no personal animosity to Colonel Greville. A public institution, to which he himself was a subscriber, he considered himself to have a right to notice *publicly*. Of that institution Colonel Greville was the avowed director; — it is too late to enter into the discussion of its merits or demerits.

Lord B. must leave the discussion of the reparation, for the real or supposed injury, to Colonel G.'s friend and Mr. Moore, the friend of Lord B. — begging them to recollect that, while they consider Colonel G.'s honour, Lord B. must also maintain his own. If the business can be settled amicably, Lord B. will do as much as can and ought to be done by a man of honour towards conciliation; — if not, he must satisfy Colonel G. in the manner most conducive to his further wishes.

"Or hail at once the patron and the pile
Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle," *etc.*

In a note he had also referred to "Billy" Way's loss of several thousand pounds in the Rooms. On his return from abroad, Colonel Greville demanded satisfaction through his friend Gould Francis Leckie. Byron referred Leckie to Moore, and sent Moore the above paper for his guidance. The affair was amicably settled.

In his *Detached Thoughts* occurs the following passage: —

"I have been called in as mediator, or second, at least twenty times, in violent

quarrels, and have always contrived to settle the business without compromising the honour of the parties, or leading them to mortal consequences, and this, too, sometimes in very difficult and delicate circumstances, and having to deal with very hot and haughty spirits, — Irishmen, gamesters, guardsmen, captains, and cornets of horse, and the like. This was, of course, in my youth, when I lived in hot-headed company. I have had to carry challenges from gentlemen to noblemen, from captains to captains, from lawyers to counsellors, and once from a clergyman to an officer in the Life Guards; but I found the latter by far the most difficult:

‘to compose
The bloody duel without blows,’

the business being about a woman: I must add, too, that I never saw a *woman* behave so ill, like a cold-blooded, heartless b — — as she was, — but very handsome for all that. A certain Susan C — — was she called. I never saw her but once; and that was to induce her but to say two words (which in no degree compromised herself), and which would have had the effect of saving a priest or a lieutenant of cavalry. She would *not* say them, and neither Nepean nor myself (the son of Sir Evan Nepean, and a friend to one of the parties) could prevail upon her to say them, though both of us used to deal in some sort with womankind. At last I managed to quiet the combatants without her talisman, and, I believe, to her great disappointment: she was the damnedest b — — that I ever saw, and I have seen a great many. Though my clergyman was sure to lose either his life or his living, he was as warlike as the Bishop of Beauvais, and would hardly be pacified; but then he was in love, and that is a martial passion.”

One challenge from a gentleman to a nobleman was that of Scrope Davies to Lord Foley, in 1813; but Byron succeeded in arranging the matter. That from a lawyer to a counsellor was in 1815, from John Hanson to Serjeant Best, afterwards Lord Wynford, and arose out of the marriage of Miss Hanson to Lord Portsmouth; this quarrel was also settled by Byron. The case of the clergyman was that of the Rev. Robert Bland, whose mistress, during his absence in Holland, left him for an officer in the Guards (see *Letters*, vol. i. p. 197, end of *note* [

“When in London,” writes Gronow (*Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 152), “Byron used to go to Manton’s shooting-gallery, in Davies Street, to try his hand, as he said, at a wafer. Wedderburn Webster was present when the poet, intensely delighted with his own skill, boasted to Joe Manton that he considered himself the best shot in London. ‘No, my lord,’ replied Manton, ‘not the best; but your

shooting to-day was respectable.' Whereupon Byron waxed wroth, and left the shop in a violent passion."

230 — to William Banks

My dear Banks, — My eagerness to come to an explanation has, I trust, convinced you that whatever my unlucky manner might inadvertently be, the change was as unintentional as (if intended) it would have been ungrateful. I really was not aware that, while we were together, I had evinced such caprices; that we were not so much in each other's company as I could have wished, I well know, but I think so *acute an observer* as yourself must have perceived enough to *explain this*, without supposing any slight to one in whose society I have pride and pleasure. Recollect that I do not allude here to "extended" or "extending" acquaintances, but to circumstances you will understand, I think, on a little reflection.

And now, my dear Banks, do not distress me by supposing that I can think of you, or you of me, otherwise than I trust we have long thought. You told me not long ago that my temper was improved, and I should be sorry that opinion should be revoked. Believe me, your friendship is of more account to me than all those absurd vanities in which, I fear, you conceive me to take too much interest. I have never disputed your superiority, or doubted (seriously) your good will, and no one shall ever "make mischief between us" without the sincere regret on the part of your ever affectionate, *etc.*

P.S. — I shall see you, I hope, at Lady Jersey's.

Hobhouse goes also.

Lady Jersey for many years reigned supreme, by her beauty and wit, in London society,

"the veriest tyrant," said Byron, "that ever governed Fashion's fools, and compelled them to shake their caps and bells as she willed it."

At Almack's, where, according to Gronow (*Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 32), she introduced the quadrille after Waterloo, she was a despot. *Almack's*, the very clever and personal picture of fashionable life, published in 1826, is dedicated

"To that most Distinguished and Despotic Conclave, composed of their High Mightinesses the Ladies Patronesses of the Balls at Almack's, the Rulers of Fashion, the Arbiters of Taste, the Leaders of *Ton*, and the Makers of Manners, whose Sovereign sway over 'the world' of London has long been established on the firmest basis, whose Decrees are Laws, and from whose judgment there is no

appeal.”

Over this “Willis Coalition Cabinet” Lady Jersey, as “Lady Hauton,” is described as reigning supreme.

“She knew more than any person I ever met with, and both everything and everybody; she could quiz and she could flatter.”

“Treat people like fools,” she is supposed to say, “and they will worship you; stoop to make up to them, and they will directly tread you underfoot.”

Ticknor (*Life*, vol. i. p. 269) speaks of her as a “beautiful creature, with a great deal of talent, taste, and elegant knowledge.” He was at Almack’s, in 1819, and standing close to Lady Jersey, then at the height of beauty and brilliant talent, a leader in society, and with decided political opinions, when she refused the Duke of Wellington admittance. The lady patronesses had made a rule to admit no one after eleven o’clock. When the rule first came into operation, Ticknor heard one of the attendants announce that the Duke of Wellington was at the door.

“What o’clock is it?” Lady Jersey asked. “Seven minutes after eleven, your ladyship.” She paused a moment, and then said, with emphasis and distinctness, Give my compliments, — give Lady Jersey’s compliments to the Duke of Wellington, and say that she is very glad that the first enforcement of the rule of exclusion is such that hereafter no one can complain of its application. He cannot be admitted.”

(*ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 296, 297).

Politically, Lady Jersey was a power. Such an entry as the following sounds strange to modern readers: Dining at Lord Holland’s, in 1835, in company with Lord Melbourne, Lord Grey, and other prominent politicians, Ticknor notes that

“public business was much talked about — the corporation bill, the motion for admitting Dissenters to the universities, etc., etc.; and as to the last, when the question arose whether it would be debated on Tuesday night, it was admitted to be doubtful whether Lady Jersey would not succeed in getting it postponed, as she has a grand dinner that evening.”

(*Life*, vol. i. pp. 409, 410).

Lady Jersey, whose mother-in-law, *née* Frances Twyden, had been a bitter opponent of the Princess of Wales, provoked the wrath of the Regent by espousing the cause of his wife. The Prince was determined to break off this friendship with his wife’s champion, and sent a letter to her by the hand of Colonel Willis, announcing his determination. Some time later they met at a great party given by Henry Hope in Cavendish Square. Lady Jersey was walking with Rogers in the gallery, when they met the Prince, who

“stopped for a moment, and then, drawing himself up, marched past her with a look of the utmost disdain. Lady Jersey returned the look to the full; and, as soon as the Prince was gone, said to me, with a smile, ‘Didn’t I do it well?’”

(*Table Talk of Samuel Rogers*, pp. 267, 268).

From this same change of feeling arose the incident which Byron celebrated in his Condolatory Address “On the Occasion of the Prince Regent Returning her Picture to Mrs. Mee.” The lines were enclosed with a letter which is printed at the date May 29, 1814. “Pegasus is, perhaps, the only horse of whose paces,” said Byron (*Conversations with Lady Blessington*, p. 51), “Lord [Jersey] could not be a judge.” Of Lady Jersey he says (*ibid.*, p. 50),

“Of all that coterie, Madame [de Stael], after Lady [Jersey], was the best; at least I thought so, for these two ladies were the only ones who ventured to protect me when all London was crying out against me on the separation, and they behaved courageously and kindly ... Poor dear Lady [Jersey]! Does she still retain her beautiful cream-coloured complexion and raven hair? I used to long to tell her that she spoiled her looks by her excessive animation; for eyes, tongue, head, and arms were all in movement at once, and were only relieved from their active service by want of respiration,” etc., etc.

231 — to Thomas Moore

March 25, 1812.

Know all men by these presents, that you, Thomas Moore, stand indicted — no — invited, by special and particular solicitation, to Lady Caroline Lamb’s tomorrow evening, at half-past nine o’clock, where you will meet with a civil reception and decent entertainment. Pray, come — I was so examined after you this morning, that I entreat you to answer in person.

Believe me, etc.

Her manuscript commonplace-book is in the possession of the Hon. G. Ponsonby. A few pages are taken up with a printed copy of the *Essay on the Progressive Improvement of Mankind*, with which her husband won the declamation prize at Trinity, Cambridge, in 1798. The rest of the volume consists of some 200 pages filled with prose, and verse, and sketches. It begins with a list of her nicknames — “Sprite,” “Young Savage,” “Ariel,” “Squirrel,” etc. Then follow the secret language of an imaginary order; her first verses, written at the age of thirteen; scraps of poetry, original and extracted, in French,

Italian, and English; a long fragment of a wild romantic story of a girl's seduction by an infidel nobleman. A clever sketch in water-colour of William Lamb and of herself, after their marriage, is followed by verses on the birth of her son, "little "Augustus," August 23, 1807. The last stanza of a poem, which has nothing to commend it except the feelings of the wife and mother which it expresses, runs thus:

"His little eyes like William's shine;
How great is then my joy,
For, while I call this darling mine,
I see 'tis William's boy!"

The most ambitious effort in the volume is a poem, illustrated with pictures in water colours, such as *L'Amour se cache sous le voile d'Amitié*, or *l'Innocence le recoit dans ses bras*; a third, in the style of Blake, bears the inscription *le Désespoir met fin à ses jours*. The poem opens with the following lines:

"Winged with Hope and hushed with Joy,
See yon wanton, blue-eyed Boy, —
Arch his smile, and keen his dart, —
Aim at Laura's youthful heart!
How could he his wiles disguise?
How deceive such watchful eyes?
How so pure a breast inspire,
Set so young a Mind on fire?
'Twas because to raise the flame
Love bethought of friendship's name.
Under this false guise he told her
That he lived but to behold her.
How could she his fault discover
When he often vowed to love her?
How could she her heart defend
When he took the name of friend?"

Dates are seldom affixed to the compositions, and it is impossible to say whether any are autobiographical. But, taken as a whole, they reveal a clever, romantic, impulsive, imaginative woman, whose pet names describe at once the charm of her character and the fascination of her small, slight figure, "golden hair, large hazel eyes," and low musical voice.

Her marriage with William Lamb, June 3, seems to have been at first kept secret. Lord Minto in August, 1805 (*Life and Letters*, vol. iii. p. 361), speaks of her as unmarried, and adds that she is “a lively and rather a pretty girl; they say she is very clever.” Augustus Foster, writing to his mother, Lady Elizabeth Foster, July 30, 1805 (*The Two Duchesses*, p. 233), says,

“I cannot fancy Lady Caroline married. I cannot be glad of it. How changed she must be — the delicate Ariel, the little Fairy Queen become a wife and soon perhaps a mother.”

Lady Elizabeth replies, September 30, 1805 (*ibid.*, p. 242):

“You may retract all your sorrow about Caro Ponsonby’s marriage, for she is the same wild, delicate, odd, delightful person, unlike everything.”

Lady Caroline and William Lamb are described by Lady Elizabeth, three months later, as “flirting all day long *è felice adesso*.” The phrase, perhaps, correctly expresses Lady Caroline’s conception of love as an episode; but no breach occurred till 1813. In the previous year, when Byron had suddenly risen to the height of his fame, she had refused to be introduced by Lady Westmorland to the man of whom she made the famous entry in her Diary “mad, bad, and dangerous to know.” But they met, a few days later, at Holland House, and Byron called on her in Whitehall, where for the next four months he was a daily visitor. On blue-bordered paper, embossed at the corners with scallop-shells, she wrote to Byron at an early stage in their acquaintance,.

For the sequel to the story of their friendship, see Byron’s to Lady Caroline, p. 135, 1, and .

232 — to Lady Caroline Lamb

[Undated.]

I never supposed you artful: we are all selfish, — nature did that for us. But even when you attempt deceit occasionally, you cannot maintain it, which is all the better; want of success will curb the tendency. Every word you utter, every line you write, proves you to be either *sincere* or a *fool*. Now as I know you are not the one, I must believe you the other.

I never knew a woman with greater or more pleasing talents, *general* as in a woman they should be, something of everything, and too much of nothing. But these are unfortunately coupled with a total want of common conduct. For

instance, the *note* to your *page* — do you suppose I delivered it? or did you mean that I should? I did not of course.

Then your heart, my poor Caro (what a little volcano!), that pours *lava* through your veins; and yet I cannot wish it a bit colder, to make a *marble slab* of, as you sometimes see (to understand my foolish metaphor) brought in vases, tables, etc., from Vesuvius, when hardened after an eruption. To drop my detestable tropes and figures, you know I have always thought you the cleverest, most agreeable, absurd, amiable, perplexing, dangerous, fascinating little being that lives now, or ought to have lived 2000 years ago. I won't talk to you of beauty; I am no judge. But our beauties cease to be so when near you, and therefore you have either some, or something better. And now, Caro, this nonsense is the first and last compliment (if it be such) I ever paid you. You have often reproached me as wanting in that respect; but others will make up the deficiency.

Come to Lord Grey's; at least do not let me keep you away. All that you so often *say*, I *feel*. Can more be said or felt? This same prudence is tiresome enough; but one *must* maintain it, or what *can* one do to be saved? Keep to it.

Fletcher, — Will you come and see me here some evening at 9, and no one will know of it. You may say you bring a letter, and wait the answer. I will send for you in. But I will let you know first, for I wish to speak with you. I also want you to take the little Foreign Page I shall send in to see Lord Byron. Do not tell him before-hand, but, when he comes with flowers, shew him in. I shall not come myself, unless just before he goes away; so do not think it is me. Besides, you will see this is quite a child, only I wish him to see my Lord if you can contrive it, which, if you tell me what hour is most convenient, will be very easy. I go out of Town tomorrow for a day or two, and I am now quite well — at least much better.”

233 — To William Bankes

My Dear Bankes, — I feel rather hurt (not savagely) at the speech you made to me last night, and my hope is that it was only one of your *profane* jests. I should be very sorry that any part of my behaviour should give you cause to suppose that I think higher of myself, or otherwise of you than I have always done. I can

assure you that I am as much the humblest of your servants as at Trin. Coll.; and if I have not been at home when you favoured me with a call, the loss was more mine than yours. In the bustle of buzzing parties, there is, there can be, no rational conversation; but when I can enjoy it, there is nobody's I can prefer to your own.

Believe me, ever faithfully and most affectionately yours,

Byron.

234 — to Thomas Moore

Friday noon.

I should have answered your note yesterday, but I hoped to have seen you this morning. I must consult with you about the day we dine with Sir Francis. I suppose we shall meet at Lady Spencer's to-night. I did not know that you were at Miss Berry's the other night, or I should have certainly gone there.

As usual, I am in all sorts of scrapes, though none, at present, of a martial description.

Believe me, *etc.*

"I had a quarter of an hour's conversation, which, I own, gave me a great desire to know him better, and he seemed willing that I should do so."

The second occasion was May 7, 1812.

"At the end of the evening I had half an hour's conversation with Lord Byron, principally on the subject of the Scotch Review, with which he is very much pleased. He is a singular man, and pleasant to me but I very much fear that his head begins to be turned by all the adoration of the world, especially the women"

(*Journal and Correspondence of Miss Berry*, vol. ii. pp. 496, 497).

235 — to Lady Caroline Lamb

May 1st, 1812.

My Dear Lady Caroline, — I have read over the few poems of Miss Milbank with attention. They display fancy, feeling, and a little practice would very soon induce facility of expression. Though I have an abhorrence of Blank Verse, I like the lines on Dermody so much that I wish they were in rhyme. The lines in the Cave at Seaham have a turn of thought which I cannot sufficiently commend, and here I am at least candid as my own opinions differ upon such subjects. The first stanza is very good indeed, and the others, with a few slight alterations, might be rendered equally excellent. The last are smooth and pretty. But these are all, has she no others? She certainly is a very extraordinary girl; who would imagine so much strength and variety of thought under that placid Countenance? It is not necessary for Miss M. to be an authoress, indeed I do not think publishing at all creditable either to men or women, and (though you will not believe me) very often feel ashamed of it myself; but I have no hesitation in saying that she has talents which, were it proper or requisite to indulge, would have led to distinction.

A friend of mine (fifty years old, and an author, but not *Rogers*) has just been here. As there is no name to the MSS. I shewed them to him, and he was much more enthusiastic in his praises than I have been. He thinks them beautiful; I shall content myself with observing that they are better, much better, than anything of Miss M.'s protégée (*sic*) Blacket. You will say as much of this to Miss M. as you think proper. I say all this very sincerely. I have no desire to be better acquainted with Miss Milbank; she is too good for a fallen spirit to know, and I should like her more if she were less perfect. Believe me, yours ever most truly,

B.

“was the most primitive hamlet ever met with — a dozen or so of cottages, no trade, no manufacture, no business doing that we could see; the owners were mostly servants of Sir Ralph Milbanke's.”

(*Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, p. 71). It was here that Blacket the poet (see *Letters*, vol. i. p. 314, note 2 [

Byron (Medwin's *Conversations with Lord Byron*, pp. 44, 45) thus describes the personal appearance of his future wife:

“There was something piquant and what we term pretty in Miss Milbanke. Her features were small and feminine, though not regular. She had the fairest skin imaginable. Her figure was perfect for her height; and there was a simplicity, a retired modesty, about her, which was very characteristic, and formed a happy contrast to the cold, artificial formality and studied stiffness

which is called fashion.”

The roundness of her face suggested to Byron the pet name of “Pippin.”

High-principled, guided by a strong sense of duty, imbued with deep religious feeling, Miss Milbanke lived to impress F. W. Robertson as “the noblest woman he ever knew” (*Diary of Crabb Robinson* (1852), vol. iii. p. 405). She was also a clever, well-read girl, fond of mathematics, a student of theology and of Greek, a writer of meritorious verse, which, however, Byron only allowed to be “good by accident” (Medwin, p. 60). Among her mother’s friends were Mrs. Siddons, Joanna Baillie, and Maria Edgeworth. The latter, writing, May, 1813, to Miss Ruxton, says, “Lady Milbanke is very agreeable, and has a charming, well-informed daughter.” With all her personal charms, virtues, and mental gifts, she shows, in many of her letters, a precision, formality, and self-complacency, which suggest the female pedant. Byron says of her that “she was governed by what she called fixed rules and principles, squared mathematically,” (Medwin, p. 60); at one time he used to speak of her as his “Princess of Parallelograms,” and at a later period he called her his “Mathematical Medea.”

Before Miss Milbanke met Byron, she had a lover in Augustus Foster, son of Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire. The duchess, writing to her son, February 29, 1812, says that Mrs. George Lamb (?) would sound Miss Milbanke as to her feelings:

“Caro means to see *la bella* Annabelle before she writes to you ... I shall almost hate her if she is blind to the merits of one who would make her so happy”

(*The Two Duchesses*, p. 358). Apparently Mr. Foster’s love was not returned.

“She persists in saying,” writes the duchess, May 4, 1812 (*ibid.*, p. 362), “that she never suspected your attachment to her; but she is so odd a girl that, though she has for some time rather liked another, she has decidedly refused them, because she thinks she ought to marry a person with a good fortune; and this is partly, I believe, from generosity to her parents, and partly owning that fortune is an object to herself for happiness. In short, she is good, amiable, and sensible, but cold, prudent, and reflecting. Lord Byron makes up to her a little; but she don’t seem to admire him except as a poet, nor he her except for a wife.”

Again, June 2, 1812, she says,

“Your Annabella is a mystery; liking, not liking; generous-minded, yet afraid of poverty; there is no making her out. I hope you don’t make yourself unhappy about her; she is really an icicle.”

Miss Milbanke’s unaffected simplicity attracted Byron; even her coldness was a charm. When he came to know her, he probably found her not only

agreeable, but the best woman he had ever met. Lady Melbourne, who knew him most intimately, and was also Miss Milbanke's aunt, may well have thought that, if her niece once gained control over Byron, her influence would be the making of his character. She encouraged the match by every means in her power. It is unnecessary to suppose that she did so to save Lady Caroline Lamb; that danger was over. At some time before the autumn of 1812, Byron proposed to Miss Milbanke, and was refused. He still, however, continued to correspond with her, and his shows that his affection for her was steadily growing during the years 1813-14. In September, 1814, he proposed a second time, and was accepted.

Byron professed to believe (Medwin, p. 59) that Miss Milbanke was not in love with him.

"I was the fashion when she first came out; I had the character of being a great rake, and was a great dandy — both of which young ladies like. She married me from vanity, and the hope of reforming and fixing me."

Byron was not the man to unbosom himself to Medwin on such a subject. Moore asked the same question — whether Lady Byron really loved Byron — of Lady Holland, who

"seemed to think she must. He was such a loveable person. I remember him (said she) sitting there with that light upon him, looking so beautiful!"

(*Journals, etc.*, vol. ii. p. 324). The letters that will follow seem to show beyond all question that the marriage was one of true affection on both sides.

236 — to Thomas Moore

May 8, 1812.

I am too proud of being your friend, to care with whom I am linked in your estimation, and, God knows, I want friends more at this time than at any other. I am "taking care of myself" to no great purpose. If you knew my situation in every point of view, you would excuse apparent and unintentional neglect. I shall leave town, I think; but do not you leave it without seeing me. I wish you, from my soul, every happiness you can wish yourself; and I think you have taken the road to secure it. Peace be with you! I fear she has abandoned me. Ever, *etc.*

237 — to Thomas Moore

May 20, 1812.

On Monday, after sitting up all night, I saw Bellingham launched into eternity, and at three the same day I saw — — launched into the country.

I believe, in the beginning of June, I shall be down for a few days in Notts. If so, I shall beat you up *en passant* with Hobhouse, who is endeavouring, like you and every body else, to keep me out of scrapes.

I meant to have written you a long letter, but I find I cannot. If any thing remarkable occurs, you will hear it from me — if good; if *bad*, there are plenty to tell it. In the mean time, do you be happy.

Ever yours, *etc.*

P.S. — My best wishes and respects to Mrs. Moore; — she is beautiful. I may say so even to you, for I was never more struck with a countenance.

“was accompanied on the occasion by his old schoolfellows, Mr. Bailey and Mr. John Madocks. They went together from some assembly, and, on their arriving at the spot, about three o’clock in the morning, not finding the house that was to receive them open, Mr. Madocks undertook to rouse the inmates, while Lord Byron and Mr. Bailey sauntered, arm in arm, up the street. During this interval, rather a painful scene occurred. Seeing an unfortunate woman lying on the steps of a door, Lord Byron, with some expression of compassion, offered her a few shillings; but, instead of accepting them, she violently pushed away his hand, and, starting up with a yell of laughter, began to mimic the lameness of his gait. He did not utter a word; but ‘I could feel,’ said Mr. Bailey, ‘his arm trembling within mine, as we left her.’ “

In Byron’s *Detached Thoughts* is an anecdote of Baillie, whose name is here misspelt by Moore:

“Baillie (commonly called ‘Long’ Baillie, a very clever man, but odd) complained in riding, to our friend Scrope Davies, that he had a *stitch* in his side. ‘I don’t wonder at it,’ said Scrope, ‘for you ride like a *tailor*.’ Whoever has seen B. on horseback, with his very tall figure on a small nag, would not deny the justice of the repartee.”

238 — to Bernard Barton

8, St. James’s St., June 1, 1812.

The most satisfactory answer to the concluding part of your letter is that Mr. Murray will republish your volume, if you still retain your inclination for the experiment, which I trust will be successful. Some weeks ago my friend Mr. Rogers showed me some of the stanzas in MS., and I then expressed my opinion

of their merit, which a further perusal of the printed volume has given me no reason to revoke. I mention this, as it may not be disagreeable to you to learn that I entertained a very favourable opinion of your powers, before I was aware that such sentiments were reciprocal.

Waiving your obliging expressions as to my own productions, for which I thank you very sincerely, and assure you that I think not lightly of the praise of one whose approbation is valuable, will you allow me to talk to you candidly, not critically, on the subject of yours? You will not suspect me of a wish to discourage, since I pointed out to the publisher the propriety of complying with your wishes. I think more highly of your poetical talents than it would, perhaps, gratify you to hear expressed, for I believe, from what I observe of your mind, that you are above flattery. To come to the point, you deserve success, but we know, before Addison wrote his *Cato*, that desert does not always command it. But, suppose it attained, —

“You know what ill the author’s life assails,
Toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail.”

Do not renounce writing, but never trust entirely to authorship. If you have a possession, retain it; it will be, like Prior’s fellowship, a last and sure resource. Compare Mr. Rogers with other authors of the day; assuredly he is amongst the first of living poets, but is it to that he owes his station in society, and his intimacy in the best circles? No, it is to his prudence and respectability; the world (a bad one, I own) courts him because he has no occasion to court it. He is a poet, nor is he less so because he was something more. I am not sorry to hear that you are not tempted by the vicinity of Capel Loft, Esq’re., though, if he had done for you what he has done for the Bloomfields, I should never have laughed at his rage for patronising. But a truly constituted mind will ever be independent. That you may be so is my sincere wish, and, if others think as well of your poetry as I do, you will have no cause to complain of your readers.

Believe me, *etc.*

“There mark what ill the scholar’s life assails, —
Toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail.”

Johnson’s *Vanity of Human Wishes*, line 159.

239 — to Lord Holland

June 25, 1812.

My Dear Lord, — I must appear very ungrateful, and have, indeed, been very negligent, but till last night I was not apprised of Lady Holland's restoration, and I shall call tomorrow to have the satisfaction, I trust, of hearing that she is well. — I hope that neither politics nor gout have assailed your Lordship since I last saw you, and that you also are "as well as could be expected."

The other night, at a ball, I was presented by order to our gracious Regent, who honoured me with some conversation, and professed a predilection for poetry. — I confess it was a most unexpected honour, and I thought of poor Brummell's adventure, with some apprehension of a similar blunder. I have now great hope, in the event of Mr. Pye's decease, of "warbling truth at court," like Mr. Mallet of indifferent memory. — Consider, one hundred marks a year! besides the wine and the disgrace; but then remorse would make me drown myself in my own butt before the year's end, or the finishing of my first dithyrambic. — So that, after all, I shall not meditate our laureate's death by pen or poison.

Will you present my best respects to Lady Holland? and believe me, hers and yours very sincerely.

Byron.

"But, oh, the basest of defections!
His Letter about 'predilections' —
His own dear Letter, void of grace,
Now flew up in its parent's face! "

And again, in the "Parody of a Celebrated Letter":

"I am proud to declare I have no predilections,
My heart is a sieve, where some scatter'd affections
Are just danc'd about for a moment or two,
And the *finer* they are, the more sure to run through."

George Brummell went from Eton to Oriel College, Oxford, where his undergraduate career is traced in “Trebeck,” a character in Lister’s *Granby* (1826). From Oxford Brummell entered the Tenth Hussars, a favourite regiment of the Prince of Wales. Well-built and well-mannered, possessed of admirable tact, witty and original in conversation, inexhaustible in good temper and good stories, a master of impudence and banter, the new cornet made himself so agreeable to the prince that, at the latter’s marriage, Brummell attended him, both at St. James’s and to Windsor, as “a kind of *chevalier d’honneur*.” In 1798 Brummell left the army with the rank of captain. A year later he came of age, and settled at 4, Chesterfield Street, Mayfair.

On his intimacy with the Prince Regent, Brummell founded the extraordinary position which he achieved in society. Fashion was in those days a power; and he was its dictator — the oracle, both for men and women, of taste, manners, and dress. His ascendancy rested in some degree on solid foundations. He was not a mere fop, but conspicuous for the quiet neatness of his dress — for “a certain exquisite propriety,” as Byron described it to Leigh Hunt — and, at a time when the opposite was common, for the scrupulous cleanliness of his person and his linen. An excellent dancer, clever at *vers de société*, an agreeable singer, a talented artist, a judge of china, buhl, and other objects of *virtù*, a collector of snuff-boxes, a connoisseur in canes, he had gifts which might have raised him above the Bond Street *flaneur*, or the idler at Watier’s Club. Well-read in a desultory fashion, he wrote verses which were not without merit in their class. The following are the first and last stanzas of *The Butterfly’s Funeral*, a poem which was suggested by Mrs. Dorset’s *Peacock at Home* and Roscoe’s *Butterfly’s Ball*: —

“Oh ye! who so lately were blythsome and gay,
At the Butterfly’s banquet carousing away;
Your feasts and your revels of pleasure are fled,
For the soul of the banquet, the Butterfly’s dead!

...

And here shall the daisy and violet blow,
And the lily discover her bosom of snow;
While under the leaf, in the evenings of spring,
Still mourning his friend, shall the grasshopper sing.”

In the days of his prosperity (1799-1816), Brummell knew everybody to

whose acquaintance he condescended. His Album, in which he collected 226 pieces of poetry, many by himself, others by celebrities of the day, is a curious proof of his popularity. It contains contributions from such persons as the Duchess of Devonshire, Erskine, Lord John Townshend, Sheridan, General Fitzpatrick, William Lamb (afterwards Lord Melbourne) and his brother George, and Byron. Lady Hester Stanhope (*Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 280-283) knew him well. She describes him "riding in Bond Street, with his bridle between his fore-finger and thumb, as if he held a pinch of snuff;" gives many instances of his audacious effrontery, and yet concludes that "the man was no fool," and that she "should like to see him again."

The story that Brummell told the Prince Regent to ring the bell was denied by him. A more probable version of the story is given in Jesse's *Life of Beau Brummell* (vol. i. p. 255),

"that one evening, when Brummell and Lord Moira were engaged in earnest conversation at Carlton House, the prince requested the former to ring the bell, and that he replied without reflection, 'Your Royal Highness is close to it,' upon which the prince rang the bell and ordered his friend's carriage, but that Lord Moira's intervention caused the unintentional liberty to be overlooked."

The rupture between them is attributed by Jesse to Mrs. Fitzherbert's influence. Whatever the cause, the prince cut his former friend. A short time afterwards, Brummell, walking with Lord Alvanley, met the prince leaning on the arm of Lord Moira. As the prince, who stopped to speak to Lord Alvanley, was moving on, Brummell said to his companion, "Alvanley, who's your fat friend?" In the *Twopenny Postbag* Moore makes the Regent say, in the "Parody of a Celebrated Letter":

"Neither have I resentments, or wish there should come ill
To mortal — except, now I think on it, Beau Brummell,
Who threatened last year, in a superfine passion,
To cut me, and bring the old king into fashion."

Brummell's position withstood the loss of the Regent's friendship. He became one of the most frequent visitors to the Duke and Duchess of York, at Oatlands Park (*Journal of T. Raikes*, vol. i. p. 146); and his friendship with the duchess lasted till her death.

He was ruined by gambling at Watier's Club, of which he was perpetual president. This club, which was in Piccadilly, at the corner of Bolton Street, was originally founded, in 1807, by Lord Headfort, John Madocks, and other young men, for musical gatherings. But glees and snatches soon gave way to

superlative dinners and gambling at macao. Byron, Moore, and William Spencer belonged to Watier's — the only men of letters admitted within its precincts. From 1814 to 1816 Brummell lost heavily; he could obtain no further supplies, and was completely ruined. In his distress he wrote to Scrope Davies, in May, 1816:

“My Dear Scrope, — Lend me two hundred pounds; the banks are shut, and all my money is in the three per cents. It shall be repaid tomorrow morning.

Yours,
George Brummell.

The reply illustrates Byron's remark that
“Scrope Davies is a wit, and a man of the world, and feels as much as such a character can do.”

“My Dear George, — 'Tis very unfortunate, but all my money is in the three per cents.

Yours,
S. Davies.

On May 17,
“obliged,” says Byron (*Detached Thoughts*), “by that affair of poor Meyler, who thence acquired the name of ‘Dick the Dandykiller’ — (it was about money and debt and all that) — to retire to France,”

Brummell took flight to Dover, and crossed to Calais. Watier's Club died a natural death, in 1819, from the ruin of most of its members.

Amongst Brummell's effects at Chesterfield Street was a screen which he was making for the Duchess of York. The sixth panel was occupied by Byron and Napoleon, placed opposite each other; the former, surrounded with flowers, had a wasp in his throat (Jesse's *Life*, vol. i. p. 361). At Calais Brummell bought a French grammar to study the language. When Scrope Davies was asked, says Byron (*Detached Thoughts*),

“what progress Brummell had made in French, he responded ‘that Brummell had been stopped, like Buonaparte in Russia, by the *Elements*.’ I have put this pun into *Beppo*, which is ‘a fair exchange and no robbery;’ for Scrope made his fortune at several dinners (as he owned himself) by repeating occasionally as his

own some of the buffooneries with which I had encountered him in the morning.”

Brummell died, in 1840, at Caen, after making acquaintance with the inside of the debtor’s prison in that town — imbecile, and in the asylum of the *Bon Sauveur*. He is buried in the Protestant cemetery of Caen. France has raised a more lasting monument to his fame in Barbey d’Aurevilly’s *Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummell* (1845).

“With Spartan Pye lull England to repose,
Or frighten children with Lenora’s woes;”

and again (*ibid.*, lines 79, 80):

“Why should I faint when all with patience hear,
And laureat Pye sings more than twice a year?”

His birthday odes were so full of “vocal groves and feathered choirs,” that George Steevens broke out with the lines:

“When the *pie* was opened,” *etc.*

Pye’s *magnum opus* was *Alfred* (1801), an epic poem in six books.

240 — to Professor Clarke

St. James’s Street, June 26, 1812.

Will you accept my very sincere congratulations on your second volume, wherein I have retraced some of my old paths, adorned by you so beautifully, that they afford me double delight? The part which pleases me best, after all, is the preface, because it tells me you have not yet closed labours, to yourself not unprofitable, nor without gratification, for what is so pleasing as to give pleasure? I have sent my copy to Sir Sidney Smith, who will derive much gratification from your anecdotes of Djeddar, his “energetic old man.” I doat upon the Druses; but who the deuce are they with their Pantheism? I shall never be easy till I ask *them* the question. How much you have traversed! I must resume my seven leagued boots and journey to Palestine, which your description mortifies me not to have seen more than ever. I still sigh for the Ægean. Shall not you always love its bluest of all waves, and brightest of all skies? You have awakened all the gipsy in me. I long to be restless again, and wandering; see

what mischief you do, you won't allow gentlemen to settle quietly at home. I will not wish you success and fame, for you have both, but all the happiness which even these cannot always give.

“a little, square, pale, flat-faced, good-natured-looking, fussy man, with very intelligent eyes, yet great credulity of countenance, and still greater benevolence.”

Byron met Clarke at Cambridge in November, 1811, discussed Greece with him, and was relieved to find that he knew “no Romaic.” Clarke was an indefatigable traveller, and, as he was a botanist, mineralogist, antiquary, and numismatist, he made good use of his opportunities. The marbles, including the Eleusinian Ceres, which he brought home, are in the Fitzwilliam Museum. His mineralogical collections were purchased, after his death, by the University of Cambridge; and his coins by Payne Knight. His *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa* appeared at intervals, from 1810 to 1823, in six quarto volumes. The following letter was written by Clarke to Byron, after the appearance of *Childe Harold*:

“Trumpington, Wednesday morning.

Dear Lord Byron, — From the eagerness which I felt to make known my opinions of your poem before others had expressed *any* upon the subject, I waited upon you to deliver my hasty, although hearty, commendation. If it be worthy your acceptance, take it once more, in a more deliberate form! Upon my arrival in town I found that Mathias entirely coincided with me. ‘Surely,’ said I to him, ‘Lord Byron, at this time of life, cannot have experienced such keen anguish as those exquisite allusions to what older men *may* have felt seem to denote!’ This was his answer: ‘*I fear he has — he could not else have written such a poem.*’ This morning I read the second canto with all the attention it so highly merits, in the peace and stillness of my study; and I am ready to confess I was never so much affected by any poem, passionately fond of poetry as I have been from my earliest youth....

“The eighth stanza, ‘*Yet if as holiest men,*’ etc., has never been surpassed. In the twenty-third, the sentiment is at variance with Dryden:

‘Strange cozenage! *none* would live past years again.’

And it is perhaps an instance wherein, for the first time, I found not within my own breast an echo to your thought, for I would not ‘*be once more a boy*,’ but the generality of men will agree with you, and wish to tread life’s path again.

In the twelfth stanza of the same canto, you might really add a very curious note to these lines:

‘Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother’s pains,’

by stating this fact: When the last of the Metopes was taken from the Parthenon, and, in moving it, a great part of the superstructure with one of the triglyphs, was thrown down by the work men whom Lord Elgin employed, the Disdar, who beheld the mischief done to the building, took his pipe out of his mouth, dropped a tear, and, in a supplicating tone of voice, said to Lusieri — I was present at the time.

Once more I thank you for the gratification you have afforded me.

Believe me, ever yours most truly,
E. D. Clarke.”

241 — To Walter Scott

St. James’s Street, July 6, 1812.

Sir, — I have just been honoured with your letter. — I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the “evil works of my nonage,” as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise; and now, waving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball; and after some sayings peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities: he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the *Lay*. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well

acquainted with both; so that (with the exception of the Turks and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it, and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

This interview was accidental. I never went to the levée; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, "no business there." To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately and sincerely,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

Byron.

P.S. — Excuse this scrawl, scratched in a great hurry, and just after a journey.

"But the Prince's great delight," says Murray, "was Walter Scott, whose name and writings he dwelt upon and recurred to incessantly. He preferred him far beyond any other poet of the time, repeated several passages with fervour, and criticized them faithfully.... Lord Byron called upon me, merely to let off the raptures of the Prince respecting you, thinking, as he said, that if I were likely to have occasion to write to you, it might not be ungrateful for you to hear of his praises."

Scott's answer (July 2) enclosed the following letter from himself to Byron:

"Edinburgh, July 3d, 1812.

"My Lord, — I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray, of Fleet Street, to give your Lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your Lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly in my own, as your Lordship's most deservedly do.

“The first *count*, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold*, and from its precursors; the former, with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses the additional charm of vivid and animated description, mingled with original sentiment; but besides this debt, which I owe your Lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your Lordship rather dedicated in general to satire, some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your Lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of *Marmion*, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular inquiry. The poem, my Lord, was *not* written upon contract for a sum of money — though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state (which I have since regretted), to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author:

‘Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.’

And so much for a mistake, into which your Lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, etc., of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited or affectedly rude and cynical.

“As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value; and I am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your Lordship’s good sense will easily put this unimportant egotism to the right account, for — though I do not know the motive would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an *unfair* literary critic — I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your Lordship will likewise permit me to add that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your Lordship’s own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal

by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

“Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your Lordship’s acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification which I am sure you intended. I dare say our worthy biblioplist overcoloured his report of your Lordship’s conversation with the Prince Regent, but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless, for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your Lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with *Childe Harold*, I have the honour to be, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s obedient servant,

“Walter Scott.

“P.S. — Will your Lordship permit me a verbal criticism on *Childe Harold*, were it only to show I have read his Pilgrimage with attention? *Nuestra Dama de la Pena* means, I suspect, not our Lady of Crime or Punishment, but our Lady of the Cliff; the difference is, I believe, merely in the accentuation of *peña*.”

To Scott Byron replied with the letter given in the text. Scott’s answer, which followed in due course, will be found in .

The Prince Regent, it may be added, showed his appreciation of Scott’s poetry by offering him, on the death of Pye, the post of poet laureate. Scott refused, on the ground, apparently, that the office had been made ridiculous by the previous holder.

“At the time when Scott and Byron were the two *lions* of London, Hookham Frere observed, ‘Great poets formerly (Homer and Milton) were blind; now they are lame’“

(*Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*, P. 194).

“There, too, he saw (whate’er he may be now)
A Prince, the prince of princes at the time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace, too, rare in every clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,

A finish'd gentleman from top to toe."

Dallas found him, shortly after his introduction to the prince, "in a full-dress court suit of clothes, with his fine black hair in powder," prepared to attend a levee. But the levee was put off, and the subsequent avowal of the authorship of the stanzas rendered it impossible for him to go (*Recollections*, p. 234).

242 — to Lady Caroline Lamb

[August, 1812?]

My Dearest Caroline, — If tears which you saw and know I am not apt to shed, — if the agitation in which I parted from you, — agitation which you must have perceived through the *whole* of this most *nervous* affair, did not commence until the moment of leaving you approached, — if all I have said and done, and am still but too ready to say and do, have not sufficiently proved what my real feelings are, and must ever be towards you, my love, I have no other proof to offer. God knows, I wish you happy, and when I quit you, or rather you, from a sense of duty to your husband and mother, quit me, you shall acknowledge the truth of what I again promise and vow, that no other in word or deed, shall ever hold the place in my affections, which is, and shall be, most sacred to you, till I am nothing. I never knew till *that moment* the *madness* of my dearest and most beloved friend; I cannot express myself; this is no time for words, but I shall have a pride, a melancholy pleasure, in suffering what you yourself can scarcely conceive, for you do not know me. I am about to go out with a heavy heart, because my appearing this evening will stop any absurd story which the event of the day might give rise to. Do you think *now* I am *cold* and *stern* and *artful*? Will even *others* think so? Will your *mother* ever — that mother to whom we must indeed sacrifice much, more, much more on my part than she shall ever know or can imagine? "Promise not to love you!" ah, Caroline, it is past promising. But I shall attribute all concessions to the proper motive, and never cease to feel all that you have already witnessed, and more than can ever be known but to my own heart, — perhaps to yours. May God protect, forgive, and bless you. Ever, and even more than ever,

Your most attached,

Byron.

P. S. — These taunts which have driven you to this, my dearest Caroline, were it not for your mother and the kindness of your connections, is there anything on earth or heaven that would have made me so happy as to have made you mine long ago? and not less *now* than *then*, but *more* than ever at this time. You know I would with pleasure give up all here and all beyond the grave for you, and in refraining from this, must my motives be misunderstood? I care not who knows this, what use is made of it, — it is to *you* and to *you* only that they are *yourself* (*sic*). I was and am yours freely and most entirely, to obey, to honour, love, — and fly with you when, where, and how you yourself *might* and *may* determine.

“Your little friend, Caro William,” writes the Duchess of Devonshire, May 4, 1812, “as usual, is doing all sorts of imprudent things for him and with him.”

Again she writes, six days later, of Byron:

“The ladies, I hear, spoil him, and the gentlemen are jealous of him. He is going back to Naxos, and then the husbands may sleep in peace. I should not be surprised if Caro William were to go with him, she is so wild and imprudent”

(The *Two Duchesses*, pp. 362, 364). But Lady Caroline’s extravagant adoration wearied Byron, who felt that it made him ridiculous; Lady Melbourne gave him sound advice about her daughter-in-law; and he was growing attached to Miss Milbanke, and, when rejected by her, at first to Lady Oxford, and later to Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. When Lady Bessborough endeavoured to persuade her daughter to leave London for Ireland, Lady Caroline is said to have forced herself into Byron’s room, and implored him to fly with her. Byron refused, conducted her back to Melbourne House, wrote her the letter printed above, and, as she herself admits, kept the secret. In December, 1812, Lady Caroline burned Byron in effigy, with “his book, ring, and chain,” at Bocket Hall. The lines which she wrote for the ceremony are preserved in Mrs. Leigh’s handwriting, and given in .

From Ireland Lady Caroline continued the siege, threatening to follow him into Herefordshire, demanding interviews, and writing about him to Lady Oxford. At length Byron sent her the letter, probably in November, 1812, which she professes to publish in *Glenarvon* (vol. iii. chap. ix.). The words are acknowledged by Byron to have formed part at least of the real document, which is here quoted as printed in the novel:

“Mortanville Priory, November the 9th.

“Lady Avondale, — I am no longer your lover; and since you oblige me to confess it, by this truly unfeminine persecution, ... learn, that I am attached to another; whose name it would, of course, be dishonourable to mention. I shall ever remember with gratitude the many instances I have received of the predilection you have shown in my favour. I shall ever continue your friend, if your ladyship will permit me so to style myself; and, as a first proof of my regard, I offer you this advice, correct your vanity, which is ridiculous; exert your absurd caprices upon others; and leave me in peace.

“Your most obedient servant,

“Glenarvon.”

The first effect of this letter and her unrequited passion was, as she told Lady Morgan, to deprive her temporarily of reason, and it may be added that, when she was a child, her grandmother was so alarmed by her eccentricities as to consult a doctor on the state of her mind. The second effect was to render her temper so ungovernable that William Lamb decided on a separation. All preliminaries were arranged; the solicitor arrived with the documents; but the old charm reasserted itself, and she was found seated by her husband, “feeding him with tiny scraps of transparent bread and butter” (Torrens, *Memoirs of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 112). The separation did not take place till 1825.

Throughout 1812-14 Lady Caroline continued to write to Byron, at first asking for interviews. Two of her last letters to him, written apparently on the eve of his leaving England, in 1816, are worth printing, though they increase the mystery of *Glenarvon*. (See Appendix III., and .)

In Isaac Nathan’s *Fugitive Pieces* (1829), a section is devoted to “Poetical Effusions, Letters, Anecdotes, and Recollections of Lady Caroline Lamb.”

Lady Caroline wrote three novels: *Glenarvon* (1816); *Graham Hamilton* (1822); and *Ada Reis; a Tale* (1823). *Glenarvon*, apart from its biographical interest, is unreadable.

“I do not know,” writes C. Lemon to Lady H. Frampton (*Journal of Mary Frampton*, pp. 286, 287), “all the characters in *Glenarvon*, but I will tell you all I do know. I am not surprised at your being struck with a few detached passages; but before you have read one volume, I think you will doubt at which end of the book you began. There is no connection between any two ideas in the book, and it seems to me to have been written as the sages of Laputa composed their works. ‘Glenarvon’ is Lord Byron; ‘Lady Augusta,’ the late Duchess of Devonshire; ‘Lady Mandeville’ — I think it is Lady Mandeville, but the lady

who dictated Glearvon's farewell letter to Calantha — is Lady Oxford. This letter she really dictated to Lord Byron to send to Lady Caroline Lamb, and is now very much offended that she has treated the matter so lightly as to introduce it into her book. The best character in it is the 'Princess of Madagascar' (Lady Holland), with all her Reviewers about her. The young Duke of Devonshire is in the book, but I forget under what name. I need not say that the heroine is Lady Caroline's own self."

In July, 1824, she was out riding, when she accidentally met Byron's funeral on its way to Newstead. "I am sure," she wrote to Murray, July 13, 1824, "I am very sorry I ever said one unkind word against him." Her mind never recovered the shock, and she died in January, 1828, in the presence of her husband, at Melbourne House. (See also .)

243 — to John Murray

High Street, Cheltenham, Sept. 5, 1812.

Dear Sir, — Pray have the goodness to send those despatches, and a No. of the *E.R.* with the rest. I hope you have written to Mr. Thompson, thanked him in my name for his present, and told him that I shall be truly happy to comply with his request. — How do you go on? and when is the graven image, "with *bays and wicked rhyme upon't*," to grace, or disgrace, some of our tardy editions?

Send me "*Rokeby*" who the deuce is he? — no matter, he has good connections, and will be well introduced. I thank you for your inquiries: I am so so, but my thermometer is sadly below the poetical point. What will you give *me* or *mine* for a poem of six cantos, (*when complete* — *no rhyme, no recompense*,) as like the last two as I can make them? I have some ideas which one day may be embodied, and till winter I shall have much leisure.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

Byron.

P. S. — My last question is in the true style of Grub Street; but, like *Jeremy Diddler*, I only "ask for information." — Send me Adair on *Diet and Regimen*, just republished by Ridgway.

"To have kept his ground at the crisis when *Rokeby* appeared," he writes, "its

author ought to have put forth his utmost strength, and to have possessed all his original advantages, for a mighty and unexpected rival was advancing on the stage — a rival not in poetical powers only, but in that art of attracting popularity, in which the present writer had hitherto preceded better men than himself. The reader will easily see that Byron is here meant, who, after a little velitation of no great promise, now appeared as a serious candidate, in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*.”

On this rivalry Byron wrote the passage in his Diary for November 17, 1813. A further cause for the cold reception of *Rokeby* was its inferiority both to the *Lay* and to *Marmion*. In Letter vii. of the *Twopenny Postbag*, Moore writes thus of *Rokeby*

“Should you feel any touch of *poetical* glow,
We’ve a Scheme to suggest — Mr. Sc — tt, you must know,
(Who, we’re sorry to say it, now works for the Row)
Having quitted the Borders, to seek new renown,
Is coming by long Quarto stages, to Town;
And beginning with *Rokeby* (the job’s sure to pay)
Means to *do* all the Gentlemen’s Seats on the way.
Now the Scheme is (though none of our hackneys can beat him)
To start a fresh Poet through Highgate to *meet* him;
Who, by means of quick proofs — no revises — long coaches —
May do a few Villas before Sc — tt approaches —
Indeed, if our Pegasus be not curst shabby,
He’ll reach, without found’ring, at least Woburn Abbey.”

Diddler

O Sam, you haven't got such a thing as tenpence about you, have you?

Sam

Yes. And I mean to keep it about me, you see.

Diddler

Oh, aye, certainly. I only asked for information.

244 — to Lord Holland

Cheltenham, September 10, 1812.

My Dear Lord, — The lines which I sketched off on your hint are still, or rather *were*, in an unfinished state, for I have just committed them to a flame more decisive than that of Drury.

Under all circumstances, I should hardly wish a contest with Philodrama — Philo-Drury — Asbestos, H — — , and all the anonymes and synonymes of Committee candidates. Seriously, I think you have a chance of something much better; for prologuising is not my forte, and, at all events, either my pride or my modesty won't let me incur the hazard of having my rhymes buried in next month's Magazine, under "Essays on the Murder of Mr. Perceval." and "Cures for the Bite of a Mad Dog," as poor Goldsmith complained of the fate of far superior performances.

I am still sufficiently interested to wish to know the successful candidate; and, amongst so many, I have no doubt some will be excellent, particularly in an age when writing verse is the easiest of all attainments.

I cannot answer your intelligence with the "like comfort," unless, as you are deeply theatrical, you may wish to hear of Mr. Betty, whose acting is, I fear, utterly inadequate to the London engagement into which the managers of Covent Garden have lately entered. His figure is fat, his features flat, his voice unmanageable, his action ungraceful, and, as Diggory says, "I defy him to extort that damned muffin face of his into madness." I was very sorry to see him in the character of the "Elephant on the slack rope;" for, when I last saw him, I was in raptures with his performance. But then I was sixteen — an age to which all London condescended to subside. After all, much better judges have admired, and may again; but I venture to "prognosticate a prophecy" (see the *Courier*) that he will not succeed.

So, poor dear Rogers has stuck fast on "the brow of the mighty Helvellyn" I hope not for ever. My best respects to Lady H.: — her departure, with that of my other friends, was a sad event for me, now reduced to a state of the most cynical solitude.

"By the waters of Cheltenham I sat down and *drank*, when I remembered

thee, oh Georgiana Cottage! As for our *harps*, we hanged them up upon the willows that grew thereby. Then they said, Sing us a song of Drury Lane," etc.;

— but I am dumb and dreary as the Israelites. The waters have disordered me to my heart's content — you *were* right, as you always are.

Believe me, ever your obliged and affectionate servant,

Byron.

"Rebuilding of Drury-Lane Theatre.

"The Committee are desirous of promoting a fair and free competition for an Address, to be spoken upon the opening of the Theatre, which will take place on the 10th of October next: They have therefore thought fit to announce to the Public, that they will be glad to receive any such Compositions, addressed to their Secretary at the Treasury Office in Drury Lane, on or before the 10th of September, sealed up, with a distinguishing word, number, or motto, on the cover, corresponding with the inscription, on a separate sealed paper, containing the name of the Author, which will not be opened, unless containing the name of the successful Candidate. Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane, August 13, 1812.

Owing to an accidental delay in the publication of the above Advertisement, the Committee have thought proper to extend the time for receiving Addresses, from the last day of August to the 10th of September."

Byron, on the suggestion of Lord Holland, intended to send in an *Address* in competition with other similar productions. He afterwards changed his mind, and refused to compete. After all the *Addresses* had been received and rejected, the Committee applied to him to write an *Address*. This he consented to do.

"The public were more importantly employed, than to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried among the essays upon liberty, Eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog."

Vicar of Wakefield, chap. xx.

"I climb'd the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn," etc., etc.

The poem was occasioned, as Scott's note states, by the death of "a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition," who was killed on the mountain in 1805.

245 — to John Murray

Cheltenham, Sept. 14, 1812.

Dear Sir, — The parcels contained some letters and verses, all (but one) anonymous and complimentary, and very anxious for my conversion from certain infidelities into which my good-natured correspondents conceive me to have fallen. The books were presents of a *convertible* kind also, — *Christian Knowledge* and the *Bioscope*, a religious Dial of Life explained: — to the author of the former (Cadell, publisher,) I beg you will forward my best thanks for his letter, his present, and, above all, his good intentions. The *Bioscope* contained an MS. copy of very excellent verses, from whom I know not, but evidently the composition of some one in the habit of writing, and of writing well. I do not know if he be the author of the *Bioscope* which accompanied them; but whoever he is, if you can discover him, thank him from me most heartily. The other letters were from ladies, who are welcome to convert me when they please; and if I can discover them, and they be young, as they say they are, I could convince them perhaps of my devotion. I had also a letter from Mr. Walpole on matters of this world, which I have answered.

So you are Lucien's publisher! I am promised an interview with him, and think I shall ask *you* for a letter of introduction, as "the gods have made him poetical." From whom could it come with a better grace than from *his* publisher and mine? Is it not somewhat treasonable in you to have to do with a relative of the "direful foe," as the *Morning Post* calls his brother?

But my book on *Diet and Regimen*, where is it? I thirst for Scott's *Rokeby*; let me have y'e first-begotten copy. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* is all very well, and not a bit worse than the *Quarterly*, and at least less harmless. By the by, have you secured my books? I want all the Reviews, at least the Critiques, quarterly, monthly, etc., Portuguese and English, extracted, and bound up in one volume for my *old age*; and pray, sort my Romaic books, and get the volumes lent to Mr. Hobhouse — he has had them now a long time. If any thing occurs, you will favour me with a line, and in winter we shall be nearer neighbours.

Yours very truly,

Byron.

P. S. — I was applied to to write the *Address* for Drury Lane, but the moment I heard of the contest, I gave up the idea of contending against all Grub Street, and threw a few thoughts on the subject into the fire. I did this out of respect to you, being sure you would have turned off any of your authors who had entered the lists with such scurvy competitors; to triumph would have been no glory, and to have been defeated — 'sdeath! — I would have choked myself, like Otway, with a quartern loaf; so, remember I had, and have, nothing to do with it, upon *my Honour!*

246 — to Lord Holland

September 22, 1812.

My Dear Lord, — In a day or two I will send you something which you will still have the liberty to reject if you dislike it. I should like to have had more time, but will do my best, — but too happy if I can oblige *you*, though I may offend a hundred scribblers and the discerning public.

Ever yours.

Keep *my name* a *secret*; or I shall be beset by all the rejected, and, perhaps, damned by a party.

247 — to Lord Holland

Cheltenham, September 23, 1812.

Ecco! — I have marked some passages with *double* readings — choose between them — *cut* — *add* — *reject* — or *destroy* — do with them as you will — I leave it to you and the Committee — you cannot say so called “a *non committendo*.” What will *they* do (and I do) with the hundred and one rejected Troubadours?

“With trumpets, yea, and with shawms,” will you be assailed in the most diabolical doggerel. I wish my name not to transpire till the day is decided. I shall not be in town, so it won't much matter; but let us have a *good deliverer*. I think Elliston should be the man, or Pope; not Raymond, I implore you, by the love of Rhythmus!

The passages marked thus = =, above and below, are for you to choose between epithets, and such like poetical furniture. Pray write me a line, and believe me

Ever, *etc.*

My best remembrances to Lady H. Will you be good enough to decide between the various readings marked, and erase the other; or our *deliverer* may be as puzzled as a commentator, and belike repeat both. If these *versicles* won't do, I will hammer out some more endecasyllables.

P.S. — Tell Lady H. I have had sad work to keep out the Phœnix — I mean the Fire Office of that name. It has insured the theatre, and why not the Address?

The youngest competitor was “Anna, a young lady in the fifteenth year of her age.”

The actual number sent in was 112, and sixty-nine of the competitors invoked the Phœnix. Among the competitors were Peter Pindar, whose *Address* was printed in 1813; Whitbread, the manager, who gave the “poulterer's description” of the Phœnix; and Horace Smith, who published his *Address without a Phœnix*, By S. T. P., in *Rejected Addresses*.

248 — to Lord Holland

September 24.

I send a recast of the four first lines of the concluding paragraph.

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obey'd,
The drama's homage by her Herald paid,
Receive *our welcome too*, whose every tone
Springs from our hearts, and fain would win your own.
The curtain rises, etc., etc.

And do forgive all this trouble. See what it is to have to do even with the *genteel*est of us.

Ever, etc.

249 — to Lord Holland

Cheltenham, Sept. 25, 1812.

Still “more matter for a May morning.” Having patched the middle and end of the Address, I send one more couplet for a part of the beginning, which, if not too turgid, you will have the goodness to add. After that flagrant image of the *Thames* (I hope no unlucky wag will say I have set it on fire, though Dryden, in

his *Annus Mirabilis*, and Churchill, in his *Times*, did it before me), I mean to insert this:

As flashing far the new Volcano shone
And swept the skies with {lightnings}/{*meteors*} not their own,
While thousands throng'd around the burning dome,
Etc., etc.

I think “thousands” less flat than “crowds collected” — but don’t let me plunge into the bathos, or rise into Nat. Lee’s *Bedlam metaphors*.

By the by, the best view of the said fire (which I myself saw from a house-top in Covent-garden) was at Westminster Bridge, from the reflection on the Thames.

Perhaps the present couplet had better come in after “trembled for their homes,” the two lines after; — as otherwise the image certainly sinks, and it will run just as well.

The lines themselves, perhaps, may be better thus — (“choose,” or “refuse” — but please *yourself*, and don’t mind “Sir Fretful”):

As flash’d the volumed blaze, and {*sadly*}/{*ghastly*} shone
The skies with lightnings awful as their own.

The last *runs* smoothest, and, I think, best; but you know *better* than *best*. “Lurid” is also a less indistinct epithet than “livid wave,” and, if you think so, a dash of the pen will do.

I expected one line this morning; in the mean time, I shall remodel and condense, and, if I do not hear from you, shall send another copy.

I am ever, etc.

“A key of fire ran all along the shore,
And lightened all the river with a blaze;
The wakened tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.”

“Bidding in one grand pile this Town expire,
Her towers in dust, her Thames a Lake of fire.”

“When Greek join’d Greek then was the tug of war.”

He collaborated with Dryden in *Ædipus* (1679) and *The Duke of Guise* (1682). His numerous dramas were distinguished, in his own day, for extravagance and bombast. His mind failing, he was confined from 1684 to 1688 in Bethlehem Hospital, where he is said to have composed a tragedy in 25 acts.

“He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six and thirty; and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.”

250 — to Lord Holland

September 26, 1812.

You will think there is no end to my villanous emendations. The fifth and sixth lines I think to alter thus:

Ye who beheld — oh sight admired and mourn’d,
Whose radiance mock’d the ruin it adorn’d;

because “night” is repeated the next line but one; and, as it now stands, the conclusion of the paragraph, “worthy him (Shakspeare) and *you*,” appears to apply the “*you*” to those only who were out of bed and in Covent Garden market on the night of conflagration, instead of the audience or the discerning public at large, all of whom are intended to be comprised in that comprehensive and, I hope, comprehensible pronoun.

By the by, one of my corrections in the fair copy sent yesterday has dived into the bathos some sixty fathom:

When Garrick died, and Brinsley ceased to write.

Ceasing to *live* is a much more serious concern, and ought not to be first; therefore I will let the old couplet stand, with its half rhymes “sought” and “wrote.”

Second thoughts in every thing are best, but, in rhyme, third and fourth don’t come amiss. I am very anxious on this business, and I do hope that the very trouble I occasion you will plead its own excuse, and that it will tend to show my endeavour to make the most of the time allotted. I wish I had known it months

ago, for in that case I had not left one line standing on another. I always scrawl in this way, and smooth as much as I can, but never sufficiently; and, latterly, I can weave a nine-line stanza faster than a couplet, for which measure I have not the cunning. When I began *Childe Harold*, I had never tried Spenser's measure, and now I cannot scribble in any other.

After all, my dear Lord, if you can get a decent *Address* elsewhere, don't hesitate to put this aside.

Why did you not trust your own Muse? I am very sure she would have been triumphant, and saved the Committee their trouble — "'tis a joyful one" to me, but I fear I shall not satisfy even myself. After the account you sent me, 'tis no compliment to say you would have beaten your candidates; but I mean that, in *that* case, there would have been no occasion for their being beaten at all.

There are but two decent prologues in our tongue — Pope's to *Cato* — Johnson's to Drury-Lane.

These, with the epilogue to *The Distrest Mother* and, I think, one of Goldsmith's, and a prologue of old Colman's to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, are the best things of the kind we have.

P.S. — I am diluted to the throat with medicine for the stone; and Boisragon wants me to try a warm climate for the winter — but I won't.

"Such are the names that here your plaudits sought,
When Garrick acted, and when Brinsley wrote."

At present the couplet stands thus:

"Dear are the days that made our annals bright,
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write."

"I am almost ashamed," writes Lord Holland to Rogers, October 22, 1812 (Clayden's *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, vol. i. p. 115), "of having induced Lord Byron to write on so ungrateful a theme (ungrateful in all senses) as the opening of a theatre; he was so good-humoured, took so much pains, corrected so good-humouredly, and produced, as I thought and think, a prologue so superior to the common run of that sort of trumpery, that it is quite vexatious to see him attacked for it. Some part of it is a little too much laboured, and the whole too long; but surely it is good and poetical.... You cannot imagine how I grew to like Lord Byron in my critical intercourse with him, and how much I am

convinced that your friendship and judgment have contributed to improve both his understanding and his happiness.”

251 — to Lord Holland

Sept. 27, 1812.

I believe this is the third scrawl since yesterday — all about epithets. I think the epithet “intellectual” won’t convey the meaning I intend; and though I hate compounds, for the present I will try (*col’ permesso*) the word “genius gifted patriots of our line” instead. Johnson has “many coloured life,” a compound — but they are always best avoided. However, it is the only one in ninety lines, but will be happy to give way to a better. I am ashamed to intrude any more remembrances on Lady H. or letters upon you; but you are, fortunately for me, gifted with patience already too often tried by

Your etc., etc.,

Byron.

“Immortal names emblazon’d on our line.”

252 — to Lord Holland

September 27, 1812.

I have just received your very kind letter, and hope you have met with a second copy corrected and addressed to Holland House, with some omissions and this new couplet,

As glared each rising flash, and ghastly shone
The skies with lightnings awful as their own.

As to remarks, I can only say I will alter and acquiesce in any thing. With regard to the part which Whitbread wishes to omit, I believe the *Address* will go off *quicker* without it, though, like the agility of the Hottentot, at the expense of its vigour. I leave to your choice entirely the different specimens of stucco-work; and a *brick* of your own will also much improve my Babylonish turret. I should like Elliston to have it, with your leave. “Adorn” and “mourn” are lawful rhymes

in Pope's *Death of the Unfortunate Lady*. — Gray has "forlorn" and "mourn" — and "torn" and "mourn" are in Smollett's famous *Tears of Scotland*.

As there will probably be an outcry amongst the rejected, I hope the Committee will testify (if it be needful) that I sent in nothing to the congress whatever, with or without a name, as your Lordship well knows. All I have to do with it is with and through you; and though I, of course, wish to satisfy the audience, I do assure you my first object is to comply with your request, and in so doing to show the sense I have of the many obligations you have conferred upon me.

Yours ever,

B.

"As glared the volumed blaze."

"Mr. Whitbread was a more steady character; his appearance was heavy; he was fond of agriculture, and was very plain and simple in his tastes. Both were reckoned good debaters in the House, but Grey was the most eloquent."

An independent Whig, and an advocate for peace with France, Whitbread supported Fox against Pitt throughout the Napoleonic War, strongly opposed its renewal after the return of the emperor from Elba, and interested himself in such measures as moderate Parliamentary reform, the amendment of the poor law, national education, and retrenchment of public expenditure. On April 8, 1805, he moved the resolutions which ended in the impeachment of Lord Melville, and took the lead in the inquiries, which were made, March, 1809, into the conduct of the Duke of York. He was a plain, business-like speaker, and a man of such unimpeachable integrity that Mr., afterwards Lord, Plunket, in a speech on the Roman Catholic claims, February 28, 1821, called him "the incorruptible sentinel of the constitution."

When he moved the articles of impeachment against Lord Melville, Canning scribbled the following impromptu parody of his speech (*Anecdotal History of the British Parliament*, p. 222):

"I'm like Archimedes for science and skill;
I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill;
I'm like — (with respect to the fair be it said) —
I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed.
If you ask why the 11th of June I remember
Much better than April, or May, or November,

On that day, my lords, with truth I assure ye,
 My sainted progenitor set up his brewery;
 On that day, in the morn, he began brewing beer;
 On that day, too, commenced his connubial career;]
 On that day he received and he issued his bills;
 On that day he cleared out all the cash from his tills;
 On that day he died, having finished his summing,
 And the angels all cried, 'Here's old Whitbread a-coming!'
 So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh,
 For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I;
 And still on that day, in the hottest of weather,
 The whole Whitbread family dine all together. —
 So long as the beams of this house shall support
 The roof which o'ershades this respectable Court,
 Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos;
 So long as that sun shall shine in at those windows,
 My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines,
Mine recorded in journals, *his* blazoned on signs!"

An active member of Parliament, a large landed proprietor, the manager of his immense brewery in Chiswell Street, Whitbread also found time to reduce to order the chaotic concerns of Drury Lane Theatre. He was, with Lord Holland and Harvey Combe, responsible for the request to Byron to write an address, having first rejected his own address with its "poulterer's description of the Phoenix." He was fond of private theatricals, and Dibdin (*Reminiscences*, vol. ii. pp. 383, 384) gives the play-bill of an entertainment given by him at Southill. In the first play, *The Happy Return*, he took the part of "Margery;" and in the second, *Fatal Duplicity*, that of "Eglantine," a very young lady, loved by "Sir Buntybart" and "Sir Brandywine." In his capacity as manager of Drury Lane, Whitbread is represented by the author of *Accepted Addresses* (1813) as addressing "the M — s of H — d" —

"My **Lord**, —

"As I now have the honour to be
 By *Man'ging* a *Playhouse* a double M.P.,
 In this my address I think fit to complain
 Of certain encroachments on great Drury Lane," etc., etc.

Whitbread strongly supported the cause of the Princess of Wales. Miss Berry (*Journal*, vol. iii. p. 25) says that he dictated the letters which the Princess wrote to the Queen, who had desired that she should not attend the two drawing-rooms to be held in June, 1814. "They were good," she adds, "but too long, and sometimes marked by Whitbread's want of taste."

The strain of his multifarious activities affected both his health and his mind, and he committed suicide July 6, 1815.

"By foreign hands thy humble grave adorn'd,
By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd."

(Pope.)

"Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn,
Leave me unblest'd, unpitied, here to mourn."

(Gray.)

"Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn."

(Smollett.)

253 — to John Murray

Cheltenham, September 27, 1812.

Dear Sir, — I sent in no *Address* whatever to the Committee; but out of nearly one hundred (this is *confidential*), none have been deemed worth acceptance; and in consequence of their *subsequent* application to *me*, I have written a prologue, which *has* been received, and will be spoken. The MS. is now in the hands of Lord Holland.

I write this merely to say, that (however it is received by the audience) you will publish it in the next edition of *Childe Harold*; and I only beg you at present to keep my name secret till you hear further from me, and as soon as possible I wish you to have a correct copy, to do with as you think proper.

I am, yours very truly,

Byron.

P. S. — I should wish a few copies printed off *before*, that the Newspaper copies may be correct *after* the *delivery*.

254 — to Lord Holland

September 28, 1812.

Will this do better? The metaphor is more complete.

Till slowly ebb'd the {*lava of the*}/{spent volcanic} wave,
And blackening ashes mark'd the Muse's grave.

If not, we will say “burning wave,” and instead of “burning clime,” in the line some couplets back, have “glowing.”

Is Whitbread determined to castrate all my *cavalry* lines? I don't see why t'other house should be spared; besides it is the public, who ought to know better; and you recollect Johnson's was against similar buffooneries of Rich's — but, certes, I am not Johnson.

Instead of “effects,” say “labours” — “degenerate” will do, will it? Mr. Betty is no longer a babe, therefore the line cannot be personal. Will this do?

Till ebb'd the lava of {*the burning*}/{that molten} wave

with “glowing dome,” in case you prefer “burning” added to this “wave” metaphorical. The word “fiery pillar” was suggested by the “pillar of fire” in the book of *Exodus*, which went before the Israelites through the Red Sea. I once thought of saying “like Israel's pillar,” and making it a simile, but I did not know, — the great temptation was leaving the epithet “fiery” for the supplementary wave. I want to work up that passage, as it is the only new ground us prologuizers can go upon:

This is the place where, if a poet
Shined in description, he might show it.

If I part with the possibility of a future conflagration, we lessen the compliment to Shakspeare. However, we will e'en mend it thus:

Yes, it shall be — the magic of that name,
That scorns the scythe of Time, the torch of Flame,

On the same spot, etc., etc.

There — the deuce is in it, if that is not an improvement to Whitbread's content. Recollect, it is the "name," and not the "magic," that has a noble contempt for those same weapons. If it were the "magic," my metaphor would be somewhat of the maddest — so the "name" is the antecedent. But, my dear Lord, your patience is not quite so immortal — therefore, with many and sincere thanks, I am,

Yours ever most affectionately.

P.S. — I foresee there will be charges of partiality in the papers; but you know I sent in no *Address*; and glad both you and I must be that I did not, for, in that case, their plea had been plausible. I doubt the Pit will be testy; but conscious innocence (a novel and pleasing sensation) makes me bold.

*"Nay, lower still, the Drama yet deplores
That late she deigned to crawl upon all-fours.
When Richard roars in Bosworth for a horse,
If you command, the steed must come in course.
If you decree, the Stage must condescend
To soothe the sickly taste we dare not mend.
Blame not our judgment should we acquiesce,
And gratify you more by showing less.
Oh, since your Fiat stamps the Drama's laws,
Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause;
That public praise be ne'er again disgraced,
From {brutes to man recall}/{babes and brutes redeem} a nation's taste;
Then pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
When Reason's voice is echoed back by ours."*

The last couplet but one was altered in a subsequent copy, thus:

*"The past reproach let present scenes refute,
Nor shift from man to babe, from babe to brute."*

On February 18, 1811, at Covent Garden, a troop of horses were introduced in *Bluebeard*. For the manager, Juvenal's words, "*Lucri bonus est odor ex re Qualibet*" (*Sat.* xiv. 204) may have been true; but, as the dressing-room of the equine comedians was under the orchestra, the stench on the first night was to

the audience intolerable. At the same theatre, April 29, 1811, the horses were again brought on the stage in Lewis's *Timour the Tartar*. At the same theatre, on the following December 26, a live elephant appeared. The novelty had, however, been anticipated in the Dublin Theatre during the season of 1771-72 (Genest's *English Stage*, vol. viii. p. 287). At the Haymarket, and Drury Lane, the introduction of live animals was ridiculed. *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh* was given at the Haymarket, July 26, 1811, as a burlesque on *Timour the Tartar* and the horses. The Prologue, by Colman the Younger, attacks the passion for German plays and animal actors:

“Your taste, recover'd half from foreign quacks,
Takes airings, now, on English horses' backs;
While every modern bard may raise his name,
If not on *lasting praise*, on *stable fame*.”

At the Lyceum, during the season 1811-12, *Quadrupeds, or the Manager's Last Kick*, in which the tailors were mounted on asses and mules, was given by the Drury Lane Company with success. It was this introduction of animal performers which Byron wished to attack.

“Then crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refined,
For years the power of Tragedy declined;
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roared, whilst Passion slept.
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remained though Nature fled.
But forced, at length, her ancient reign to quit,
She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit;
Exulting Folly hailed the joyous Day,
And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway.
But who the coming changes can presage,
And mark the future periods of the Stage?
Perhaps if skill could distant times explore,
New Behns, new Durfeys, yet remain in store;
Perhaps, where Lear has raved, and Hamlet died,
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride;
Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance?)
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.”

John Rich (circ. 1682-1761) was the creator of pantomime in England, which he introduced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in April, 1716, and in which, under the stage name of Lun, he played the part of Harlequin. At Lincoln's Inn Fields, January 29, 1728, he produced *The Beggar's Opera*, which, after being refused at Drury Lane, made "Gay rich, and Rich gay." "Great Faustus" probably alludes to the war between the two theatres, and the rival productions of *Harlequin Dr. Faustus* at Drury Lane in 1723, and of *The Necromancer, or the History of Dr. Faustus* at Lincoln's Inn Fields in December of the same year. On December 7, 1732, Rich opened the new theatre at Covent Garden, of which he remained manager till his death in 1761.

"Till blackening ashes and lonely wall
Usurp'd the Muse's realm, and mark'd her fall."

255 — to Lord Holland

September 28.

I have altered the *middle* couplet, so as I hope partly to do away with W.'s objection. I do think, in the present state of the stage, it had been unpardonable to pass over the horses and Miss Mudie, *etc.* As Betty is no longer a boy, how can this be applied to him? He is now to be judged as a man. If he acts still like a boy, the public will but be more ashamed of their blunder. I have, you see, *now* taken it for granted that these things are reformed. I confess, I wish that part of the *Address* to stand; but if W. is inexorable, e'en let it go. I have also new-cast the lines, and softened the hint of future combustion, and sent them off this morning. Will you have the goodness to add, or insert, the *approved* alterations as they arrive? They "come like shadows, so depart," occupy me, and, I fear, disturb you.

Do not let Mr. W. put his *Address* into Elliston's hands till you have settled on these alterations. E. will think it too long: — much depends on the speaking. I fear it will not bear much curtailing, without *chasms* in the sense.

It is certainly too long in the reading; but if Elliston exerts himself, such a favourite with the public will not be thought tedious. *I* should think it so, if *he* were not to speak it.

Yours ever, *etc.*

P.S. — On looking again, I doubt my idea of having obviated W.'s objection. To the other House allusion is *non sequitur* — but I wish to plead for this part, because the thing really is not to be passed over. Many afterpieces of the Lyceum by the *same company* have already attacked this “Augean Stable” — and Johnson, in his prologue against “Lunn” (the harlequin manager, Rich), — “Hunt,” — “Mahomet,” *etc.* is surely a fair precedent.

“Ladies and gentlemen, — I know nothing I have done to offend you, and has set (*sic*) those who are sent here to hiss me; I will be very much obliged to you to turn them out.”

This unfortunate speech made matters worse; the audience refused to hear her, and her part was finished by Miss Searle.

Miss Mudie was said to be only eight years old. But J. Kemble, being asked if she were really such a child, answered,

“*Child!* Why, sir, when I was a very young actor in the York Company, that little creature kept an inn at Tadcaster, and had a large family”

(Clark Russell's *Representative Actors*, p. 363, *note* 2). The *Morning Post* (April 5, 1806) says that Miss Mudie afterwards joined a children's troupe in Leicester Place, where,

“though deservedly discountenanced at a great theatre, she will, no doubt, prove an acquisition to the infant establishment”

(Ashton's *Dawn of the XIXth Century in England*, pp. 333-336).

256 — to William Bankes

Cheltenham, September 28, 1812.

My Dear Bankes, — When you point out to one how people can be intimate at the distance of some seventy leagues, I will plead guilty to your charge, and accept your farewell, but not *wittingly*, till you give me some better reason than my silence, which merely proceeded from a notion founded on your own declaration of *old*, that you hated writing and receiving letters. Besides, how was I to find out a man of many residences? If I had addressed you *now*, it had been to your borough, where I must have conjectured you were amongst your constituents. So now, in despite of Mr. N. and Lady W., you shall be as “much better” as the Hexham post-office will allow me to make you. I do assure you I am much indebted to you for thinking of me at all, and can't spare you even from amongst the superabundance of friends with whom you suppose me

surrounded.

You heard that Newstead is sold — the sum £140,000; sixty to remain in mortgage on the estate for three years, paying interest, of course. Rochdale is also likely to do well — so my worldly matters are mending. I have been here some time drinking the waters, simply because there are waters to drink, and they are very medicinal, and sufficiently disgusting. In a few days I set out for Lord Jersey's, but return here, where I am quite alone, go out very little, and enjoy in its fullest extent the *dolce far niente*. What you are about I cannot guess, even from your date; — not dauncing to the sound of the gitourney in the Halls of the Lowthers? one of whom is here, ill, poor thing, with a phthisic. I heard that you passed through here (at the sordid inn where I first alighted) the very day before I arrived in these parts. We had a very pleasant set here; at first the Jerseys, Melbournes, Cowpers, and Hollands, but all gone; and the only persons I know are the Rawdons and Oxfords, with some later acquaintances of less brilliant descent.

But I do not trouble them much; and as for your rooms and your assemblies “they are not dreamed of in our philosophy!!” — Did you read of a sad accident in the Wye t'other day? A dozen drowned; and Mr. Roscoe, a corpulent gentleman, preserved by a boat-hook or an eel-spear, begged, when he heard his wife was saved — no — *lost* — to be thrown in again!! — as if he could not have thrown himself in, had he wished it; but this passes for a trait of sensibility. What strange beings men are, in and out of the Wye!

I have to ask you a thousand pardons for not fulfilling some orders before I left town; but if you knew all the cursed entanglements I *had* to wade through, it would be unnecessary to beg your forgiveness. — When will Parliament (the new one) meet? — in sixty days, on account of Ireland, I presume: the Irish election will demand a longer period for completion than the constitutional allotment. Yours, of course, is safe, and all your side of the question. Salamanca is the ministerial watchword, and all will go well with you. I hope you will speak more frequently, I am sure at least you *ought*, and it will be expected. I see Portman means to stand again. Good night.

Ever yours most affectionately,

“In 1812 at Middelton (Lord Jersey's), amongst a goodly company of Lords, Ladies, and wits, etc., there was poor old Vice Leach, the lawyer, attempting to play off the fine gentleman. His first exhibition, an attempt on horseback, I think, to escort the women — God knows where — in the month of November,

ended in a fit of the Lumbago — as Lord Ogleby says, ‘a grievous enemy to Gallantry and address’ — and if he could have but heard Lady Jersey quizzing him (as I did) next day for the *cause* of his malady, I don’t think that he would have turned a ‘Squire of dames’ in a hurry again. He seemed to me the greatest fool (in that line) I ever saw. This was the last I saw of old Vice Leach, except in town, where he was creeping into assemblies, and trying to look young — and gentlemanly.

Erskine too! — Erskine was there — good but intolerable. He jested, he talked, he did everything admirably, but then he *would* be applauded for the same thing twice over. He would read his own verses, his own paragraphs, and tell his own story again and again; and then ‘the trial by Jury!!!’ — I almost wished it abolished, for I sate next him at dinner, and, as I had read his published speeches, there was no occasion to repeat them to me. Chester (the fox-hunter), surnamed ‘Cheek Chester,’ and I sweated the Claret, being the only two who did so. Cheek, who loves his bottle, and had no notion of meeting with a ‘bonvivant’ in a scribbler, in making my eulogy to somebody one evening, summed it up in ‘by G-d, he *drinks like a Man!*’“

“On Tuesday,” he says, “I supped, after the opera, at Mrs. Meynel’s with a set of the most fashionable company, which, take notice, I very seldom do now, as I certainly am not of the age to mix often with young people. Lady Melbourne was standing before the fire, and adjusting her feathers in the glass. Says she, ‘Lord, they say the stocks will blow up! That will be very comical.’“

Greville (*Memoirs*, ed. 1888, vol. vi. p. 248) associates her name with that of Lord Egremont. Reynolds painted her with her eldest son in his well-known picture *Maternal Affection*. Her second son, William, afterwards Prime Minister, used to say,

“Ah! my mother was a most remarkable woman; not merely clever and engaging, but the most sagacious woman I ever knew”

(*Memoirs of Viscount Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 135). Lady Melbourne, whom Byron spoke of as

“the best, the kindest, and ablest female I have ever known, old or young,”

died in 1818, her husband in 1828. He thus described her to Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, p. 225):

“Lady M., who might have been my mother, excited an interest in my feelings that few young women have been able to awaken. She was a charming person — a sort of modern Aspasia, uniting the energy of a man’s mind with the delicacy and tenderness of a woman’s. She wrote and spoke admirably, because

she felt admirably. Envy, malice, hatred, or uncharitableness, found no place in her feelings. She had all of philosophy, save its moroseness, and all of nature, save its defects and general *faiblesse*; or if some portion of *faiblesse* attached to her, it only served to render her more forbearing to the errors of others. I have often thought, that, with a little more youth, Lady M. might have turned my head, at all events she often turned my heart, by bringing me back to mild feelings, when the demon passion was strong within me. Her mind and heart were as fresh as if only sixteen summers had flown over her, instead of four times that number.”

“Even now the autumnal charms of Lady — — are remembered by me with more than admiration. She resembled a landscape by Claude Lorraine, with a setting sun, her beauties enhanced by the knowledge that they were shedding their last dying beams, which threw a radiance around. A woman... is only grateful for her *first* and *last* conquest. The first of poor dear Lady — — ’s was achieved before I entered on this world of care; but the *last*, I do flatter myself, was reserved for me, and a *bonne bouche* it was.”

The following passage certainly relates to Lady Oxford:

“There was a lady at that time,” said Byron (Medwin’s *Conversations*, pp. 93, 94), “double my own age, the mother of several children who were perfect angels, with whom I had formed a *liaison* that continued without interruption for eight months. The autumn of a beauty like her’s is preferable to the spring in others. She told me she was never in love till she was thirty; and I thought myself so with her when she was forty. I never felt a stronger passion; which she returned with equal ardour.... She had been sacrificed, almost before she was a woman, to one whose mind and body were equally contemptible in the scale of creation; and on whom she bestowed a numerous family, to which the law gave him the right to be called father. Strange as it may seem, she gained (as all women do) an influence over me so strong, that I had great difficulty in breaking with her, even when I knew she had been inconstant to me: and once was on the point of going abroad with her, and narrowly escaped this folly.”

To be near the Oxfords at Eywood, in Herefordshire, Byron took Kinsham Court, a dower-house of the family, where Bishop Harley died in 1788. At one time, as is evident from his correspondence with Hanson, he was bent on going abroad with Lady Oxford. In the end he only accompanied her to Portsmouth. Of Lady Oxford, Uvedale Price wrote thus to Rogers (Clayden, *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, vol. i. pp. 397, 398):

“This is a melancholy subject” — [the death, by consumption of Lord

Aberdeen's children] — "and I must go to another. Poor Lady Oxford! I had heard with great concern of her dangerous illness, but hoped she might get through it, and was much, very much grieved to hear that it had ended fatally. I had, as you know, lived a great deal with her from the time she came into this country, immediately after her marriage; but for some years past, since she went abroad, had scarcely had any correspondence or intercourse with her, till I met her in town last spring. I then saw her twice, and both times she seemed so overjoyed to see an old friend, and expressed her joy so naturally and cordially, that I felt no less overjoyed at seeing her after so long an absence. She talked, with great satisfaction, of our meeting for a longer time this next spring, little thinking of an eternal separation. There could not, in all respects, be a more ill-matched pair than herself and Lord Oxford, or a stronger instance of the cruel sports of Venus, or, rather, of Hymen:

'Cui placet impares
Formas atque animos sub juga ahenea
Sævo mittere cum joco.'

It has been said that she was, in some measure, forced into the match. Had she been united to a man whom she had loved, esteemed, and respected, she herself might have been generally respected and esteemed, as well as loved; but in her situation, to keep clear of all misconduct required a strong mind or a cold heart; perhaps both, and she had neither. Her failings were in no small degree the effect of circumstances; her amiable qualities all her own. There was something about her, in spite of her errors, remarkably attaching, and that something was not merely her beauty. 'Kindness has resistless charms,' and she was full of affectionate kindness to those she loved, whether as friends or as lovers. As a friend, I always found her the same, never at all changeful or capricious. As I am not a very rigid moralist, and am extremely open to kindness, 'I could have better spared a better woman.'"

257 — to Lord Holland

September 29, 1812.

Shakespeare certainly ceased to reign in *one* of his kingdoms, as George III. did in America, and George IV. may in Ireland? Now, we have nothing to do out of our own realms, and when the monarchy was gone, his majesty had but a barren sceptre. I have *cut away*, you will see, and altered, but make it what you

please; only I do implore, for my *own* gratification, one lash on those accursed quadrupeds — "a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me." I have altered "wave," etc., and the "fire," and so forth for the timid.

Let me hear from you when convenient, and believe me, *etc.*

P.S. — Do let *that* stand, and cut out elsewhere. I shall choke, if we must overlook their damned menagerie.

258 — to Lord Holland

September 30, 1812.

I send you the most I can make of it; for I am not so well as I was, and find I "pull in resolution."

I wish much to see you, and will be at Tetbury by twelve on Saturday; and from thence I go on to Lord Jersey's. It is impossible not to allude to the degraded state of the Stage, but I have lightened *it*, and endeavoured to obviate your *other* objections. There is a new couplet for Sheridan, allusive to his Monody. All the alterations I have marked thus], — as you will see by comparison with the other copy. I have cudgelled my brains with the greatest willingness, and only wish I had more time to have done better.

You will find a sort of clap-trap laudatory couplet inserted for the quiet of the Committee, and I have added, towards the end, the couplet you were pleased to *like*. The whole Address is seventy-three lines, still perhaps too long; and, if shortened, you will save time, but, I fear, a little of what I meant for sense also.

With myriads of thanks, I am ever, *etc.*

My sixteenth edition of respects to Lady H. — How she must laugh at all this!

I wish Murray, my publisher, to print off some copies as soon as your Lordship returns to town — it will ensure correctness in the papers afterwards.

"of one peer and two commoners, one poet and two prozers, one Lord and two Brewers; and the only points in which they coincided were in being all three parliament men, all three politicians, all three in opposition to the Government of the country. Their names, as we understand, were Vassal Holland, Samuel Whitbread, and Harvey Christian Combe."

259 — to Lord Holland

Far be from him that hour which asks in vain
Tears such as flow for Garrick in his strain;

or,

Far be that hour that vainly asks in turn
Such verse for him as {*crown'd his/wept o'er*} Garrick's urn.

September 30, 1812.

Will you choose between these added to the lines on Sheridan?

I think they will wind up the panegyric, and agree with the train of thought preceding them.

Now, one word as to the Committee — how could they resolve on a rough copy of an *Address* never sent in, unless you had been good enough to retain in memory, or on paper, the thing they have been good enough to adopt? By the by, the circumstances of the case should make the Committee less *avidus gloriæ*, for all praise of them would look plaguy suspicious. If necessary to be stated at all, the simple facts bear them out. They surely had a right to act as they pleased. My sole object is one which, I trust, my whole conduct has shown; viz. that I did nothing insidious — sent in no *Address whatever* — but, when applied to, did my best for them and myself; but, above all, that there was no undue partiality, which will be what the rejected will endeavour to make out. Fortunately — most fortunately — I sent in no lines on the occasion. For I am sure that had they, in that case, been preferred, it would have been asserted that *I* was known, and owed the preference to private friendship. This is what we shall probably have to encounter; but, if once spoken and approved, we sha'n't be much embarrassed by their brilliant conjectures; and, as to criticism, an *old* author, like an old bull, grows cooler (or ought) at every baiting.

The only thing would be to avoid a party on the night of delivery — afterwards, the more the better, and the whole transaction inevitably tends to a good deal of discussion. Murray tells me there are myriads of ironical *Addresses* ready — some, in imitation of what is called *my style*. If they are as good as the *Probationary Odes*, or Hawkins's *Pipe of Tobacco*, it will not be bad fun for the imitated. Ever, etc.

October 2, 1812.

A copy of this *still altered* is sent by the post, but this will arrive first. It must be “humbler” — “yet *aspiring*” does away the modesty, and, after all, *truth is truth*. Besides, there is a puff direct altered, to please your *plaguy renters*.

I shall be at Tetbury by 12 or 1 — but send this for you to ponder over. There are several little things marked thus / altered for your perusal. I have dismounted the cavalry, and, I hope, arranged to your general satisfaction.

Ever, *etc.*

At Tetbury by noon. — I hope, after it is sent, there will be no more elisions. It is not now so long — 73 lines — two less than allotted. I will alter all Committee objections, but I hope you won't permit *Elliston* to have any *voice* whatever, — except in speaking it.

261 — to John Murray

Cheltenham, Oct. 12, 1812.

Dear Sir, — I have a *very strong objection* to the engraving of the portrait, and request that it may, on no account, be prefixed; but let *all* the proofs be burnt, and the plate broken. I will be at the expense which has been incurred; it is but fair that *I* should, since I cannot permit the publication. I beg, as a particular favour, that you will lose no time in having this done, for which I have reasons that I will state when I see you. Forgive all the trouble I have occasioned you.

I have received no account of the reception of the *Address*, but see it is vituperated in the papers, which does not much embarrass an *old author*. I leave it to your own judgment to add it, or not, to your next edition when required. Pray comply *strictly* with my wishes as to the engraving, and believe me, *etc.*

Yours very truly,

Byron.

P.S. — Favour me with an answer, as I shall not be easy until I hear that the *proofs*, *etc.*, are destroyed. I hear that the *Satirist* has reviewed *Childe Harold*, in what manner I need not ask; but I wish to know if the old personalities are revived? I have a better reason for asking this than any that merely concerns myself; but in publications of that kind, others, particularly female names, are sometimes introduced.

Byron.

“If you think the picture you saw at Murray’s worth your acceptance, it is yours; and you may put a glove or mask on it, if you like”
(Moore).

“It is with unaffected satisfaction we find that he has improved wonderfully, and that he is a poet. Indeed, when we consider the comparatively short interval which has elapsed, and contrast the character of his recent with that of his early work, we confess ourselves astonished at the intellectual progress which Lord Byron has made, and are happy to hold him up as another example of the extraordinary effects of study and cultivation, *even* on minds apparently of the most unpromising description.”

The reviewer severely condemns the morbid bitterness of the poet’s thought and feeling, but yet affirms that the poems

“abound with beautiful imagery, clothed in a diction free, forcible, and various. *Childe Harold*, although avowedly a fragment, contains many fragments which would do honour to any poet, of any period, in any country.”

262 — to Lord Holland.

Cheltenham, Oct. 14, 1812.

My Dear Lord, — I perceive that the papers, yea, even Perry’s, are somewhat ruffled at the injudicious preference of the Committee. My friend Perry has, indeed, *et tu*, *Brute*-d me rather scurvily, for which I will send him, for the *Morning Chronicle*, the next epigram I scribble, as a token of my full forgiveness.

Do the Committee mean to enter into no explanation of their proceedings? You must see there is a leaning towards a charge of partiality. You will, at least, acquit me of any great anxiety to push myself before so many elder and better anonymous, to whom the twenty guineas (which I take to be about two thousand pounds *Bank* currency) and the honour would have been equally welcome. “Honour,” I see, “hath skill in paragraph-writing.”

I wish to know how it went off at the second reading, and whether any one has had the grace to give it a glance of approbation. I have seen no paper but

Perry's and two Sunday ones. Perry is severe, and the others silent. If, however, you and your Committee are not now dissatisfied with your own judgments, I shall not much embarrass myself about the brilliant remarks of the journals. My own opinion upon it is what it always was, perhaps pretty near that of the public.

Believe me, my dear Lord, etc., etc.

P.S. — My best respects to Lady H., whose smiles will be very consolatory, even at this distance.

“Mr. Elliston then came forward and delivered the following *Prize Address*. We cannot boast of the eloquence of the delivery. It was neither gracefully nor correctly recited. The merits of the production itself we submit to the criticism of our readers. We cannot suppose that it was selected as the most poetical composition of all the scores that were submitted to the Committee. But, perhaps by its tenor, by its allusions to the fire, to Garrick, to Siddons, and to Sheridan, it was thought most applicable to the occasion, notwithstanding its being in parts unmusical, and in general tame.”

Again (October 14), in a notice of *Rejected Addresses*, the *Morning Chronicle* returns to the subject:

“A wag has already published a small volume of *Addresses rejected*, in which, with admirable wit, all the poets of the day are assembled, contesting for the Prize Address at Drury Lane. And certainly he has assigned to the pen of Lord B. a superior *poem* to that which has gained the prize.”

The Address was also severely handled in *A Critique on the Address written by Lord Byron, which was Spoken at the opening of the New Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, October 10, 1812*. By Lord — — (London, no date). The author is “astonished at the glaring faults and general insipidity” of the address, and, after a detailed criticism, concludes that “public indignation” will sympathize with the rejected poets, and “pursue the rival patrons and the rival bard.”

Rogers, writing to Moore, October 22, 1812 (*Memoirs, etc., of Thomas Moore*, vol. viii. p. 123), says,

“Poor Byron! what I hear and read of his prologue makes me very angry. Of such value is public favour! So a man is to be tried by a copy of verses thrown off perhaps at hazard, and *invitâ Minervâ!*”

Dear Sir, — With perfect confidence in you I sign the note; but is not Claughton's delay very strange? let us take care what we are about. I answered his letter, which I enclose to you, very *cautiously*; the wines and China, etc., I will not demur much upon; but the vase and cup (not the *skull cup*) and some little coffee things brought from the East, or made for the purpose of containing relics brought from thence, I will not part with, and if he refuses to ratify, I will take such steps as the Law will allow on the form of the contract for compelling him to ratify it.

Pray write. I am invited to Lord O.'s and Lord H.'s; but if you wish very much to meet me I can come to town.

I suppose the tythe purchase will be made in my name. What is to be done with Deardon?

Mrs. M[assingberd] is dead, and I would wish something settled for the Daughter who is still responsible. Will you give a glance into that business, and if possible first settle something about the Annuities.

I shall perhaps draw within a £100 next week, but I will delay for your answer on C.'s business.

Ever yours, sincerely and affectionately,

Byron.

My love to all the family.

I wish to do something for young Rushton, if practicable at *Rochdale*; if not, think of some situation where he might occupy himself to avoid Idleness, in the mean time.

"When Mr. France was here," writes Mrs. Byron to Hanson, July 13, 1811 (Kölbing's *Englische Studien*, vol. xxv. p. 153), "he told me there had been an injunction procured to prevent Deardin from working the Coal Pits that was in dispute between Lord Byron and him, but since France was here, there has been a Man from Lancashire who says they are worked by Deardin the same as ever. I also heard that the Person you sent down to take an account of the Coals was bribed by Deardin, and did not give an account of half of what was got."

"Lord Byron, to the best of his knowledge and recollection, in Dec., 1805-January, 1806 applied to King, in consequence of an advertisement in the papers, who acquainted Lord Byron that his minority prevented all money transactions without the security of competent persons. Through Mr. K. he became acquainted with Mr. Dellevelly, another of the tribe of Israel, and subsequently

with a Mr. Howard of Golden Square.

“After many delays, during which Lord B. had interviews with Howard, once, he thinks, in Golden Square, but more frequently in Piccadilly, Mrs. M[assingberd] agreed to become security jointly with her daughter. Lord B. knows Howard’s person perfectly well, has not seen him subsequent to the transaction, but recollects Howard’s mentioning to him that he, Lord B., was acting imprudently, stating that he made it a rule to advise young men against such proceedings. Lord B. recollects, on the day on which the money was paid, that he remained in the next room till the papers were signed, Mrs. M[assingberd] having stated that the parties wished him to be kept out of sight during the business, and wished to avoid even mentioning his name. Mrs. M[assingberd] deducted the interest for two years and a half, and £100 for Howard’s papers.”

Two other Annuities were effected, in both of which Mrs. Massingberd figured as a security, and in one the manager of Dorant’s Hotel. It was the interest on these minority loans which crippled Byron. Two were still unpaid in 1817.

264 — to John Murray

Cheltenham, Oct. 18, 1812,

Dear Sir, — Will you have the goodness to get this Parody of a peculiar kind (for all the first lines are *Busby’s* entire), inserted in several of the papers (*correctly* — and copied *correctly*; *my hand* is difficult) — particularly the *Morning Chronicle*? Tell Mr. Perry I forgive him all he has said, and may say against *my address*, but he will allow me to deal with the Doctor — (*audi alteram partem*) — and not *betray* me. I cannot think what has befallen Mr. Perry, for of yore we were very good friends; — but no matter, only get this inserted.

I have a poem on Waltzing for *you*, of which I make *you* a present; but it must be anonymous. It is in the old style of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*.

Ever yours,

Byron.

P. S. — With the next edition of *Childe Harold* you may print the first fifty or a hundred opening lines of the *Curse of Minerva* down to the couplet beginning Mortal (‘twas thus she spake), *etc.*

Of course, the moment the Satire begins, there you will stop, and the opening is the best part.

265 — to Robert Rushton

Cheltenham, Oct. 18th, 1812.

Robert, — I hope you continue as much as possible to apply yourself to *Accounts* and Land-Measurement, *etc.* Whatever change may take place about Newstead, there will be none as to you and Mr. Murray. It is intended to place you in a situation in Rochdale for which your pursuance of the Studies I recommend will best fit you. Let me hear from you; is your health improved since I was last at the Abbey? In the mean time, if any accident occur to me, you are provided for in my will, and if not, you will always find in your Master a sincere Friend.

B.

266 — to John Murray

Oct. 19, 1812.

Dear Sir, — Many thanks, but I *must* pay the *damage*, and will thank you to tell me the amount for the engraving. I think the *Rejected Addresses* by far the best thing of the kind since the *Rolliad*, and wish *you* had published them. Tell the author “I forgive him, were he twenty times our satirist;” and think his imitations not at all inferior to the famous ones of Hawkins Browne. He must be a man of very lively wit, and much less scurrilous than Wits often are: altogether, I very much admire the performance, and wish it all success. The *Satirist* has taken a *new* tone, as you will see: we have now, I think, finished with *C. H.*’s critics. I have in *hand* a *Satire* on *Waltzing*, which you must publish anonymously: it is not long, not quite 200 lines, but will make a very small boarded pamphlet. In a few days you shall have it.

Ever yours,

Byron.

P.S. — The editor of the *Satirist* almost ought to be thanked for his

revocation; it is done handsomely, after five years' warfare.

267 — to John Hanson

Octr. 22d, 1812.

Dear Sir, — I enclose you Mr. C[laughton]'s letter, from which you yourself will judge of my own. I insisted on the *contract*, and said, *if* I gave up the wines, etc., it would be as a *gift*. He admits the validity, as you perceive. I told him that *I* wished to avoid raising difficulties and in all respects to fulfil the bargain.

I am going to Lord Oxford's, *Eywood, Presteigne, Hereford*. In my way back I will take Farleigh, if you are not returned to London before.

I wish to take a small *house* for the winter any where not remote from St. James's. Will you arrange this for me? — and think of young Rushton, whom I promised to provide for, and must begin to think of it; he might be a *sub-Tythe collector*, or a Bailiff to our agent at Rochdale, or many other things. He has had a fair education and was well disposed; at all events, he must no longer remain in idleness.

Let the Mule be sold and the dogs.

Pray let me hear from you when convenient, and

Believe me, ever yours truly,

Byron.

My best remembrances to all.

I shall draw for *fifty* this week.

Is anything done about Miss M[assingberd]? You have not mentioned her.

268 — to John Murray

Oct. 23, 1812.

Dear Sir, — Thanks, as usual. You go on boldly; but have a care of *glutting* the public, who have by this time had enough of *C. H. Waltz* shall be prepared. It is rather above 200 lines, with an introductory letter to the Publisher. I think of publishing, with *C. H.*, the opening lines of the *Curse of Minerva*, as far as the

first speech of Pallas, — because some of the readers like that part better than any I have ever written; and as it contains nothing to affect the subject of the subsequent portion, it will find a place as a *descriptive fragment*.

The *plate* is *broken*? between ourselves, it was unlike the picture; and besides, upon the whole, the frontispiece of an author's visage is but a paltry exhibition. At all events, *this* would have been no recommendation to the book. I am sure Sanders would not have *survived* the engraving. By the by, the *picture* may remain with *you* or *him* (which you please), till my return. The *one* of two remaining copies is at your service till I can give you a *better*; the other must be *burned peremptorily*. Again, do not forget that I have an account with you, and *that* this is *included*. I give you too much **Trouble** to allow you to incur **Expense** also.

You best know how far this "Address Riot" will affect the future sale of *C. H.* I like the volume of "*rejected A.*" better and better. The other parody which Perry has received is *mine* also (I believe). It is Dr. Busby's speech versified. You are removing to Albemarle Street, I find, and I rejoice that we shall be nearer neighbours. I am going to Lord Oxford's, but letters here will be forwarded. When at leisure, all communications from you will be willingly received by the humblest of your scribes. Did Mr. Ward write the review of *H. Tooke's Life*? It is excellent.

Yours ever,
B.

269 — to John Hanson

Eywood, Presteign, Hereford, Octr. 31st, 1812.

Dear Sir, — The inclosed bill will convince you how anxious I must be for the payment of Claughton's first instalment; though it has been sent in without due notice, I cannot blame Mr. Davies who must feel very anxious to get rid of the business. Press C., and let me have an answer whenever you can to this Place.

Yours ever,
B.

P.S. — I am at *Lord Oxford's*, Eywood, as above.

“Lord Byron.

A Bill for £1500, drawn by Scrope B. Davies, lies due at Sir *James Esdaile* and Co’s., No. 21, *Lombard-Street*.

All Drafts intended for the Payment of Bills, to be brought before Half past Three o’Clock.

Please to call between 3 and Five o’Clock.”

The same day Byron writes a second letter to Hanson:

“Do pray press Claughton, as Mr. D.’s business must be settled at all events. I send you his letter, and I am more uncomfortable than I can possibly express myself upon the subject. Pray write.”

270 — to John Hanson

Presteign, Novr. 8th, 1812.

Dear Sir, — Not being able (and to-day being Sunday also) to procure a stamp, as the Post town is very remote, I must request this letter to be considered as an Order for paying fifteen hundred pounds to S. B. Davies, Esq., and the same sum to your own account for the Tythe purchase. Mr. D.’s receipt can be indorsed on the bond.

I shall be in London the latter end of the week. I set out from this place on the 12th. As to Mr. C., the Law must decide between us; I shall abide by the Contract. Your answer will not reach me in time, so do not write to me while here.

Pray let Mr. D. be paid and you also — come what may. I always foresaw that C. would *shirk*; but he did it with his eyes open. What question can arise as to the title? has it never been examined? I never heard of it before, and surely, in all our law suits, that question must have come to issue.

I hope we shall meet in town. I will wait on you the moment I arrive.

My best respects to your family; believe me,
Ever yours sincerely,

Byron.

“Dear Sir, — I have to request that you will pay the bearer (my Groom) the wages due to him (12 pds. 10s.), and dismiss him immediately, as I have given up my horses, and place the sum to my account.

Ever yours,

Byron.”

Four days later, December 14, 1812, he writes again to Hanson —

“Dear Sir, — I request your attention to the enclosed. See what can be done with Howard, and urge Claughton. If this kind of thing continues, I must quit a country which my debts render uninhabitable, notwithstanding every sacrifice on my part.

Yours ever,
B.”

271 — to John Hanson

Presteign, Novr. 16th, 1812.

Dear Sir, — The floods having rendered the road impassable, I am detained here, but trust by the latter end of the week to proceed to Cheltenham, where I shall expect a letter from you to tell me if I am wanted in town.

I shall not be in time for the Prince’s address; but I wish you to write down for my *Parliamentary* robes (Mrs. Chaworth had them, at least Mrs. Clarke the mother); though I rather think those were the Coronation and not the House robes. At least enquire.

I hope Mr. D. is paid; and, if Mr. C. demurs, we must bring an action according to Contract.

I trust you are well, and well doing in my behalf and your own.

Ever yours most sincerely,
B.

272 — to John Murray

Cheltenham, November 22, 1812.

Dear Sir, — On my return here from Lord Oxford's, I found your obliging note, and will thank you to retain the letters, and any other subsequent ones to the same address, till I arrive in town to claim them, which will probably be in a few days. I have in charge a curious and very long MS. poem, written by Lord Brooke (the *friend* of Sir *Philip Sidney*), which I wish to submit to the inspection of Mr. Gifford, with the following queries: — first, whether it has ever been published, and secondly (if not), whether it is worth publication? It is from Lord Oxford's Library, and must have escaped or been overlooked amongst the MSS. of the Harleian Miscellany. The writing is Lord Brooke's, except a different hand towards the close. It is very long, and in the six-line stanza. It is not for me to hazard an opinion upon its merits; but I would take the Liberty, if not too troublesome, to submit it to Mr. Gifford's judgment, which, from his excellent edition of Massinger, I should conceive to be as decisive on the writings of that age as on those of our own.

Now for a less agreeable and important topic. — How came Mr. Mac-Somebody, without consulting you or me, to prefix the Address to his volume of "*dejected addresses*?" Is not this somewhat larcenous? I think the ceremony of leave might have been asked, though I have no objection to the thing itself; and leave the "hundred and eleven" to tire themselves with "base comparisons." I should think the ingenuous public tolerably sick of the subject, and, except the parodies, I have not interfered, nor shall; indeed I did not know that Dr. Busby had published his apologetical letter and postscript, or I should have recalled them. But, I confess, I looked upon his conduct in a different light before its appearance. I see some mountebank has taken Alderman Birch's name to vituperate the Doctor; he had much better have pilfered his pastry, which I should imagine the more valuable ingredient — at least for a Puff. — Pray secure me a copy of Woodfall's new *Junius*,

and believe me,

Dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

B.

- "Junius's Letters, 2 vol. *russia*, 1806."
- "Junius's Letters, by Woodfall, 3 vol., *Large Paper*, 1812."
-

273 — to William Bankes

December 26, .

The multitude of your recommendations has already superseded my humble endeavours to be of use to you; and, indeed, most of my principal friends are returned, Leake from Joannina, Canning and Adair from the city of the Faithful, and at Smyrna no letter is necessary, as the consuls are always willing to do every thing for personages of respectability. I have sent you *three*; one to Gibraltar, which, though of no great necessity, will, perhaps, put you on a more intimate footing with a very pleasant family there. You will very soon find out that a man of any consequence has very little occasion for any letters but to ministers and bankers, and of them we have already plenty, I will be sworn.

It is by no means improbable that I shall go in the spring; and if you will fix any place of rendezvous about August, I will *write* or *join* you. — When in Albania, I wish you would inquire after Dervise Tahiri and Vascillie (or Basil), and make my respects to the viziers, both there and in the Morea. If you mention my name to Suleyman of Thebes, I think it will not hurt you; if I had my dragoman, or wrote Turkish, I could have given you letters of *real service*; but to the English they are hardly requisite, and the Greeks themselves can be of little advantage. Liston you know already, and I do not, as he was not then minister. Mind you visit Ephesus and the Troad, and let me hear from you when you please. I believe G. Forresti is now at Yanina; but if not, whoever is there will be too happy to assist you. Be particular about *firmauns*; never allow yourself to be bullied, for you are better protected in Turkey than any where; trust not the Greeks; and take some knicknackeries for *presents* — *watches, pistols, etc., etc.*, to the Beys and Pachas. If you find one Demetrius, at Athens or elsewhere, I can recommend him as a good dragoman. I hope to join you, however; but you will find swarms of English now in the Levant.

Believe me, *etc.*

274 — to John Murray.

Eywood, Presteign, January 8, 1813.

Dear Sir, — You have been imposed upon by a letter forged in my name to obtain the picture left in your possession. This I know by the confession of the culprit and as she is a woman (and of rank), with whom I have unfortunately been too much connected, you will for the present say very little about it; but if you have the letter *retain* it — write to me the particulars. You will also be more

cautious in future, and not allow anything of mine to pass from your hands without my *Seal* as well as Signature.

I have not been in town, nor have written to you since I left it. So I presume the forgery was a skilful performance. — I shall endeavour to get back the picture by fair means, if possible.

Yours ever,

Byron.

P. S. — Keep the letter if you have it. I did not receive your parcel, and it is now too late to send it on, as I shall be in town on the 17th. The *delinquent* is one of the first families in this kingdom; but, as Dogberry says, this is “flat burglary.”

Favour me with an answer. I hear I am scolded in the *Quarterly*; but you and it are already forgiven. I suppose that made you bashful about sending it.

275 — to Francis Hodgson

February 3, 1813.

My Dear Hodgson, — I will join you in any bond for the money you require, be it that or a larger sum. With regard to security, as Newstead is in a sort of abeyance between sale and purchase, and my Lancashire property very unsettled, I do not know how far I can give more than personal security, but what I can I will. At any rate you can try, and as the sum is not very considerable, the chances are favourable. I hear nothing of my own concerns, but expect a letter daily. Let me hear from you where you are and will be this month. I am a great admirer of the *R. A.* [*Rejected Addresses*], though I have had so great a share in the cause of their publication, and I like the *C. H.* [*Childe Harold*] imitation one of the best. Lady Oxford has heard me talk much of you as a relative of the Cokes, etc., and desires me to say she would be happy to have the pleasure of your acquaintance. You must come and see me at K[insham]. I am sure you would like *all* here if you knew them.

The “Agnus” is furious. You can have no idea of the horrible and absurd things she has said and done since (really from the best motives) I withdrew my homage. “Great pleasure” is, certes, my object, but “*why brief, Mr. Wild?*” I cannot answer for the future, but the past is pretty secure; and in it I can number the last two months as worthy of the gods in *Lucretius*. I cannot review in the “*Monthly*,” in fact I can just now do nothing, at least with a pen; and I really

think the days of Authorship are over with me altogether. I hear and rejoice in Eland's and Merivale's intentions.

Murray has grown great, and has got him new premises in the fashionable part of the town.

We live here so shut out of the *monde* that I have nothing of general import to communicate, and fill this up with a "happy new year," and drink to you and Drury.

Ever yours, dear H., B.

I have no intention of continuing "*Childe Harold*." There are a few additions in the "body of the book" of description, which will merely add to the number of pages in the next edition. I have taken Kinsham Court. The business of last summer I broke off, and now the amusement of the gentle fair is writing letters literally threatening my life, and much in the style of "Miss Mathews" in "*Amelia*," or "Lucy" in the "*Beggar's Opera*." Such is the reward of restoring a woman to her family, who are treating her with the greatest kindness, and with whom I am on good terms. I am still in *palatia Circes*, and, being no Ulysses, cannot tell into what animal I may be converted; as you are aware of the turn of both parties, your conjectures will be very correct, I daresay, and, seriously, I am very much *attached*. She has had her share of the denunciations of the brilliant Phryne, and regards them as much as I do. I hope you will visit me at K. which will not be ready before spring, and I am very sure you would like my neighbours if you knew them. If you come down now to Kingston, pray come and see me.

"Byron often talks of the authors of the *Rejected Addresses*, and always in terms of unqualified praise. He says that the imitations, unlike all other imitations, are full of genius. 'Parodies,' he said, 'always give a bad impression of the original, but in the *Rejected Addresses* the reverse was the fact;' and he quoted the second and third stanzas, in imitation of himself, as admirable, and just what he could have wished to write on a similar subject"

(Lady Blessington's *Conversations*, p. 134).

"The Bessboroughs," writes Lady H. Leveson Gower to Lady G. Morpeth, September 12, 1812 (*Letters of Harriet, Countess Granville*, vol. i. pp. 40, 41), "have been unpacked about a couple of hours. My aunt looks stout and well, but poor Caroline most terribly the contrary. She is worn to the bone, as pale as death and her eyes starting out of her head. She seems indeed in a sad way, alternately in tearing spirits and in tears. I hate her character, her feelings, and

herself when I am away from her, but she interests me when I am with her, and to see her poor careworn face is dismal, in spite of reason and speculation upon her extraordinary conduct. She appears to me in a state very (little) short of insanity, and my aunt describes it as at times having been decidedly so.”

“a dialogue matrimonial, which passed between Jonathan Wild, Esquire, and Laetitia his wife” (*née* Laetitia Snap), “Laetitia asks, ‘But pray, Mr. Wild, why b — ch? Why did you suffer such a word to escape you?’“

276 — to John Hanson

3d Feb’y, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Will you forward the inclosed immediately to Corbet, whose address I do not exactly remember? It is of consequence, relative to a foolish woman I never saw, who fancies I want to marry her.

Yours ever, B.

P. S. — I wish you would see Corbet and talk to him about it, for she plagues my soul out with her damned letters.

277 — to John Murray

February 20, 1813.

Dear Sir, — In “*Horace in London*” I perceive some stanzas on Lord Elgin in which (waving the kind compliment to myself) I heartily concur. I wish I had the pleasure of Mr. Smith’s acquaintance, as I could communicate the curious anecdote you read in Mr. T.’s letter. If he would like it, he can have the *substance* for his second Edition; if not, I shall add it to *our* next, though I think we already have enough of Lord Elgin.

What I have read of this work seems admirably done. My praise, however, is not much worth the Author’s having; but you may thank him in my name for *his*. The idea is new — we have excellent imitations of the Satires, *etc.* by Pope; but I remember but one imitative Ode in his works, and *none* any where else. I can hardly suppose that *they* have lost any fame by the fate of the Farce; but even should this be the case, the present publication will again place them on their pinnacle.

Yours truly,

B.

“All who behold my mutilated pile
Shall brand its ravager with classic rage,
And soon a titled bard from Britain’s Isle,
Thy country’s praise and suffrage shall engage,
And fire with Athens’ wrongs an angry age!”

“Such as mild Justice might herself dispense,
To Inexperience and a First Offence.”

278 — to Robert Rushton

4, Bennet Street, St. James’s, Feb. 24th, 1813.

I feel rather surprised to have heard nothing from you or your father in answer to Fletcher’s last letter. I wish to know whether you intend taking a share in a farm with your brother, or prefer to wait for some other situation in Lancashire; — the first will be the best, because, at your time of life, it is highly improper to remain idle. If this *marriage* which is spoken of for you is at all advantageous, I can have no objection; but I should suppose, after being in my service from your infancy, you will at least let me know the name of your *intended*, and her expectations. If at all respectable, nothing can be better for your settlement in life, and a proper provision will be made for you; at all events let me hear something on the subject, for, as I have some intention of leaving England in the Summer, I wish to make my arrangements with regard to yourself before that period. As you and Mr. Murray have not received any money for some time, if you will draw on *me* for *fifty* pounds (payable at Messrs. Hoare’s, Bankers, Fleet Street), and tell Mr. J[oseph] Murray to draw for the *same sum* on his *own* account, both will be paid by me.

Etc., etc.,

B.

279 — to John Hanson

F'y. 27th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have called several times, and you may suppose am very anxious to hear something from or of Mr. Claughton.

It is my determination, on account of a malady to which I am subject, and for other weighty reasons, to go abroad again almost immediately. To this you will object; but, as my intention cannot be altered, I have only to request that you will assist me as far as in your power to make the necessary arrangements.

I have every confidence in you, and will leave the fullest powers to act in my absence. If this man still hesitates, I must sell my part of Rochdale for what it will bring, even at a loss, and fight him out about Newstead; without this, I have no funds to go on with, and I do not wish to incur further debts if possible.

Pray favour me with a short reply to this, and say when I can see you. Excuse me to Mrs. H. for my non-appearance last night; I was detained in the H. of L. till too late to dress for her party. Compliments to all.

Ever yours,

B.

280 — to John Hanson

March 1st, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I am sorry that I could not call today but will tomorrow. Your objections I anticipated and can only repeat that I cannot act otherwise; so pray hasten some arrangement — for with, or without, I must go.

A person told me yesterday there was one who would give within £10,000 of C.'s price and take the title as it was. C. is a fool or is shuffling.

Think of what I said about *Rochdale*, for I will sell it for what I can get, and will not stay three months longer in this country. I again repeat I will leave all with full powers to you. I commend your objection which is a proof of an honourable mind — which however I did not need to convince me of your character. If you have any news send a few lines.

Ever yours,

BN.

281 — to — — Corbet

Mh. 5th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Lady F[alkland?] has returned by Mr. Hanson the only two

letters I ever wrote her, both some time ago, and neither containing the least allusion which could make any person suppose that I had any intention further than regards the children of her husband. My servant returned the packet and letter of yesterday at the moment of receiving them; by her letter to Mr. H. it should seem they have not been redelivered. I am sorry for this, but it is not my fault, and they ought never to have been sent. After her Ladyship's mistakes, so often repeated, you will not blame me for declining all further interference in her affairs, and I rely much upon your word in contradicting her foolish assertions, and most absurd imaginations. She now says that "I need not leave the country on her account." How the devil she knew that I was about to leave it I cannot guess; but, however, for the first time she has *dreamed* right. But *her* being the cause is still more ludicrous than the rest. First, she would have it that I returned here for love of a woman I *never* saw, and now that I am going, for the same whom I *have never seen*, and certainly never wished, nor wish, to see! The maddest *consistency* I ever heard of. I trust that she has regained her senses, as she tells Mr. H. she will not scribble any more, which will also save *you* from the troublesome correspondence of

Your obliged and obedient servant,

Byron.

282 — to John Hanson

March 6th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I must be ready in April at whatever risk, — at whatever loss. You will therefore advertize Rochdale; if you decline this, I will sell it for what it will bring, even though but a few thousand pounds.

With regard to Claughton, I shall only say that, if he knew the ruin, — the misery, he occasions by his delay, he would be sorry for his conduct, and I only hope that he and I may not meet, or I shall say something he will not like to hear. I have called often. I shall call today at three or between three and four; again and again, I can only beg of you to forward my plans, for here no power on earth shall make me remain six weeks longer.

Ever yours,

B.

283 — to Charles Hanson

Mh. 24th, 1813.

My Dear Charles, — This is very evasive and dissatisfactory. What is to be done I cannot tell, but your father had better see his letter and this of mine. A long litigation neither suits my inclination nor circumstances; it were better to take back the estate, and raise it to what it will bear, which must be at least double, to dismantle the house and sell the materials, and sell Rochdale. Something I must determine on and that quickly. I want to go abroad immediately; it is utterly impossible for me to remain here; every thing I have done to extricate myself has been useless. Your father said “*sell*,” I have sold, and see what has become of it! If I go to Law with this fellow, after five years litigation at the present depreciation of money, the *price* will not be worth the *property*; besides how much of it will be spent in the contest! and how am I to live in the interim? Every day land rises and money falls. I shall tell Mr. Cn. he is a *scoundrel*, and have done with him, and I only hope he will have spirit enough to resent the appellation, and defend his own rascally conduct. In the interim of his delay in his journey, I shall leave town; on Sunday I shall set out for Herefordshire, from whence, when wanted, I will return.

Pray tell your father to get the money on Rochdale, or I must sell it directly. I must be ready by the last week in *May*, and am consequently pressed for time.

I go first to Cagliari in Sardinia, and on to the Levant.

Believe me, dear Charles,

Yours truly,

B.

284 — to Samuel Rogers

March 25, 1813.

I enclose you a draft for the usurious interest due to Lord B[oringdon]’s *protégé*; — I also could wish you would state thus much for me to his Lordship. Though the transaction speaks plainly in itself for the borrower’s folly and the lender’s usury, it never was my intention to *quash* the demand, as I *legally* might, nor to withhold payment of principal, or, perhaps, even *unlawful* interest. You know what my situation has been, and what it is. I have parted with an estate (which has been in my family for nearly three hundred years, and was never disgraced by being in possession of a *lawyer*, a *churchman*, or a *woman*, during that period,) to liquidate this and similar demands; and the payment of the

purchase is still withheld, and may be, perhaps, for years. If, therefore, I am under the necessity of making those persons *wait* for their money, (which, considering the terms, they can afford to suffer,) it is my misfortune.

When I arrived at majority in 1809,¹ offered my own security on *legal* interest, and it was refused. Now, I will not accede to this. This man I may have seen, but I have no recollection of the names of any parties but the *agents* and the securities. The moment I can, it is assuredly my intention to pay my debts. This person's case may be a hard one; but, under all circumstances, what is mine? I could not foresee that the purchaser of my estate was to demur in paying for it.

I am glad it happens to be in my power so far to accommodate my Israelite, and only wish I could do as much for the rest of the Twelve Tribes.

Ever yours, dear R.,
BN.

“Friday Morning.

“My Dearest Byron, — I have just received your note, but I *will not* execute your Commission; and, moreover, I will tell Lord Boringdon that I refused to do it. I know your situation; and I should never sleep again, if by any interference of mine, for by so harsh a word I must call it, you should be led by your generosity, your pride, or any other noble motive, to do more than you are called upon to do.

“I mentioned the thing to Lord Holland last night, and he entirely agreed with me, that you are not called upon to do it. The Principal and the legal interest are all that these extortioners are entitled to; and, you must forgive me, but I will not do as you require. I shall keep the draft till I see you.

“Yours ever and ever,

“Saml. Rogers.”

285 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh.

4, Bennet Street, St. James's, March 26th, 1813.

My Dearest Augusta, — I did not answer your letter, because I could not answer as I wished, but expected that every week would bring me some tidings that might enable me to reply better than by apologies. But Claughton has not, will not, and, I think, cannot pay his money, and though, luckily, it was stipulated that he should never have possession till the whole was paid, the estate

is still on my hands, and your brother consequently not less embarrassed than ever. This is the truth, and is all the excuse I can offer for inability, but not unwillingness, to serve you.

I am going abroad again in June, but should wish to see you before my departure. You have perhaps heard that I have been fooling away my time with different “*regnantes*,” but what better can be expected from me? I have but one *relative*, and her I never see. I have no connections to domesticate with, and for marriage I have neither the talent nor the inclination. I cannot fortune-hunt, nor afford to marry without a fortune. My parliamentary schemes are not much to my taste — I spoke twice last Session, and was told it was well enough; but I hate the thing altogether, and have no intention to “strut another hour” on that stage. I am thus wasting the best part of life, daily repenting and never amending.

On Sunday, I set off for a fortnight for Eywood, near Presteign, in Herefordshire — with the *Oxfords*. I see you put on a *demure* look at the name, which is very becoming and matronly in you; but you won’t be sorry to hear that I am quite out of a more serious scrape with another singular personage which threatened me last year, and trouble enough I had to steer clear of it I assure you. I hope all my nieces are well, and increasing in growth and number; but I wish you were not always buried in that bleak common near Newmarket.

I am very well in health, but not happy, nor even comfortable; but I will not bore you with complaints. I am a fool, and deserve all the ills I have met, or may meet with, but nevertheless very *sensibly*, dearest Augusta,

Your most affectionate brother

Byron.

The following impressions of his short parliamentary career are recorded by Byron himself:

“I have never heard any one who fulfilled my ideal of an orator. Grattan would have been near it, but for his harlequin delivery. Pitt I never heard. Fox but once, and then he struck me as a debater, which to me seems as different from an orator as an improvisatore, or a versifier, from a poet. Grey is great, but it is not oratory. Canning is sometimes very like one. Windham I did not admire, though all the world did; it seemed sad sophistry. Whitbread was the Demosthenes of bad taste and vulgar vehemence, but strong, and English. Holland is impressive from sense and sincerity. Lord Lansdowne good, but still a debater only. Grenville I like vastly, if he would prune his speeches down to an hour’s delivery. Burdett is sweet and silvery as Belial himself, and I think the greatest favourite in Pandemonium; at least I always heard the country gentlemen and the ministerial devilry praise his speeches *up* stairs, and run down from Bellamy’s when he was upon his legs. I heard Bob Milnes make his *second* speech; it made no impression. I like Ward — studied, but keen, and sometimes eloquent. Peel, my school and form fellow (we sat within two of each other), strange to say, I have never heard, though I often wished to do so; but, from what I remember of him at Harrow, he *is*, or *should* be, among the best of them. Now I do *not* admire Mr. Wilberforce’s speaking; it is nothing but a flow of words — ‘words, words, alone.’

“I doubt greatly if the English *have* any eloquence, properly so called; and am inclined to think that the Irish *had* a great deal, and that the French *will* have, and have had in Mirabeau. Lord Chatham and Burke are the nearest approaches to orators in England. I don’t know what Erskine may have been at the *bar*, but in the House, I wish him at the bar once more. Lauderdale is shrill, and Scotch, and acute. Of Brougham I shall say nothing, as I have a personal feeling of dislike to the man.

“But amongst all these, good, bad, and indifferent, I never heard the speech which was not too long for the auditors, and not very intelligible, except here and there. The whole thing is a grand deception, and as tedious and tiresome as maybe to those who must be often present. I heard Sheridan only once, and that briefly, but I liked his voice, his manner, and his wit: and he is the only one of them I ever wished to hear at greater length.

“The impression of Parliament upon me was, that its members are not formidable as *speakers*, but very much so as an *audience*; because in so numerous a body there may be little eloquence, (after all, there were but *two* thorough orators in all antiquity, and I suspect still *fewer* in modern times,) but there must be a leaven of thought and good sense sufficient to make them *know* what is right, though they can’t express it nobly.

“Horne Tooke and Roscoe both are said to have declared that they left Parliament with a higher opinion of its aggregate integrity and abilities than that with which they entered it. The general amount of both in most Parliaments is probably about the same, as also the number of *speakers* and their talent. I except *orators*, of course, because they are things of ages, and not of septennial or triennial reunions. Neither House ever struck me with more awe or respect than the same number of Turks in a divan, or of Methodists in a barn, would have done. Whatever diffidence or nervousness I felt (and I felt both, in a great degree) arose from the number rather than the quality of the assemblage, and the thought rather of the *public without* than the persons within, — knowing (as all know) that Cicero himself, and probably the Messiah, could never have altered the vote of a single lord of the bedchamber, or bishop. I thought *our* House dull, but the other animating enough upon great days.

“I have heard that when Grattan made his first speech in the English Commons, it was for some minutes doubtful whether to laugh at or cheer him. The *débût* of his predecessor, Flood, had been a complete failure, under nearly similar circumstances. But when the ministerial part of our senators had watched Pitt (their thermometer) for the cue, and saw him nod repeatedly his stately nod of approbation, they took the hint from their huntsman, and broke out into the most rapturous cheers. Grattan’s speech, indeed, deserved them; it was a *chef-d’oeuvre*. I did not hear *that* speech of his (being then at Harrow), but heard most of his others on the same question — also that on the war of 1815. I differed from his opinions on the latter question, but coincided in the general admiration of his eloquence.

“When I met old Courtenay, the orator, at Rogers’s the poet’s, in 1811-12, I was much taken with the portly remains of his fine figure, and the still acute quickness of his conversation. It was *he* who silenced Flood in the English House by a crushing reply to a hasty *débût* of the rival of Grattan in Ireland. I asked Courtenay (for I like to trace motives) if he had not some personal provocation; for the acrimony of his answer seemed to me, as I read it, to involve it. Courtenay said ‘he had; that, when in Ireland (being an Irishman), at the bar of the Irish House of Commons, Flood had made a personal and unfair

attack upon *himself*, who, not being a member of that House, could not defend himself, and that some years afterwards, the opportunity of retort offering in the English Parliament, he could not resist it.' He certainly repaid Flood with interest, for Flood never made any figure, and only a speech or two afterwards, in the English House of Commons. I must except, however, his speech on Reform in 1790, which Fox called 'the best he ever heard upon that subject.'“

286 — to John Murray

March 29th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Westall has, I believe, agreed to illustrate your book, and I fancy one of the engravings will be from the pretty little girl you saw the other day, though without her name, and merely as a model for some sketch connected with the subject. I would also have the portrait (which you saw to-day) of the friend who is mentioned in the text at the close of Canto 1st, and in the notes, — which are subjects sufficient to authorise that addition.

Believe me, yours truly, B'N.

287 — to John Hanson

Presteigne, April 15th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I wrote to you requesting an answer last week, and again apprising you of my determination of leaving England early in May, and proceeding no further with Claughton.

Now, having arrived, I shall write to that person immediately to give up the whole business. I am sick of the delays attending it, and can wait no longer, and I have had too much of *law* already at Rochdale to place Newstead in the same predicament.

I shall only be able to see you for a few days in town, as I shall sail before the 20th of May.

Believe me, yours ever, B.

P. S. — My best compliments to Mrs. H. and the family.

288 — to John Hanson

Presteigne, April 17th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I shall follow your advice and say nothing to our shuffling purchaser, but leave him to you, and the fullest powers of *Attorney*, which I hope you will have ready on my arrival in town early next week. I wish, if possible, the arrangement with Hoare to be made immediately, as I must set off forthwith. I mean to remain *incog.* in London for the short time previous to my embarkation.

I have not written to Claughton, nor shall, of course, after your counsel on the subject. I wish you would turn in your mind the expediency of selling Rochdale. I shall never make any thing of it, as it is.

I beg you will provide (as before my last voyage) the fullest powers to act in my absence, and bring my cursed concerns into some kind of order. You must at least allow that I have acted according to your advice about Newstead, and I shall take no step without your being previously consulted.

I hope I shall find you and Mrs. H., etc., well in London, and that you have heard something from this dilatory gentleman.

Believe me, ever yours truly,

B.

289 — to John Murray

April 21, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I shall be in town by Sunday next, and will call and have some conversation on the subject of Westall's proposed designs. I am to sit to him for a picture at the request of a friend of mine; and as Sanders's is not a good one, you will probably prefer the other. I wish you to have Sanders's taken down and sent to my lodgings immediately — before my arrival. I hear that a certain malicious publication on *Waltzing* is attributed to me. This report, I suppose, you will take care to contradict, as the Author, I am sure, will not like that I should wear his cap and bells. Mr. Hobhouse's quarto will be out immediately; pray send to the author for an early copy which I wish to take abroad with me.

Dear Sir, I am, yours very truly, B.

P. S. — I see the *Examiner* threatens some observations upon you next week. What can you have done to share the wrath which has heretofore been principally expended upon the Prince? I presume all your Scribleri will be drawn up in battle array in defence of the modern Tonson — Mr. Bucke, for instance. Send in my account to Bennet Street, as I wish to settle it before sailing.

CHAPTER VII — MAY, 1812-DECEMBER, 1813

THE GIAOUR AND BRIDE OF ABYDOS

290 — to John Murray

May 13, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I send a corrected, and, I hope, amended copy of the lines for the “fragment” already sent this evening. Let the enclosed be the copy that is sent to the Devil (the printers) and burn the other.

Yours, etc., B’N.

291 — to Thomas Moore

May 19, 1813.

Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town,
Anacreon, Tom Little, Tom Moore, or Tom Brown, —
For hang me if I know of which you may most brag,
Your Quarto two-pounds, or your Twopenny Post Bag;

...

But now to my letter — to *yours* ‘tis an answer —
Tomorrow be with me, as soon as you can, sir,
All ready and dress’d for proceeding to sponge on
(According to compact) the wit in the dungeon —
Pray Phœbus at length our political malice
May not get us lodgings within the same palace!
I suppose that to-night you’re engaged with some codgers,
And for Sotheby’s Blues have deserted Sam Rogers;
And I, though with cold I have nearly my death got,
Must put on my breeches, and wait on the Heathcote.
But tomorrow at four, we will both play the *Scurra*,
And you’ll be Catullus, the Regent, Mamurra.

Dear M., — having got thus far, I am interrupted by — — . 10 o’clock.
Half-past 11. — — is gone. I must dress for Lady Heathcote’s. — Addio.

In March, 1812, the *Morning Post* printed a poem, speaking of the Prince Regent as the “Mæcenas of the Age,” the “Exciter of Desire,” the “Glory of the People,” an “Adonis of Loveliness,” etc. The *Examiner* for March 12, 1812, thus translated this adulation into “the language of truth:”

“What person, unacquainted with the true state of the case, would imagine, in reading these astounding eulogies, that this ‘Glory of the People’ was the subject of millions of shrugs and reproaches!... that this “‘Exciter of Desire’ (bravo! Messieurs of the *Post*!), this ‘Adonis in Loveliness,’ was a corpulent man of fifty! — in short, this *delightful, blissful, wise, pleasureable, honourable, virtuous, true, and immortal* prince was a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity.”

Crabb Robinson, who met Leigh Hunt, four days later, at Charles Lamb’s, says (*Diary*, vol. i. p. 376),

“Leigh Hunt is an enthusiast, very well intentioned, and, I believe, prepared for the worst. He said, pleasantly enough, ‘No one can accuse me of not writing a libel. Everything is a libel, as the law is now declared, and our security lies only in their shame.’“

For this libel John and Leigh Hunt were convicted in the Court of King’s Bench on December 9, 1812. In the following February they were sentenced to two years’ imprisonment and a fine of £500 a-piece. John was imprisoned in Coldbath-fields, Leigh in the Surrey County Gaol. They were released on February 2 or 3, 1815.

Shelley, on reading the sentence, proposed a subscription for

“the brave and enlightened man... to whom the public owes a debt as the champion of their liberties and virtues”

(Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, vol. i. p. 325). Keats wrote a sonnet to Hunt on the day he left his prison, beginning:

“What though for showing truth to flatter’d state, Kind Hunt was shut in prison.”

A political alliance was thus cemented, which, for the time, was disastrous to the literary prospects of Shelley and Keats. To Hunt Shelley dedicated the *Cenci*, and Keats his first volume of *Poems* (1817). He is the “gentlest of the wise” in Shelley’s *Adonais*; and, in a suppressed stanza of the same poem, the poet speaks of Hunt’s “sweet and earnest looks,” “soft smiles,” and “dark and night-like eyes.” The words inscribed on Shelley’s tomb — “*Cor Cordium*” — were

Hunt's choice. In his various papers Hunt zealously championed his friends. In the *Examiner* for September to October, 1819, he defended Shelley's personal character; in the same paper for June to July, 1817, he praised Keats's first volume of *Poems*; he reviewed "Lamia" in the *Indicator* for August 2-9, 1820, and "La Belle Dame sans Merci" in that for May 10, 1820. In his *Foliage* (1818) are three sonnets addressed to Keats.

Shelley believed in Hunt to the end. It was mainly through him that Hunt came to Pisa in June, 1822, to join with Byron in *The Liberal*. But he doubted whether the alliance between the "wren and the eagle" could continue (*Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 519). Keats, on the other hand, lost his faith in Hunt. In a letter to Haydon (May, 1817), speaking of Hunt, he says,

"There is no greater Sin after the seven deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet."

Again (March, 1818) he writes,

"It is a great Pity that People should, by associating themselves with the finest things, spoil them. Hunt has damned Hampstead, and masks, and sonnets, and Italian tales."

He writes still more severely (December, 1818-January, 1819),

"If I were to follow my own inclinations, I should never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt, who is certainly a pleasant fellow in the main when you are with him; but in reality he is vain, egotistical, and disgusting in matters of taste and morals. Hunt does one harm by making fine things petty, and beautiful things hateful. Through him I am indifferent to Mozart. I care not for white Busts — and many a glorious thing when associated with him becomes a nothing."

Haydon considered that Hunt was the "great unhinger" of Keats's best dispositions (*Works of Keats*, ed. H. B. Forman, vol. iv. p. 359); and Severn attributes Keats's temporary "mawkishness" to Hunt's society (*ibid.*, p. 376).

Nathaniel Hawthorne (*Our Old Home*, p. 229, ed. 1884) says of Hunt, and means it as high praise, that

"there was not an English trait in him from head to foot — morally, intellectually, or physically. Beef, ale or stout, brandy or port-wine, entered not at all into his composition."

He was, in fact, a man of weak fibre, who allowed himself to sponge upon his friends, such as Talfourd, Haydon, and Shelley. Though Dickens denied (*All the Year Round*, Dec. 24, 1859) that "Harold Skimpole" was intended for Hunt, the picture was recognized as a portrait. On the other hand, Hunt was a man of kindly and genial disposition.

“He loves everything,” says Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, vol. ii. p. 192), “he catches the sunny side of everything, and, excepting that he has a few polemical antipathies, finds everything beautiful.”

In his essays, the best of which appeared in the *Indicator* (1819-21), he communicates some of his own sense of enjoyment to those of his readers who are content to take him as he is. His circle is limited; but in it his observation is minute and suggestive. The Vale of Health is to him, in a degree proportioned to their respective powers, what the Temple was to Lamb. His style is neat, pretty, and would be affected if it were not the man himself. As a literary journalist, a dramatic critic, and an essayist, he has a place in literature. His poetry is less successful; his affectations, innate vulgarity, and habit of pawing his subjects repel even those who are attracted by its sweetness. Yet his *Story of Rimini* (1816), which he dedicated to Byron, was admired in its day. Byron, though he condemned its affected style, thought the poem a “devilish good one.” Moore held the same opinion; and Jeffrey, writing to him May 28, 1816 (*Memoirs, etc., of Thomas Moon*, vol. ii. p. 100), says,

“I certainly shall not be ill-natured to *Rimini*. It is very sweet and very lively in many places, and is altogether piquant, as being by far the best imitation of Chaucer and some of his Italian contemporaries that modern times have produced.”

No two men could be more unlike than Byron and Hunt, or have less in common. Yet, with a singular capacity for self-delusion, Hunt told his wife that the texture of Byron’s mind resembled his to a thread (*Correspondence of L. Hunt*, vol. i. p. 88). The friendship began in political sympathy; but two years later (see Byron’s letter to Moore, June 1, 1818) it had, on one side at least, cooled. In June, 1822, Hunt came to Pisa to launch *The Liberal*, with the aid of Shelley and Byron. *The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South*, started in 1822, lived through four numbers, and died in July, 1823. During that time Byron expressed to Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, p. 77)

“a very good opinion of the talents and principle of Mr. Hunt, though, as he said, ‘our tastes are so opposite that we are totally unsuited to each other ... in short, we are more formed to be friends at a distance, than near.’“

For the best part of two years Hunt was Byron’s guest: he repaid his hospitality by publishing his *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries* (1828). Though Lady Blessington said the book “gave, in the main, a fair account” of Byron (Crabb Robinson’s *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 13), its publication was a breach of honour. As such it was justly attacked by Moore in “The *Living Dog* and the *Dead Lion* “:

“Next week will be published (as ‘Lives’ are the rage)
The whole Reminiscences, wondrous and strange,
Of a small puppy-dog, that lived once in the cage
Of the late noble Lion at Exeter ‘Change.

“Though the dog is a dog of the kind they call ‘sad,’
‘Tis a puppy that much to good breeding pretends;
And few dogs have such opportunities had
Of knowing how Lions behave — among friends.

“How that animal eats, how he snores, how he drinks,
Is all noted down by this Boswell so small;
And ‘tis plain, from each sentence, the puppy-dog thinks
That the Lion was no such great things after all.

“Though he roared pretty well — this the puppy allows —
It was all, he says, borrowed — all second-hand roar;
And he vastly prefers his own little bow-wows
To the loftiest war-note the Lion could pour.

“‘Tis, indeed, as good fun as a *Cynic* could ask,
To see how this cockney-bred setter of rabbits
Takes gravely the Lord of the Forest to task,
And judges of Lions by puppy-dog habits.

“Nay, fed as he was (and this makes it a dark case)
With sops every day from the Lion’s own pan,
He lifts up his leg at the noble beast’s carcass,
And — does all a dog, so diminutive, can.

“However, the book’s a good book, being rich in
Examples and warnings to lions high-bred,
How they suffer small mongrelly curs in their kitchen,
Who’ll feed on them living, and foul them when dead.

“*Exeter ‘Change.*

T. Pidcock.”

For the reply of Hunt or one of his friends, “The Giant and the Dwarf,” see .

“Sotheby is a good man; rhymes well (if not wisely), but is a bore. He seizes you by the button. One night of a rout, at Mrs. Hope’s, he had fastened upon me (something about Agamemnon or Orestes — or some of his plays), notwithstanding my symptoms of manifest distress, (for I was in love and had just nicked a minute when neither mothers, nor husbands, nor rivals, nor gossips, were near my then idol, who was beautiful as the Statues of the Gallery where we stood at the time). Sotheby, I say, had seized upon me by the button, and the heart-strings, and spared neither. W. Spencer, who likes fun, and don’t dislike mischief, saw my case, and, coming up to us both, took me by the hand and pathetically bade me farewell, ‘for,’ said he, ‘I see it is all over with you.’ Sotheby then went away. *Sic me servavit Apollo.*”

“Quis hoc potest videre, quis potest pati,
Nisi impudicus et vorax, et aleo,
Mamurram habere, quod Comata Gallia
Habebat uncti et ultima Britannia?”

See also xli. 4, xliii. 5 (compare Horace, *Sat.* i. 5. 37), and lvii. 2.

292 — to John Murray

May 22nd, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I return the “*Curiosities of Literature.*” Pray is it fair to ask if the “*Twopenny Postbag*” is to be reviewed in this No.? because, if not, I should be glad to undertake it, and leave it to Chance and the Editor for a reception into your pages.

Yours truly, B.

P. S. — You have not sent me Eustace’s *Travels*.

293 — to John Murray

May 23rd, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I question whether ever author before received such a compliment from his *master*. I am glad you think the thing is tolerably *vamped* and will be *vendible*.

Pray look over the proof again. I am but a careless reviser, and let me have 12 struck off, and one or two for yourself to serve as MS. for the thing when published in the body of the volume. If Lady Caroline Lamb sends for it, do *not* let her have it, till the copies are all ready, and then you can send her one.

Yours truly,

P. S. — H.'s book is out at last; I have my copy, which I have lent already.

294 — to John Murray

June 2, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I presented a petition to the house yesterday, which gave rise to some debate, and I wish you to favour me for a few minutes with the *Times* and *Herald* to look on their hostile report.

You will find, if you like to look at my *prose*, my words nearly *verbatim* in the *M. Chronicle*.

B'N.

“spouting in a sort of mock heroic voice, detached sentences of the speech he had just been delivering. ‘I told them,’ he said, ‘that it was a most flagrant violation of the Constitution — that, if such things were permitted, there was an end of English freedom, and that — ’

‘But what was this dreadful grievance?’ asked Moore.

‘The grievance?’ he repeated, pausing as if to consider, ‘oh, *that* I forget.’“

295 — to Thomas Moore

My Dear Moore, — “When Rogers” must not see the inclosed, which I send for your perusal. I am ready to fix any day you like for our visit. Was not Sheridan good upon the whole? The “Poulterer” was the first and best.

Ever yours, *etc.*

1.

When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent,
(I hope I am not violent),
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.

2.

And since not ev'n our Rogers' praise
To common sense his thoughts could raise —
Why *would* they let him print his lays?

3.

...

4.

...

5.

To me, divine Apollo, grant — O!
Hermilda's first and second canto,
I'm fitting up a new portmanteau;

6.

And thus to furnish decent lining,
My own and others' bays I'm twining —
So, gentle Thurlow, throw me thine in.

"When Rogers o'er this labour bent,
Their purest fire the Muses lent,
T' illustrate this sweet argument."

But when he began to read them aloud, he could not, for laughing, get beyond the first two words. Two or three times he tried, but always broke down, till he was joined by Moore in a fit of laughter which at last infected Rogers himself. The three were, as Moore tells the story,

"in such a state of inextinguishable laughter, that, had the author himself been of the party, I question much whether he could have resisted the infection."

A day or two afterwards, Byron sent Moore the lines given in Letter 295. On the same day he again returned to the subject, with the following additional lines, in which the last stanza of the same poem is the text:

"Then, thus, to form Apollo's crown,
(*That crown, which he had been so long to win*)

(Let ev ry other bring his own,)
I lay my branch of laurel down.”

“To Lord Thurlow.

1

“*I lay my branch of laurel down.*’

“*Thou* ‘lay thy branch of *laurel* down!’
Why, what thou’st stole is not enow;
And, were it lawfully thine own,
Does Rogers want it most, or thou?
Keep to thyself thy wither’d bough,
Or send it back to Dr. Donne —
Were justice done to both, I trow,
He’d have but little, and thou — none.

2

“*Then thus to form Apollo’s crown.*’

“A crown! why, twist it how you will,
Thy chaplet must be foolscap still.
When next you visit Delphi’s town,
Inquire amongst your fellow-lodgers,
They’ll tell you Phœbus gave his crown,
Some years before your birth, to Rogers.

3

“*Let every other bring his own.*’

“When coals to Newcastle are carried,
And owls sent to Athens as wonders,
From his spouse when the Regent’s unmarried,
Or Liverpool weeps o’er his blunders;
When Tories and Whigs cease to quarrel,
When Castlereagh’s wife has an heir,
Then Rogers shall ask us for laurel.

And thou shalt have plenty to spare.”

Edward Hovell (1781-1829) succeeded his uncle in 1806 as second Baron Thurlow. He published several volumes of poetry: *Poems on Several Occasions* (1812); *Ariadne, a Poem* (1814); *Carmen Britannicum, or the Song of Britain: written in honour of the Prince Regent* (1814); *Moonlight, a Poem* (1814); *The Sonnets of Edward, Lord Thurlow* (privately printed, 1821); *Angelica, or the Rape of Proteus, a Poem* (1822).

296 — to John Hanson

June 3d, 1813.

Dear Sir, — When you receive this I shall have left town for a week, and, as it is perfectly right we should understand each other, I think you will not be surprised at my persisting in my intention of going abroad. If the Suit can be carried on in my absence, — *well*; if not, it must be given up. One word, one letter, to Cn. would put an end to it; but this I shall not do, at all events without acquainting you before hand; nor at all, provided I am able to go abroad again. But at all hazards, at all losses, on this last point I am as determined as I have been for the last six months, and you have always told me that you would endeavour to assist me in that intention. Every thing is ordered and ready now. Do not trifle with me, for I am in very solid serious earnest, and if utter ruin *were*, or *is* before me, on the one hand — and wealth at home on the other, — I have made my choice, and go I will.

If you wish to write, address a line before Saturday to Salthill Post Office; Maidenhead, I believe, but am not sure, is the Post town; but I shall not be in town till Wednesday next.

Believe me, yours ever,

BN.

P. S. — Let all the books go to Mr. Murray’s immediately, and let the plate, linen, etc., which I find *excepted* by the *contract*, be sold, particularly a large silver vase — with the *contents* not removed as they are curious, and a silver cup (not the skull) be sold also — both are of value.

The Pictures also, and every moveable that is mine, and can be converted into cash; all I want is a few thousand pounds, and then adieu. You shan’t be troubled with me these ten years, if ever.

297 — to Francis Hodgson

June 6, 1813.

My Dear Hodgson, — I write to you a few lines on business. Murray has thought proper at his own risk, and peril, and profit (if there be any) to publish *The Giaour*; and it may possibly come under your ordeal in the *Monthly* I merely wish to state that in the published copies there are additions to the amount of ten pages, *text* and *margin* (*chiefly* the last), which render it a little less unfinished (but more unintelligible) than before. If, therefore, you review it, let it be from the published copies and not from the first sketch. I shall not sail for this month, and shall be in town again next week, when I shall be happy to hear from you but more glad to see you. You know I have no time or turn for correspondence(!). But you also know, I hope, that I am not the less

Yours ever,

298 — to Francis Hodgson

June 8th, 1813.

My dear Hodgson, — In town for a night I find your card. I had written to you at Cambridge merely to say that Murray has thought it expedient to publish *The Giaour* at his own risk (and reimbursement, if he can), and that, as it will probably be in your department in the *Monthly*, I wished to state that, in the published copies, there are additions to the tune of 300 lines or so towards the end, and, if reviewed, it should *not* be from the privately printed copy. So much for scribbling.

I shall manage to see you somewhere before I sail, which will be next month; till then I am yours here, and afterwards any where and every where,

Dear H., *tutto tuo*, BN.

299 — to John Murray

Je. 9, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I regret much that I have no profane garment to array you with for the masquerade. As my motions will be uncertain, you need not write nor send the proofs till my return.

Yours truly,

BN.

P. S. — My wardrobe is out of town — or I could have dressed you as an Albanian — or a Turk — or an officer — or a Waggoner.

300 — to John Murray

June 12, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Having occasion to send a servant to London, I will thank you to inform me whether I left with the other things 3 miniatures in your care (— if not — I know where to find them), and also to “report progress” in unpacking the books? The bearer returns this evening.

How does Hobhouse’s work go on, or rather off — for that is the essential part? In yesterday’s paper, immediately under an advertisement on “Strictures in the Urethra,” I see — most appropriately consequent — a poem with “*strictures* on Ld B., Mr. Southey and others,” though I am afraid neither “Mr. S.’s” poetical distemper, nor “mine,” nor “others,” is of the suppressive or stranguary kind. You may read me the prescription of this kill or cure physician. The medicine is compounded at White and Cochrane’s, Fleet Street. As I have nothing else to do, I may enjoy it like Sir Fretful, or the Archbishop of Grenada, or any other personage in like predicament.

Recollect that my lacquey returns in the Evening, and that I set out for Portsmouth tomorrow. All here are very well, and much pleased with your politeness and attention during their stay in town.

Believe me, yours truly,

B.

P. S. — Are there anything but books? If so, let those *extras* remain untouched for the present. I trust you have not stumbled on any more “Aphrodites,” and have burnt those. I send you both the advertisements, but don’t send me the first treatise — as I have no occasion for *Caustic* in that quarter.

- *Practical Observations on the best mode of curing Strictures, etc., with Remarks on Inefficacy, etc., of Caustic Applications.* By William

Wadd. Printed for J. Callow, Soho.

- *Modern Poets; a Dialogue in Verse, containing some Strictures on the Poetry of Lord Byron, Mr. Southey, and Others.* Printed for White, Cochrane, and Co., Fleet Street.

In a note on *Modern Poets* (p. 7) occurs the following passage:

“In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* the same respectable corps of critics is successively exhibited, in the course of only ten lines, under the following significant but somewhat incongruous forms, viz. (1) Northern Wolves, (2) Harpies, (3) Bloodhounds.”

In proof the writer quotes lines 426-437 of the Satire. Then follows a long review of *Childe Harold*, in which the critic condemns Harold, the hero, as “an uncouth incumbrance of this flighty Lord;” the want of “plot ... action and fable, interest, order, end;” and asks:

“Shall he immortal bays aspire to wear
Who immortality from man would tear,
Repress the sigh which hopes a happier home,
And chase the visions of a life to come?”

301 — to John Murray

[Maidenhead], June 13, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Amongst the books from Bennet St. is a small vol. of abominable poems by the Earl of Haddington which must not be in ye Catalogue on Sale — also — a vol. of French Epigrams in the same predicament.

On the title page of Meletius is an inscription in writing which must be *erased* and made illegible.

I have read the strictures, which are just enough, and not grossly abusive, in very fair couplets. There is a note against Massinger near the end, but one cannot quarrel with one’s company, at any rate. The author detects some incongruous figures in a passage of *E. Bds.*, page 23., but which edition I do not know. In the sole copy in your possession — I mean the *fifth* edition — you may make these alterations, that I may profit (though a little too late) by his remarks: — For “hellish instinct,” substitute “brutal instinct;” “harpies” alter to “felons;” and for “blood-hounds” write “hell-hounds.” These be “very bitter words, by my troth,” and the alterations not much sweeter; but as I shall not publish the thing, they

can do no harm, but are a satisfaction to me in the way of amendment. The passage is only 12 lines.

You do not answer me about H.'s book; I want to write to him, and not to say anything unpleasing. If you direct to Post Office, Portsmouth, till *called* for, I will send and receive your letter. You never told me of the forthcoming critique on *Columbus* which is not *too* fair; and I do not think justice quite done to the *Pleasures*, which surely entitles the author to a higher rank than that assigned to him in the *Quarterly*. But I must not cavil at the decisions of the *invisible infallibles*; and the article is very well written. The general horror of "*fragments*" makes me tremulous for "*The Giaour*;" but you would publish it — I presume, by this time, to your repentance. But as I consented, whatever be its fate, I won't now quarrel with you, even though I detect it in my pastry; but I shall not open a pye without apprehension for some weeks.

The Books which may be marked G.O. I will carry out. Do you know Clarke's *Naufragia*? I am told that he asserts the *first* volume of *Robinson Crusoe* was written by the first Lord Oxford, when in the Tower, and given by him to Defoe; if true, it is a curious anecdote. Have you got back Lord Brooke's MS.? and what does Heber say of it? Write to me at Portsmouth.

Ever yours, etc.,

Bn.

"But before I conclude this Section, I wish to make the admirers of this Nautical Romance mindful of a Report, which prevailed many years ago; that Defoe, after all, was not the real author of *Robinson Crusoe*. This assertion is noticed in an article in the seventh volume of the *Edinburgh Magazine* [vol. vii. p. 269]. Dr. Towers, in his *Life* of Defoe in the *Biographia*, is inclined to pay no attention to it; but was that writer aware of the following letter, which also appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1788? (vol. lviii. part i. p. 208). At least no notice is taken of it in his *Life* of Defoe:

'Dublin, February 25.

Mr. Urban, — In the course of a late conversation with a nobleman of the first consequence and information in this kingdom, he assured me, that Mr. Benjamin Holloway, of Middleton Stony, assured him, some time ago: that he knew for fact, that the celebrated Romance of 'Robinson Crusoe' was really written by the Earl of Oxford, when confined in the Tower of London: that his Lordship gave the manuscript to Daniel Defoe, who frequently visited him during his confinement: and that Defoe, having afterwards added the second volume, published the whole as his own production. This anecdote I would not venture to

send to your valuable magazine, if I did not think my information good, and imagine it might be acceptable to your numerous readers, notwithstanding the work has heretofore been generally attributed to the latter. W. W.’“

It is impossible for me to enter on a discussion of this literary subject; though I thought the circumstance ought to be more generally known. And yet I must observe, that I always discerned a very striking falling off between the composition of the first and second volumes of this Romance — they seem to bear evident marks of having been the work of different writers.”

A volume of memoranda in the handwriting of Warton, the Laureate, preserved in the British Museum, contains the following:

“Mem. Jul. 10, 1774. In the year 1759, I was told by the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Holloway, rector of Middleton Stony, in Oxfordshire, then about 70 years old, and in the early part of his life domestic Chaplain to Lord Sunderland, that he had often heard Lord Sunderland say that Lord Oxford, while a prisoner in the Tower of London, wrote the first volume of the History of Robinson Crusoe, merely as an amusement under confinement; and gave it to Daniel De Foe, who frequently visited Lord Oxford in the Tower, and was one of his Pamphlet writers. That De Foe, by Lord Oxford’s permission, printed it as his own, and, encouraged by its extraordinary success, added himself the second volume, the inferiority of which is generally acknowledged. Mr. Holloway also told me, from Lord Sunderland, that Lord Oxford dictated some parts of the manuscript to De Foe. Mr. Holloway was a grave conscientious clergyman, not vain of telling anecdotes, very learned, particularly a good orientalist, author of some theological tracts, bred at Eton School, and a Master of Arts at St. John’s College, Cambridge. He lived many years with great respect in Lord Sunderland’s family, and was like to the late Duke of Marlborough. He died, as I remember, about the year “1761.”

138 — To his Mother

Constantinople, May 18, 1810.

Dear Madam, — I arrived here in an English frigate from Smyrna a few days ago, without any events worth mentioning, except landing to view the plains of Troy, and afterwards, when we were at anchor in the Dardanelles, *swimming* from Sestos to Abydos, in imitation of Monsieur Leander, whose story you, no doubt, know too well for me to add anything on the subject except that I crossed the Hellespont without so good a motive for the undertaking. As I am just going

to visit the Captain-Pacha, you will excuse the brevity of my letter. When Mr. Adair takes leave I am to see the Sultan and the mosques, *etc.*

Believe me, yours ever,

Byron.

302 — to John Murray

June 18, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Will you forward the enclosed answer to the kindest letter I ever received in my life, my sense of which I can neither express to Mr. Gifford himself nor to any one else?

Ever yours,

B’N.

303 — to W. Gifford

June 18, 1813.

My Dear Sir, — I feel greatly at a loss how to write to you at all — still more to thank you as I ought. If you knew the veneration with which I have ever regarded you, long before I had the most distant prospect of becoming your acquaintance, literary or personal, my embarrassment would not surprise you.

Any suggestion of yours, even were it conveyed in the less tender shape of the text of the *Baviad*, or a Monk Mason note in Massinger, would have been obeyed; I should have endeavoured to improve myself by your censure: judge then if I shall be less willing to profit by your kindness. It is not for me to bandy compliments with my elders and my betters: I receive your approbation with gratitude, and will not return my brass for your Gold by expressing more fully those sentiments of admiration, which, however sincere, would, I know, be unwelcome.

To your advice on Religious topics, I shall equally attend. Perhaps the best way will be by avoiding them altogether. The already published objectionable passages have been much commented upon, but certainly have been rather *strongly* interpreted. I am no Bigot to Infidelity, and did not expect that, because I doubted the immortality of Man, I should be charged with denying the existence of a God. It was the comparative insignificance of ourselves and *our*

world, when placed in competition with the mighty whole, of which it is an atom, that first led me to imagine that our pretensions to eternity might be over-rated.

This, and being early disgusted with a Calvinistic Scotch school, where I was cudgelled to Church for the first ten years of my life, afflicted me with this malady; for, after all, it is, I believe, a disease of the mind as much as other kinds of hypochondria.

I regret to hear you talk of ill-health. May you long exist! not only to enjoy your own fame, but outlive that of fifty such ephemeral adventurers as myself.

As I do not sail quite so soon as Murray may have led you to expect (not till July) I trust I have some chance of taking you by the hand before my departure, and repeating in person how sincerely and affectionately I am

Your obliged servant,

Byron.

304 — to John Murray

June 22, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I send you a *corrected* copy of the lines with several *important* alterations, — so many that this had better be sent for proof rather than subject the other to so many blots.

You will excuse the eternal trouble I inflict upon you. As you will see, I have attended to your Criticism, and softened a passage you proscribed this morning.

Yours veritably, B.

305 — to Thomas Moore

June 22, 1813.

Yesterday I dined in company with Stael, the “Epicene,” whose politics are sadly changed. She is for the Lord of Israel and the Lord of Liverpool — a vile antithesis of a Methodist and a Tory — talks of nothing but devotion and the ministry, and, I presume, expects that God and the government will help her to a pension.

Murray, the of publishers, the Anak of stationers, has a design upon you in the paper line. He wants you to become the staple and stipendiary editor of a

periodical work. What say you? Will you be bound, like “Kit Smart, to write for ninety-nine years in the “*Universal Visitor*?”

Seriously, he talks of hundreds a year, and — though I hate prating of the beggarly elements — his proposal may be to your honour and profit, and, I am very sure, will be to our pleasure.

I don’t know what to say about “friendship.” I never was in friendship but once, in my nineteenth year, and then it gave me as much trouble as love. I am afraid, as Whitbread’s sire said to the king, when he wanted to knight him, that I am “too old; but nevertheless, no one wishes you more friends, fame, and felicity, than

Yours, *etc.*

“And ah! what verse can grace thy stately mien,
Guide of the world, preferment’s golden queen,
Neckar’s fair daughter, Staël the *Epicene*!
Bright o’er whose flaming cheek and pumple nose
The bloom of young desire unceasing glows!
Fain would the Muse — but ah! she dares no more,
A mournful voice from lone *Guyana*’s shore,
Sad Quatremer, the bold presumption checks,
Forbid to question thy ambiguous sex.’

“These lines contain the Secret History of Quatremer’s deportation. He presumed, in the Council of Five Hundred, to arraign Madame de Staël’s conduct, and even to hint a doubt of her sex. He was sent to *Guyana*. The transaction naturally brings to one’s mind the dialogue between Falstaff and Hostess Quickly in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*.”

Canning’s New Morality, lines 293-301 (Edmonds’ edition of the *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, pp. 282, 283).

Anne Louise Germaine Necker (1766-1817), only child of the Minister Necker and his wife Suzanne Curchod, Gibbon’s early love, married, in 1786, the Swedish Ambassador Baron de Staël Holstein, who died in 1802. She married, as her second husband, in 1811, M. de Rocca, a young French officer, who had been severely wounded in Spain, but survived her by a year (Madame de Récamier, *Souvenirs*, vol. i. p. 272). Her book, *De l’Allemagne*, seized and destroyed by Napoleon, was brought out in June, 1813, by John Murray. Byron thought her

“certainly the cleverest, though not the most agreeable woman he had ever

known. ‘She declaimed to you instead of conversing with you,’ said he, ‘never pausing except to take breath; and if during that interval a rejoinder was put in, it was evident that she did not attend to it, as she resumed the thread of her discourse as though it had not been interrupted’“.

(Lady Blessington’s *Conversations*, p. 26). Croker (*Croker Papers*, vol. i. p. 327) describes her as

“ugly, and not of an intellectual ugliness. Her features were coarse, and the ordinary expression rather vulgar, she had an ugly mouth, and one or two irregularly prominent teeth, which perhaps gave her countenance an habitual gaiety. Her eye was full, dark, and expressive; and when she declaimed, which was almost whenever she spoke, she looked eloquent, and one forgot that she was plain.”

Madame de Staël

“did not affect to conceal her preference for the society of men to that of her own sex,”

and was entirely above, or below, studying the feminine arts of pleasing. In 1802 Miss Berry called on her in Paris.

“Found her in an excessively dirty *cabinet* — sofa singularly so; her own dress, a loose spencer with a bare neck,”

(*Journal*, vol. ii. p. 145). A similar experience is mentioned by Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, 1804).

“On the 28th of January,” he writes, “I first waited on Madame de Staël. I was shown into her bedroom, for which, not knowing Parisian customs, I was unprepared. She was sitting, most decorously, *in* her bed, and writing. She had her night-cap on, and her face was not made up for the day. It was by no means a captivating spectacle; but I had a very cordial reception, and two bright black eyes smiled benignantly on me.”

Of her political opinions Sir John Bowring (*Autobiographical Recollections*, pp. 375, 376) has left a sketch.

“Madame de Staël was a perfect aristocrat, and her sympathies were wholly with the great and prosperous. She saw nothing in England but the luxury, stupidity, and pride of the Tory aristocracy, and the intelligence and magnificence of the Whig aristocracy. These latter talked about truth, and liberty and herself, and she supposed it was all as it should be. As to the millions, the people, she never inquired into their situation. She had a horror of the *canaille*, but anything of *sangre azul* had a charm for her. When she was dying she said, ‘Let me die in peace; let my last moments be undisturbed.’ Yet she ordered the cards of every visitor to be brought to her. Among them was one from the Duc

de Richelieu. ‘What!’ exclaimed she indignantly, ‘What! have you sent away the Duke? Hurry! Fly after him. Bring him back. Tell him that, though I die for all the world, I live for *him*.’“

Napoleon’s hatred of her was intense. “Do not allow that jade, Madame de Staël,” he writes to Fouché, December 31, 1806 (*New Letters of Napoleon I.*, p. 35), “to come near Paris.” Again, March 15, 1807 (*ibid.*, p. 39), “You are not to allow Madame de Staël to come within forty leagues of Paris. That wicked schemer ought to make up her mind to behave herself at last.” In a third letter, April 19, 1807 (*ibid.*, p. 40), he speaks of her as “paying court, one day to the great — a patriot, a democrat, the next!... a fright, ... a worthless woman” (Léon Lecestre’s *Lettres inédites de Napoléon I^{er}*, 2nd ed. vol. i. pp. 84, 88, 93).

“Old Gardner the bookseller employed Rolt and Smart to write a monthly miscellany called the *Universal Visitor*. There was a formal written contract, which Allen the printer saw.... They were bound to write nothing else; they were to have, I think, a third of the profits of his sixpenny pamphlet; and the contract was for ninety-nine years”

(Boswell’s *Life of Dr. Johnson*, ed. Birrell, vol. iii. p. 192).

“But first the Monarch, so polite,
Ask’d Mister Whitbread if he’d be a *Knight*.
Unwilling in the list to be enroll’d,
Whitbread contemplated the Knights of *Peg*,
Then to his generous Sov’reign made a leg,
And said, ‘He was afraid he was *too old*,’“ *etc.*

Peter Pindar’s *Instructions to a Laureat*.

306 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

4, Bennet Street, June 26th, 1813.

My Dearest Augusta, — Let me know when you arrive, and when, and where, and how, you would like to see me, — any where in short but at *dinner*. I have put off going into ye country on purpose to *waylay* you.

Ever yours,

Byron.

307 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

[June, 1813.]

My Dearest Augusta, — And if you knew *whom* I had put off besides my journey — you would think me grown strangely fraternal. However I won't overwhelm you with my *own praises*.

Between one and two be it — I shall, in course, prefer seeing you all to myself without the incumbrance of third persons, even of *your* (for I won't own the relationship) fair cousin of *eleven page* memory, who, by the bye, makes one of the finest busts I have seen in the Exhibition, or out of it. Good night!

Ever yours, **Byron.**

P. S. — Your writing is grown like my Attorney's, and gave me a qualm, till I found the remedy in your signature.

308 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

[Sunday], June 27th, 1813.

My Dearest Augusta, — If you like to go with me to ye Lady Davy's to-night, I *have* an invitation for you.

There you will see the *Stael*, some people whom you know, and *me* whom you do *not* know, — and you can talk to which you please, and I will watch over you as if you were unmarried and in danger of always being so. Now do as you like; but if you chuse to array yourself before or after half past ten, I will call for you. I think our being together before 3d people will be a new *sensation* to *both*.

Ever yours,

B.

“He is now about thirty-three, but with all the freshness and bloom of five-and-twenty, and one of the handsomest men I have seen in England. He has a

great deal of vivacity, talks rapidly, though with great precision, and is so much interested in conversation, that his excitement amounts to nervous impatience, and keeps him in constant motion.”

Davy married, in 1812, a rich widow, Jane Apreece, *née* Kerr (1780-1855). The marriage brought him wealth; but it also, it is said, impaired the simplicity of his character, and made him ambitious of social distinction. Miss Berry (*Journal*, vol. ii. p. 535) supped with Lady Davy in May, 1813, to meet the Princess of Wales, and notes that among the other guests was Byron. Lady Davy, who was so dark a brunette that Sydney Smith said she was as brown as a dry toast, was for many years a prominent figure in the society of London and Rome. It was of her that Madame de Staël said that she had “all Corinne’s talents without her faults or extravagances.” Ticknor, who called on her in June, 1815,

“found her in her parlour, working on a dress, the contents of her basket strewn about the table, and looking more like home than anything since I left it. She is small, with black eyes and hair, a very pleasant face, an uncommonly sweet smile, and, when she speaks, has much spirit and expression in her countenance. Her conversation is agreeable, particularly in the choice and variety of her phraseology, and has more the air of eloquence than I have ever heard before from a lady.”

(*Life of George Ticknor*, vol. i. P. 57).

309 — to John Murray

July 1st, 1813.

Dear Sir, — There is an error in my dedication. The word “*my*” must be struck out — “*my*” admiration, etc.; it is a false construction and disagrees with the signature. I hope this will arrive in time to prevent a *cancel* and serve for a proof; recollect it is only the “*my*” to be erased throughout.

There is a critique in the *Satirist*, which I have read, — fairly written, and, though *vituperative*, very fair in judgment. One part belongs to you, *viz.*, the 4s. and 6d charge; it is unconscionable, but you have no conscience.

Yours truly,

B.

“To Samuel Rogers, Esq., as a slight but most sincere token of my admiration of his genius.”

“A word in conclusion. The noble lord appears to have an aristocratical solicitude to be read only by the opulent. Four shillings and sixpence for forty-one octavo pages of poetry! and those pages verily happily answering to Mr. Sheridan’s image of a rivulet of text flowing through a meadow of margin. My good Lord Byron, while you are revelling in all the sensual and intellectual luxury which the successful sale of Newstead Abbey has procured for you, you little think of the privations to which you have subjected us unfortunate Reviewers, ... in order to enable us to purchase your lordship’s expensive publication.”

310 — to Thomas Moore

4, Benedictine Street, St. James’s, July 8, 1813.

I presume by your silence that I have blundered into something noxious in my reply to your letter, for the which I beg leave to send beforehand a sweeping apology, which you may apply to any, or all, parts of that unfortunate epistle. If I err in my conjecture, I expect the like from you in putting our correspondence so long in quarantine. God he knows what I have said; but he also knows (if he is not as indifferent to mortals as the *nonchalant* deities of Lucretius), that you are the last person I want to offend. So, if I have, — why the devil don’t you say it at once, and expectorate your spleen?

Rogers is out of town with Madame de Stael, who hath published an Essay against Suicide, which, I presume, will make somebody shoot himself; — as a sermon by Blenkinsop, in *proof* of Christianity, sent a hitherto most orthodox acquaintance of mine out of a chapel of ease a perfect atheist. Have you found or founded a residence yet? and have you begun or finished a poem? If you won’t tell me what *I* have done, pray say what you have done, or left undone, yourself. I am still in equipment for voyaging, and anxious to hear from, or of, you *before* I go, which anxiety you should remove more readily, as you think I sha’n’t cogitate about you afterwards. I shall give the lie to that calumny by fifty foreign letters, particularly from any place where the plague is rife, — without a drop of vinegar or a whiff of sulphur to save you from infection.

The Oxfords have sailed almost a fortnight, and my sister is in town, which is a great comfort, — for, never having been much together, we are naturally more attached to each other. I presume the illuminations have conflagrated to Derby (or wherever you are) by this time. We are just recovering from tumult and train oil, and transparent fripperies, and all the noise and nonsense of victory. Drury

Lane had a large *M. W.*, which some thought was Marshal Wellington; others, that it might be translated into Manager Whitbread; while the ladies of the vicinity of the saloon conceived the last letter to be complimentary to themselves. I leave this to the commentators to illustrate. If you don't answer this, I sha'n't say what *you* deserve, but I think *I* deserve a reply. Do you conceive there is no Post-Bag but the Twopenny? Sunburn me, if you are not too bad.

“Madame de Stael treats me as the person whom she most delights to honour; I am generally ordered with her to dinner, as one orders beans and bacon: she is one of the few persons who surpass expectation; she has every sort of talent, and would be universally popular, if, in society, she were to confine herself to her inferior talents — pleasantries, anecdote, and literature. I have reviewed her *Essay on Suicide* in the last *Edinburgh Review*: it is not one of her best, and I have accordingly said more of the author and the subject than of the work.”

Sir J. Mackintosh (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 269).

311 — to Thomas Moore

July 13, 1813.

Your letter set me at ease; for I really thought (as I hear of your susceptibility) that I had said — I know not what — but something I should have been very sorry for, had it, or I, offended you; — though I don't see how a man with a beautiful wife — *his own* children, — quiet — fame — competency and friends, (I will vouch for a thousand, which is more than I will for a unit in my own behalf,) can be offended with any thing.

Do you know, Moore, I am amazingly inclined — remember I say but *inclined* — to be seriously enamoured with Lady A[delaide] F[orbes] — but this — — has ruined all my prospects. However, you know her; is she *clever*, or sensible, or good-tempered? either *would* do — I scratch out the *will*. I don't ask as to her beauty — that I see; but my circumstances are mending, and were not my other prospects blackening, I would take a wife, and that should be the woman, had I a chance. I do not yet know her much, but better than I did.

I want to get away, but find difficulty in compassing a passage in a ship of war. They had better let me go; if I cannot, patriotism is the word — “nay, an they'll mouth, I'll rant as well as they.”

Now, what are you doing? — writing, we all hope, for our own sakes.

Remember you must edit my posthumous works, with a Life of the Author, for which I will send you Confessions, dated “Lazaretto,” Smyrna, Malta, or Palermo — one can die any where.

There is to be a thing on Tuesday ycleped a national fête. The Regent and — — are to be there, and every body else, who has shillings enough for what was once a guinea. Vauxhall is the scene — there are six tickets issued for the modest women, and it is supposed there will be three to spare. The passports for the lax are beyond my arithmetic.

P. S. — The Staël last night attacked me most furiously — said that I had “no right to make love — that I had used — — barbarously — that I had no feeling, and was totally *insensible* to *la belle passion*, and *had* been all my life.” I am very glad to hear it, but did not know it before. Let me hear from you anon.

“Lady A. F — — *was* also very handsome. It is melancholy to talk of women in the past tense. What a pity, that of all flowers, none fade so soon as beauty! Poor Lady A. F — has not got married. Do you know, I once had some thoughts of her as a wife; not that I was in love, as people call it, but I had argued myself into a belief that I ought to marry, and, meeting her very often in society, the notion came into my head, not heart, that she would suit me. Moore, too, told me so much of her good qualities — all which was, I believe, quite true — that I felt tempted to propose to her, but did not, whether *tant mieux* or *tant pis*, God knows, supposing my proposal accepted.”

(Lady Blessington’s *Conversations*, pp. 108, 109).

Lady Adelaide Forbes, whom Byron in Rome compared to the “Belvedere Apollo,” was the daughter of George, sixth Earl of Granard, and his wife, Lady Selina Rawdon, daughter of the first Earl of Moira. Born in 1789, she died at Dresden, in 1858, unmarried. Lord Moira was Moore’s patron, and, through this connection and political sympathies, Moore was acquainted with Lord Granard and his family.

“Nay, an thou’lt mouth,
I’ll rant as well as thou.”

But the letter is destroyed.

Sunday, July 18th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — A Report is in general circulation (which has distressed my friends, and is not very pleasing to me), that the Purchaser of Newstead is a *young* man, who has been over-reached, ill-treated, and ruined, by me in this transaction of the sale, and that I take an unfair advantage of the *law* to enforce the contract. This must be contradicted by a true and open statement of the circumstances attending, and subsequent to, the sale, and that immediately and publicly. Surely, if anyone is ill treated it is myself. He bid his own price; he took time before he bid at all, and now, when I am actually granting him further time as a favour, I hear from all quarters that I have acted unfairly. Pray do not delay on this point; see him, and let a proper and true statement be drawn up of the sale, etc., and inserted in the papers.

Ever yours,

B.

P.S. — Mr. C. himself, if he has either honour or feeling, will be the first to vindicate me from so unfounded an implication. It is surely not for his credit to be supposed *ruined* or *over-reached*.

313 — to John Murray

July 22nd, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have great pleasure in accepting your invitation to meet anybody or nobody as you like best.

Pray what should you suppose the book in the inclosed advertisement to be? is it anything relating to Buonaparte or Continental Concerns? If so, it may be worth looking after, particularly if it should turn out to be your purchase — Lucien's *Epic*.

Believe me, very truly yours,

Byron.

314 — to Thomas Moore

July 25, 1813.

I am not well versed enough in the ways of single woman to make much matrimonial progress.

I have been dining like the dragon of Wantley for this last week. My head aches with the vintage of various cellars, and my brains are muddled as their dregs. I met your friends the Daltons: — she sang one of your best songs so well, that, but for the appearance of affectation, I could have cried; he reminds me of Hunt, but handsomer, and more musical in soul, perhaps. I wish to God he may conquer his horrible anomalous complaint. The upper part of her face is beautiful, and she seems much attached to her husband. He is right, nevertheless, in leaving this nauseous town. The first winter would infallibly destroy her complexion, — and the second, very probably, every thing else.

I must tell you a story. Morris (of indifferent memory) was dining out the other day, and complaining of the Prince's coldness to his old wassailers. D'Israeli (a learned Jew) bored him with questions — why this? and why that? "Why did the Prince act thus?" — "Why, sir, on account of Lord — — , who ought to be ashamed of himself." — "And why ought Lord — — to be ashamed of himself?" — "Because the Prince, sir, — — " — "And why, sir, did the Prince cut *you*?" — "Because, G — d d — mme, sir, I stuck to my principles." — "And why did you stick to your principles?"

Is not this last question the best that was ever put, when you consider to whom? It nearly killed Morris. Perhaps you may think it stupid, but, as Goldsmith said about the peas, it was a very good joke when I heard it — as I did from an ear-witness — and is only spoilt in my narration.

The season has closed with a dandy ball; — but I have dinners with the Harrowbys, Rogers, and Frere and Mackintosh, where I shall drink your health in a silent bumper, and regret your absence till "too much canaries" wash away my memory, or render it superfluous by a vision of you at the opposite side of the table. Canning has disbanded his party by a speech from his [— —] — the true throne of a Tory.

Conceive his turning them off in a formal harangue, and bidding them think for themselves. "I have led my ragamuffins where they are well peppered. There are but three of the 150 left alive," and they are for the *Townsend* (*query*, might not Falstaff mean the Bow Street officer? I dare say Malone's posthumous edition will have it so) for life.

Since I wrote last, I have been into the country. I journeyed by night — no incident, or accident, but an alarm on the part of my valet on the outside, who, in crossing Epping Forest, actually, I believe, flung down his purse before a milestone, with a glow-worm in the second figure of number XIX — mistaking it for

a footpad and dark lantern. I can only attribute his fears to a pair of new pistols wherewith I had armed him; and he thought it necessary to display his vigilance by calling out to me whenever we passed any thing — no matter whether moving or stationary. Conceive ten miles, with a tremor every furlong. I have scribbled you a fearfully long letter. This sheet must be blank, and is merely a wrapper, to preclude the tabellarians of the post from peeping. You once complained of my *not* writing; — I will “heap coals of fire upon your head” by *not* complaining of your *not* reading. Ever, my dear Moore, your’n (isn’t that the Staffordshire termination?),

Byron.

“Have you not heard of the *Trojan* Horse;
With Seventy Men in his Belly?
This Dragon was not quite so big,
But very near, I’ll tell you;
Devoured he poor Children three,
That could not with him grapple;
And at one sup he eat them up,
As one would eat an Apple.

“All sorts of Cattle this Dragon did eat,
Some say he eat up Trees,
And that the Forest sure he would
Devour by degrees.
For Houses and Churches were to him Geese and Turkeys;
He eat all, and left none behind,
But some Stones, dear Jack, which he could not crack,
Which on the Hills you’ll find.”

Morris, who was an admirable song-writer and singer, attached himself politically to the Prince’s party, and attacked Pitt in such popular ballads as “Billy’s too young to drive us,” and “Billy Pitt and the Farmer.” He was, however, disappointed in his hope of reward from his political patrons, and vented his spleen in his ode, “The Old Whig Poet to his Old Buff Waistcoat”

“Farewell, thou poor rag of the Muse!

In the bag of the clothesman go lie;
A farthing thou'lt fetch from the Jews,
Which the hard-hearted Christians deny," etc.

Some of his poems deserve the censure of *The Shade of Pope* (line 225):

"There reeling Morris and his bestial songs."

But others, in their ease and vivacity, hold their own with all but the best of Moore's songs. A collection of them was printed in two volumes by Bentley, in 1840, under the title of *Lyra Urbanica*.

"a handful of grey pease, given him by a girl at a wake (after fasting for twenty-four hours) the most comfortable repast he had ever made."

Byron may mean that any joke seems good to a man who had not heard one for a day.

"I liked the Dandies," says Byron, in his *Detached Thoughts*; "they were always very civil to *me*, though in general they disliked literary people, and persecuted and mystified Madme. de Staël, Lewis, Horace Twiss, and the like, damnably. They persuaded Madme. de Staël that Alvanley had a hundred thousand a year, etc., etc., till she praised him to his *face* for his *beauty!* and made a set at him for Albertine (*Libertine*, as Brummell baptized her, though the poor girl was, and is, as correct as maid or wife can be, and very amiable withal), and a hundred other fooleries besides. The truth is, that, though I gave up the business early, I had a tinge of Dandyism in my minority, and probably retained enough of it to conciliate the great ones at four and twenty. I had gamed and drunk and taken my degrees in most dissipations, and, having no pedantry, and not being overbearing, we ran quietly together. I knew them all more or less, and they made me a member of Watier's (a superb club at that time), being, I take it, the only literary man (except *two* others, both men of the world, M[oore] and S[pencer] in it. Our Masquerade was a grand one; so was the Dandy Ball too — at the Argyle, — but *that* (the latter) was given by the four chiefs — B[rummel?], M[idmay?], A[lvanley?], and P[ierreoint?], if I err not."

His great intellectual powers were shown to most advantage in society. Rogers (*Table-Talk*, pp. 197, 198) thought him one of the three acutest men he had ever known.

"He had a prodigious memory, and could repeat by heart more of Cicero than you could easily believe.... I never met a man with a fuller mind than

Mackintosh, — such readiness on all subjects, such a talker.”

“Till subdued by age and illness,” wrote Sydney Smith (*Life of Mackintosh*, vol. ii. p. 500), “his conversation was more brilliant and instructive than that of any human being I ever had the good fortune to be acquainted with.”

As in political life, so in society, he was too much of the lecturer. Ticknor (*Life*, vol. i. p. 265) thought him “a little too precise, a little too much made up in his manners and conversation.” But on all sides there is evidence to confirm the testimony of Rogers (*Table-Talk*, p. 207) that he was a man “who had not a particle of envy or jealousy in his nature.”

The *Morning Chronicle* for July 29, 1813, has the following paragraph:

“Mr. Canning it seems has (to use a French phrase) *reformed* his political corps. He assembled them at the close of the Session, and with many expressions of regret for the failure of certain negociations, which might have been favourable to them as a body, relieved them from their oaths of allegiance, and recommended them to pursue in future their objects separately. The Right Honourable gentleman, perhaps, finds it more convenient for himself to act unencumbered; and both he and one or two others may find their interest in disbanding the squad; but some of them are turned off *without a character*.”

The *Courier* for July 29, quoting the first part of the statement, adds,

“We believe ... that Mr. Canning is not indisposed to join the present Cabinet, and may wish one or two of his particular friends to come in with him.”

“I have led my ragamuffins where they are pepper’d: there’s but three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town’s end, to beg during life.”

(*Henry IV.*, Part I. act v. sc. 3).

Townshend, the Bow Street officer, is described by Cronow (*Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 286) as

“a little fat man with a flaxen wig, Kersey-mere breeches, a blue straight-cut coat, and a broad-brimmed white hat. To the most daring courage he added great dexterity and cunning; and was said, *in propria persona*, to have taken more thieves than all the other Bow Street officers put together.”

315 — to Thomas Moore

July 27, 1813.

When you next imitate the style of “Tacitus,” pray add, *de moribus*

Germannorum; — this last was a piece of barbarous silence, and could only be taken from the *Woods*, and, as such, I attribute it entirely to your sylvan sequestration at Mayfield Cottage. You will find, on casting up accounts, that you are my debtor by several sheets and one epistle. I shall bring my action; — if you don't discharge, expect to hear from my attorney. I have forwarded your letter to Ruggiero; but don't make a postman of me again, for fear I should be tempted to violate your sanctity of wax or wafer.

Believe me, ever yours *indignantly*,
BN.

316 — to Thomas Moore

July 28, 1813.

Can't you be satisfied with the pangs of my jealousy of Rogers, without actually making me the pander of your epistolary intrigue? This is the second letter you have enclosed to my address, notwithstanding a miraculous long answer, and a subsequent short one or two of your own. If you do so again, I can't tell to what pitch my fury may soar. I shall send you verse or arsenic, as likely as any thing, — four thousand couplets on sheets beyond the privilege of franking; that privilege, sir, of which you take an undue advantage over a too susceptible senator, by forwarding your lucubrations to every one but himself. I won't frank *from* you, or *for* you, or *to* you — may I be curst if I do, unless you mend your manners. I disown you — I disclaim you — and by all the powers of Eulogy, I will write a panegyric upon you — or dedicate a quarto — if you don't make me ample amends.

P. S. — I am in training to dine with Sheridan and Rogers this evening. I have a little spite against R., and will shed his "Clary wines pottle-deep." This is nearly my ultimate or penultimate letter; for I am quite equipped, and only wait a passage. Perhaps I may wait a few weeks for Sligo, but not if I can help it.

"In society I have met Sheridan frequently: he was superb! He had a sort of liking for me, and never attacked me, at least to my face, as he did every body else — high names, and wits, and orators, some of them poets also. I have seen him cut up Whitbread, quiz Madame de Staël, annihilate Colman, and do little less by some others (whose names, as friends, I set not down) of good fame and ability. Poor fellow! he got drunk very thoroughly and very soon. It occasionally

fell to my lot to pilot him home — no sinecure, for he was so tipsy that I was obliged to put on his cocked hat for him. To be sure, it tumbled off again, and I was not myself so sober as to be able to pick it up again.

“The last time I met him was, I think, at Sir Gilbert Elliot’s, where he was as quick as ever — no, it was not the last time; the last time was at Douglas Kinnaird’s. I have met him in all places and parties — at Whitehall with the Melbournes, at the Marquis of Tavistock’s, at Robins’s the auctioneer’s, at Sir Humphry Davy’s, at Sam Rogers’s, — in short, in most kinds of company, and always found him very convivial and delightful.

“I have seen Sheridan weep two or three times. It may be that he was maudlin; but this only renders it more impressive, for who would see

‘From Marlborough’s eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expire a driveller and a show’?

“Once I saw him cry at Robins’s the auctioneer’s, after a splendid dinner, full of great names and high spirits. I had the honour of sitting next to Sheridan. The occasion of his tears was some observation or other upon the subject of the sturdiness of the Whigs in resisting office and keeping to their principles: Sheridan turned round: ‘Sir, it is easy for my Lord G. or Earl G. or Marquis B. or Lord H. with thousands upon thousands a year, some of it either *presently* derived, or *inherited* in sinecure or acquisitions from the public money, to boast of their patriotism and keep aloof from temptation; but they do not know from what temptation those have kept aloof who had equal pride, at least equal talents, and not unequal passions, and nevertheless knew not in the course of their lives what it was to have a shilling of their own.’ And in saying this he wept.

“There was something odd about Sheridan. One day, at dinner, he was slightly praising that pert pretender and impostor, Lyttelton (the Parliamentary puppy, still alive, I believe). I took the liberty of differing from him; he turned round upon me, and said, ‘Is that your real opinion?’ I confirmed it. Then said he, ‘Fortified by this concurrence, I beg leave to say that it, in fact, is *my* opinion also, and that he is a person whom I do absolutely and utterly despise, abhor, and detest.’ He then launched out into a description of his despicable qualities, at some length, and with his usual wit, and evidently in earnest (for he hated Lyttelton). His former compliment had been drawn out by some preceding one, just as its reverse was by my hinting that it was unmerited.

“I have more than once heard him say, ‘that he never had a shilling of his own.’ To be sure, he contrived to extract a good many of other people’s.

“In 1815 I had occasion to visit my lawyer in Chancery Lane; he was with

Sheridan. After mutual greetings, etc., Sheridan retired first. Before recurring to my own business, I could not help inquiring *that* of Sheridan. 'Oh,' replied the attorney, 'the usual thing! to stave off an action from his wine-merchant, my client.' — 'Well,' said I, 'and what do you mean to do?' — 'Nothing at all for the present,' said he: 'would you have us proceed against old Sherry? what would be the use of it?' and here he began laughing, and going over Sheridan's good gifts of conversation.

"Now, from personal experience, I can vouch that my attorney is by no means the tenderest of men, or particularly accessible to any kind of impression out of the statute or record; and yet Sheridan, in half an hour, had found the way to soften and seduce him in such a manner, that I almost think he would have thrown his client (an honest man, with all the laws, and some justice, on his side) out of the window, had he come in at the moment.

"Such was Sheridan! he could soften an attorney! There has been nothing like it since the days of Orpheus.

"One day I saw him take up his own '*Monody on Garrick*.' He lighted upon the Dedication to the Dowager Lady Spencer. On seeing it, he flew into a rage, and exclaimed 'that it must be a forgery, that he had never dedicated any thing of his to such a damned canting bitch,' etc., etc. — and so went on for half an hour abusing his own dedication, or at least the object of it. If all writers were equally sincere, it would be ludicrous.

"He told me that, on the night of the grand success of his *School for Scandal* he was knocked down and put into the watch-house for making a row in the street, and being found intoxicated by the watchmen. Latterly, when found drunk one night in the kennel, and asked his name by the watchmen, he answered, 'Wilberforce.'

"When dying he was requested to undergo 'an operation.' He replied that he had already submitted to two, which were enough for one man's lifetime. Being asked what they were, he answered, 'having his hair cut, and sitting for his picture.'

"I have met George Colman occasionally, and thought him extremely pleasant and convivial. Sheridan's humour, or rather wit, was always saturnine, and sometimes savage; he never laughed (at least that *I* saw, and I watched him), but Colman did. If I had to *choose* and could not have both at a time I should say, 'Let me begin the evening with Sheridan, and finish it with Colman.' Sheridan for dinner, Colman for supper; Sheridan for claret or port but Colman for every thing, from the madeira and champagne at dinner the claret with a *layer* of port between the glasses up to the punch of the night, and down to the

grog, or gin and water, of daybreak; — all these I have threaded with both the same. Sheridan was a grenadier company of life guards, but Colman a whole regiment — of *light infantry*, to be sure, but still a regiment.”

“Potations pottle deep”

Othello, act ii. sc. 3, line 54.

317 — to John Murray

July 31, 1813.

Dear Sir — As I leave town early tomorrow, the proof must be sent to-night, or many days will be lost. If you have any *reviews* of the *Giaour* to send, let me have them now. I am not very well to day. I thank you for the *Satirist*, which is short but savage on this unlucky affair, and *personally* facetious on me which is much more to the purpose than a tirade upon other peoples’ concerns.

Ever yours, B.

With horn-handled knife,
To kill a tender lamb as dead as mutton.”

“A short time back (say the newspapers, and newspapers never say *the thing which is not*) Lady H. gave a ball and supper. Among the company were Lord B — n, Lady W — , and Lady C. L — b. Lord B., it would appear, is a favourite with the latter Lady; on this occasion, however, he seemed to lavish his attention on another fair object. This preference so enraged Lady C. L. that in a paroxysm of jealousy she took up a dessert-knife and stabbed herself. The gay circle was, of course, immediately plunged in confusion and dismay, which however, was soon succeeded by levity and scandal. The general cry for medical assistance was from Lady W — d: Lady W — d!!! And why? Because it was said that, early after her marriage, Lady W — also took a similar liberty with her person for a similar cause, and was therefore considered to have learned from experience the most efficacious remedy for the complaint. It was also whispered that the Lady’s husband had most to grieve, that the attempt had not fully succeeded. Lady C. L. is still living.

“The poet has told us how ‘Ladies wish to be who love their Lords;’ but this is the first public demonstration in our times to show us how Ladies wish to be who love, not their own, but others’ Lords. ‘Better be with the dead than thus,’

cried the jealous fair; and, casting a languishing look at Lord B — , who, Heaven knows, is more like Pan than Apollo, she whipt up as pretty a little dessert-knife as a Lady could desire to commit suicide with,

‘And stuck it in her wizzard.’

“The desperate Lady was carried out of the room, and the affair endeavoured to be hushed up, etc., etc.”

318 — to John Wilson Croker

Bt. Str., August 2, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I was honoured with your unexpected and very obliging letter, when on the point of leaving London, which prevented me from acknowledging my obligation as quickly as I felt it sincerely. I am endeavouring all in my power to be ready before Saturday — and even if I should not succeed, I can only blame my own tardiness, which will not the less enhance the benefit I have lost. I have only to add my hope of forgiveness for all my trespasses on your time and patience, and with my best wishes for your public and private welfare, I have the honour to be, most truly, Your obliged and most obedient servant,

Byron.

319 — to John Murray

If you send more proofs, I shall never finish this infernal story — “*Ecce signum*” — thirty-three more lines enclosed! to the utter discomfiture of the printer, and, I fear, not to your advantage.

B.

320 — to John Murray

Half-past two in the morning, Aug. 10, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Pray suspend the *proofs*, for I am *bitten* again, and have *quantities* for other parts of the bravura. Yours ever,

B.

P. S. — You shall have them in the course of the day.

321 — To James Wedderburn Webster

August 12, 1813.

My Dear Webster, — I am, you know, a detestable correspondent, and write to no one person whatever; you therefore cannot attribute my silence to any thing but want of good breeding or good taste, and not to any more atrocious cause; and as I confess the fault to be entirely mine — why — you will pardon it.

I have ordered a copy of the *Giaour* (which is nearly doubled in quantity in this edition) to be sent, and I will first scribble my name in the title page. Many and sincere thanks for your good opinion of book, and (I hope to add) author.

Rushton shall attend you whenever you please, though I should like him to stay a few weeks, and help my other people in forwarding my chattels. Your taking him is no less a favor to me than him; and I trust he will behave well. If not, your remedy is very simple; only don't let him be idle; honest I am sure he is, and I believe good-hearted and quiet. No pains has been spared, and a good deal of expense incurred in his education; accounts and mensuration, etc., he ought to know, and I believe he does.

I write this near London, but your answer will reach me better in Bennet Street, *etc.* (as before). I am going very soon, and if you would do the same thing — as far as Sicily — I am sure you would not be sorry. My sister, Mrs. L. goes with me — her spouse is obliged to retrench for a few years (but *he* stays at home); so that his *link boy* prophecy (if ever he made it) recoils upon himself.

I am truly glad to hear of Lady Frances's good health. Have you added to your family? Pray make my best respects acceptable to her Ladyship.

Nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear from you as soon and as fully as you please. Ever most truly yours,

Byron.

322 — to Thomas Moore

Bennet Street, August 22, 1813.

As our late — I might say, deceased — correspondence had too much of the

town-life leaven in it, we will now, *paulo majora*, prattle a little of literature in all its branches; and first of the first — criticism. The Prince is at Brighton, and Jackson, the boxer, gone to Margate, having, I believe, decoyed Yarmouth to see a milling in that polite neighbourhood.

Mad'e. de Staël Holstein has lost one of her young barons, who has been carbonadoed by a vile Teutonic adjutant, — kilt and killed in a coffee-house at Scrawsenhawsen. Corinne is, of course, what all mothers must be, — but will, I venture to prophesy, do what few mothers could — write an Essay upon it. She cannot exist without a grievance — and somebody to see, or read, how much grief becomes her. I have not seen her since the event; but merely judge (not very charitably) from prior observation.

In a “mail-coach copy” of the *Edinburgh* I perceive *The Giaour* is second article. The numbers are still in the Leith smack — *pray which way is the wind?* The said article is so very mild and sentimental, that it must be written by Jeffrey *in love*; — you know he is gone to America to marry some fair one, of whom he has been, for several *quarters*, *éperdument amoureux*. Seriously — as Winifred Jenkins says of Lismahago — Mr. Jeffrey (or his deputy) “has done the handsome thing by me,” and I say *nothing*. But this I will say, if you and I had knocked one another on the head in this quarrel, how he would have laughed, and what a mighty bad figure we should have cut in our posthumous works. By the by, I was call'd *in* the other day to mediate between two gentlemen bent upon carnage, and — after a long struggle between the natural desire of destroying one's fellow-creatures, and the dislike of seeing men play the fool for nothing, — I got one to make an apology, and the other to take it, and left them to live happy ever after.

One was a peer, the other a friend untitled, and both fond of high play; — and one, I can swear for, though very mild, “not fearful,” and so dead a shot, that, though the other is the thinnest of men, he would have split him like a cane. They both conducted themselves very well, and I put them out of *pain* as soon as I could.

There is an American *Life* of G. F. Cooke, *Scurra* deceased, lately published. Such a book! — I believe, since *Drunken Barnaby's Journal* nothing like it has drenched the press. All green-room and tap-room — drams and the drama — brandy, whisky-punch, and, *latterly*, toddy, overflow every page. Two things are rather marvellous, — first, that a man should live so long drunk, and, next, that he should have found a sober biographer. There are some very laughable things in it, nevertheless; — but the pints he swallowed, and the parts he performed, are too regularly registered.

All this time you wonder I am not gone; so do I; but the accounts of the plague are very perplexing — not so much for the thing itself as the quarantine established in all ports, and from all places, even from England. It is true, the forty or sixty days would, in all probability, be as foolishly spent on shore as in the ship; but one likes to have one's choice, nevertheless. Town is awfully empty; but not the worse for that. I am really puzzled with my perfect ignorance of what I mean to do; — not stay, if I can help it, but where to go? Sligo is for the North; — a pleasant place, Petersburg, in September, with one's ears and nose in a muff, or else tumbling into one's neckcloth or pocket-handkerchief! If the winter treated Buonaparte with so little ceremony, what would it inflict upon your solitary traveller? — Give me a *sun*, I care not how hot, and sherbet, I care not how cool, and *my* Heaven is as easily made as your Persian's.

The Giaour is now a thousand and odd lines. "Lord Fanny spins a thousand such a day," eh, Moore? — thou wilt needs be a wag, but I forgive it. Yours ever,

Byron.

P. S. — I perceive I have written a flippant and rather cold-hearted letter! let it go, however. I have said nothing, either, of the brilliant sex; but the fact is, I am at this moment in a far more serious, and entirely new, scrape than any of the last twelve months, — and that is saying a good deal. It is unlucky we can neither live with nor without these women.

I am now thinking of regretting that, just as I have left Newstead, you reside near it. Did you ever see it? *do* — but don't tell me that you like it. If I had known of such intellectual neighbourhood, I don't think I should have quitted it. You could have come over so often, as a bachelor, — for it was a thorough bachelor's mansion — plenty of wine and such sordid sensualities — with books enough, room enough, and an air of antiquity about all (except the lasses) that would have suited you, when pensive, and served you to laugh at when in glee. I had built myself a bath and a *vault* — and now I sha'n't even be buried in it. It is odd that we can't even be certain of a *grave*, at least a particular one. I remember, when about fifteen, reading your poems there, which I can repeat almost now, — and asking all kinds of questions about the author, when I heard that he was not dead according to the preface; wondering if I should ever see him — and though, at that time, without the smallest poetical propensity myself, very much taken, as you may imagine, with that volume. Adieu — I commit you to the care of the gods — Hindoo, Scandinavian, and Hellenic!

P. S. 2d. — There is an excellent review of Grimm's *Correspondence* and

Madame de Staël in this No. of the *E[dinburgh] R[evue]*. Jeffrey, himself, was my critic last year; but this is, I believe, by another hand. I hope you are going on with your *grand coup* — pray do — or that damned Lucien Buonaparte will beat us all. I have seen much of his poem in MS., and he really surpasses every thing beneath Tasso. Hodgson is translating him *against* another bard. You and (I believe Rogers,) Scott, Gifford, and myself, are to be referred to as judges between the twain, — that is, if you accept the office. Conceive our different opinions! I think we, most of us (I am talking very impudently, you will think — us, indeed!) have a way of our own, — at least, you and Scott certainly have.

Byron.

Francis Charles Seymour Conway, Earl of Yarmouth (1777-1842), succeeded his father as second Marquis of Hertford in 1822. The colossal libertinism and patrician splendour of his life inspired Disraeli to paint him as “Monmouth” in *Coningsby*, and Thackeray as “Steyne” in *Vanity Fair*. He married, in 1798, Maria Fagniani, claimed as a daughter by George Selwyn and by “Old Q.,” and enriched by both. Yarmouth, as an intimate friend of the Regent, and the son of the Prince’s female favourite, was the butt of Moore and the Whig satirists. Byron gibes at Yarmouth’s red whiskers, which helped to gain him the name of “Red Herrings” in the *Waltz*, line 142, *note* 1. Yarmouth, like Byron, patronized the fancy, and, like him also, was a frequenter of Manton’s shooting-gallery in Davies Street; but there is no record of their being acquainted, though the house, which Byron occupied (13, Piccadilly Terrace) during his brief married life, was in the occupation of Lord Yarmouth before Byron took it from the Duchess of Devonshire.

“led an irregular life, and met a deplorable death at Doberan, a small city of the duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, on the coast of the Baltic Sea, a favourite resort in summer for bathing, gambling, *etc.* Some officers of the état-major of Bernadotte had gone to try their luck in this place of play and pleasure. They quarrelled over some louis, and a duel immediately ensued. I well remember that the Grand-Duke Paul of Mecklenburg-Schwerin told me he was there at the time, and, while walking with his tutors in the park, suddenly heard the clinking of swords in a neighbouring thicket. They ran to the place, and reached it just in time to see the head of Albert fall, cleft by one of those long and formidable sabres which were carried by the Prussian cavalry.”

The above passage is quoted from the unpublished *Souvenirs* of M. Pictet de

Sergy, given by A. Stevens in his *Life of Madame de Staël*, vol. ii. pp. 204, 205.

In the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1813, the *Giaour* was reviewed as a poem “full of spirit, character, and originality,” and producing an effect at once “powerful and pathetic.” But the reviewer considers that “energy of character and intensity of emotion... presented in combination with worthlessness and guilt,” are “most powerful corrupters and perverters of our moral nature,” and he deplores Byron’s exclusive devotion to gloomy and revolting subjects.

Jeffrey is described at considerable length by Ticknor, in a letter, dated February 8, 1814 (*Life of G. Ticknor*, vol. i. pp. 43-47):

“You are to imagine, then, before you a short, stout, little gentleman, about five and a half feet high, with a very red face, black hair, and black eyes. You are to suppose him to possess a very gay and animated countenance, and you are to see in him all the restlessness of a will-o’-wisp ... He enters a room with a countenance so satisfied, and a step so light and almost fantastic, that all your previous impressions of the dignity and severity of the *Edinburgh Review* are immediately put to flight ... It is not possible, however, to be long in his presence without understanding something of his real character, for the same promptness and assurance which mark his entrance into a room carry him at once into conversation. The moment a topic is suggested — no matter what or by whom — he comes forth, and the first thing you observe is his singular fluency,” etc., etc.

By the side of this description may be set that given of Jeffrey by Francis Horner (*Life of Jeffrey*, 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 212):

“His manner is not at first pleasing; what is worse, it is of that cast which almost irresistibly impresses upon strangers the idea of levity and superficial talents. Yet there is not any man whose real character is so much the reverse.”

The secret of his success, both as editor and critic, is that he made the *Review* the expression of the Whig character, both in its excellences and its limitations. A man of clear, discriminating mind, of cool and placid judgment, he refused to accept the existing state of things, was persuaded that it might be safely improved, saw the practical steps required, and had the courage of his convictions. He was suspicious of large principles, somewhat callous to enthusiasm or sentiment, intolerant of whatever was incapable of precise expression. His intellectual strength lay not in the possession of one great gift, but in the simultaneous exercise of several well-adjusted talents. His literary taste was correct; but it consisted rather in recognizing compliance with accepted

rules of proved utility than in the readiness to appreciate novelties of thought and treatment. Hence his criticism, though useful for his time, has not endured beyond his day. It may be doubted whether more could be expected from a man who was eminently successful in addressing a jury. "He might not know his subject, but he knew his readers" (Bagehot's *Literary Studies*, vol. i. p. 30).

Byron, believing him to have been the author of the famous article on *Hours of Idleness*, attacked him bitterly in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*; (lines 460-528). He afterwards recognized his error. *Don Juan* (Canto X. stanza xvi.) expresses his mature opinion of a critic who, whatever may have been his faults, was as absolutely honest as political prejudice would permit:

"And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over; Here's a health to 'Auld Lang Syne!'
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face — but you have acted, on the whole,
Most nobly; and I own it from my soul."

Jeffrey reviewed *Childe Harold* in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 38, art. 10; the *Giaour*, No. 42, art. 2; the *Corsair* and *Bride of Abydos*, No. 45, art. 9; Byron's *Poetry*, No. 54, art. I; *Manfred*, No. 56, art. 7; *Beppo*, No. 58, art. 2; *Marino Faliero*, No. 70, art. I; Byron's *Tragedies*, No. 72, art. 5.

Byron uses the word *scurra*, which generally means a "parasite," in its other sense of a "buffoon." *Memoirs of George Frederic Cooke, late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden*, by W. Dunlap, in 2 vols., was published in 1813

"Drunken Barnaby" was also the burden of an old ballad quoted by Haslewood:

"Barnaby, Barnaby, thou'st been drinking,
I can tell by thy nose, and thy eyes winking;
Drunk at Richmond, drunk at Dover,
Drunk at Newcastle, drunk all over.
Hey, Barnaby! tak't for a warning,
Be no more drunk, nor dry in a morning!"

“A Persian’s Heav’n is easily made —
‘Tis but black eyes and lemonade.”

323 — to John Murray

August 26, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have looked over and corrected one proof, but not so carefully (God knows if you can read it through, but I can’t) as to preclude your eye from discovering some omission of mine or *commission* of y’e Printer. If you have patience, look it over. Do you know any body who can *stop* — I mean *point-commas*, and so forth? for I am, I hear, a sad hand at your punctuation. I have, but with some difficulty, *not* added any more to this snake of a poem, which has been lengthening its rattles every month. It is now fearfully long, being more than a canto and a half of *C. H.*, which contains but 882 lines per book, with all late additions inclusive.

The last lines Hodgson likes — it is not often he does — and when he don’t, he tells me with great energy, and I fret and alter. I have thrown them in to soften the ferocity of our Infidel, and, for a dying man, have given him a good deal to say for himself.

Do you think you shall get hold of the *female* MS. you spoke of to day? if so, you will let me have a glimpse; but don’t tell our *master* (not W’s), or we shall be buffeted.

I was quite sorry to hear you say you stayed in town on my account, and I hope sincerely you did not mean so superfluous a piece of politeness.

Our *six* critiques! — they would have made half a *Quarterly* by themselves; but this is the age of criticism.

Ever yours,

B.

324 — to Thomas Moore

August 28, 1813.

Ay, my dear Moore, “there was a time” — I have heard of your tricks, when “you was campaigning at the “King of Bohemy.”

I am much mistaken if, some fine London spring, about the year 1815, that time does not come again. After all, we must end in marriage; and I can conceive nothing more delightful than such a state in the country, reading the county newspaper, etc., and kissing one's wife's maid. Seriously, I would incorporate with any woman of decent demeanour tomorrow — that is, I would a month ago, but, at present, — —

Why don't you "parody that Ode?" — Do you think I should be *tetchy*? or have you done it, and won't tell me? — You are quite right about Giamschid, and I have reduced it to a dissyllable within this half hour.

I am glad to hear you talk of Richardson, because it tells me what you won't — that you are going to beat Lucien. At least tell me how far you have proceeded. Do you think me less interested about your works, or less sincere than our friend Ruggiero? I am not — and never was. In that thing of mine, the *English Bards*, at the time when I was angry with all the world, I never "disparaged your parts," although I did not know you personally; — and have always regretted that you don't give us an *entire* work, and not sprinkle yourself in detached pieces — beautiful, I allow, and quite *alone* in our language, but still giving us a right to expect a *Shah Nameh* (is that the name?) as well as gazelles. Stick to the East; — the oracle, Staël, told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South, and West, have all been exhausted; but from the East, we have nothing but Southey's unsaleables, — and these he has contrived to spoil, by adopting only their most outrageous fictions. His personages don't interest us, and yours will. You will have no competitor; and, if you had, you ought to be glad of it. The little I have done in that way is merely a "voice in the wilderness" for you; and if it has had any success, that also will prove that the public are orientalising, and pave the path for you.

I have been thinking of a story, grafted on the amours of a Peri and a mortal — something like, only more *philanthropical* than, Cazotte's *Diable Amoureux*.

It would require a good deal of poesy, and tenderness is not my forte. For that, and other reasons, I have given up the idea, and merely suggest it to you, because, in intervals of your greater work, I think it a subject you might make much of.

If you want any more books, there is "Castellan's *Moeurs des Ottomans*," the best compendium of the kind I ever met with, in six small tomes.

I am really taking a liberty by talking in this style to my "elders and my betters;" — pardon it, and don't *Rochefoucault* my motives.

"The Ode of Horace —

‘Natis in usum lætitiæ,’ etc.;

some passages of which I told him might be parodied, in allusion to some of his late adventures:

‘Quanta laboras in Charybdi!
Digne puer meliore flammâ!’“

(Moore.)

“In his first edition of *The Giaour* he had used this word as a trisyllable — ‘Bright as the gem of Giamschid’ — but on my remarking to him, upon the authority of Richardson’s *Persian Dictionary*, that this was incorrect, he altered it to ‘Bright as the ruby of Giamschid.’ On seeing this, however, I wrote to him, ‘that, as the comparison of his heroine’s eye to a “ruby” might unluckily call up the idea of its being bloodshot, he had better change the line to “Bright as the jewel of Giamschid;”’ which he accordingly did in the following edition”

(Moore).

In the *Sháh Námeḥ*, Giamschid is the fourth sovereign of the ancient Persians, and ruled seven hundred years. His jewel was a green chrysolite, the reflection of which gives to the sky its blue-green colour. Byron probably changed to “ruby” on the authority of *Vathek* (p. 58, ed. 1856), where Beckford writes,

“Then all the riches this place contains, as well as the carbuncle of Giamschid, shall be hers.”

“I had already, singularly enough, anticipated this suggestion, by making the daughter of a Peri the heroine of one of my stories, and detailing the love adventures of her ærial parent in an episode. In acquainting Lord Byron with this circumstance, in my answer to the above letter, I added, ‘All I ask of your friendship is — not that you will abstain from Peris on my account, for that is too much to ask of human (or, at least, author’s) nature — but that, whenever you mean to pay your addresses to any of these ærial ladies, you will, at once, tell me so, frankly and instantly, and let me, at least, have my choice whether I shall be desperate enough to go on, with such a rival, or at once surrender the whole race into your hands, and take, for the future, to Antediluvians with Mr. Montgomery’“

(Moore).

“Nous nous persuadons souvent d’aimer les gens plus puissans que nous, et néanmoins c’est l’interêt seul qui produit notre amitié; nous ne nous donnons pas

à eux pour le bien que nous leur voulons faire, mais pour celui que nous en voulons recevoir.”

325 — to Thomas Moore

August — September, I mean — 1, 1813.

I send you, begging your acceptance, Castellan, and three vols. on Turkish literature, not yet looked into. The *last* I will thank you to read, extract what you want, and return in a week, as they are lent to me by that brightest of Northern constellations, Mackintosh, — amongst many other kind things into which India has warmed him; for I am sure your *home* Scotsman is of a less genial description.

Your Peri, my dear M., is sacred and inviolable; I have no idea of touching the hem of her petticoat. Your affectation of a dislike to encounter me is so flattering, that I begin to think myself a very fine fellow. But you are laughing at me — ”Stap my vitals, Tam! thou art a very impudent person;” and, if you are not laughing at me, you deserve to be laughed at. Seriously, what on earth can you, or have you, to dread from any poetical flesh breathing? It really puts me out of humour to hear you talk thus.

The Giaour I have added to a good deal; but still in foolish fragments. It contains about 1200 lines, or rather more — now printing. You will allow me to send you a copy. You delight me much by telling me that I am in your good graces, and more particularly as to temper; for, unluckily, I have the reputation of a very bad one. But they say the devil is amusing when pleased, and I must have been more venomous than the old serpent, to have hissed or stung in your company. It may be, and would appear to a third person, an incredible thing, but I know *you* will believe me when I say, that I am as anxious for your success as one human being can be for another’s, — as much as if I had never scribbled a line. Surely the field of fame is wide enough for all; and if it were not, I would not willingly rob my neighbour of a rood of it. Now you have a pretty property of some thousand acres there, and when you have passed your present Inclosure Bill, your income will be doubled, (there’s a metaphor, worthy of a Templar, namely, pert and low,) while my wild common is too remote to incommode you, and quite incapable of such fertility. I send you (which return per post, as the printer would say) a curious letter from a friend of mine, which will let you into the origin of *The Giaour*. Write soon.

Ever, dear Moore, yours most entirely, *etc.*

P.S. — This letter was written to me on account of a *different story* circulated

by some gentlewomen of our acquaintance, a little too close to the text. The part erased contained merely some Turkish names, and circumstantial evidence of the girl's detection, not very important or decorous.

“Yes, his manner was cold; his shake of the hand came under the genus ‘mortmain;’ but his heart was overflowing with benevolence”

(Lady Holland's *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, 4th edition, vol. i. p. 440).

Albany, Monday, August 31, 1813.

“My Dear Byron, — You have requested me to tell you all that I heard at Athens about the affair of that girl who was so near being put an end to while you were there; you have asked me to remember every circumstance, in the remotest degree relating to it, which I heard. In compliance with your wishes, I write to you all I heard, and I cannot imagine it to be very far from the fact, as the circumstances happened only a day or two before I arrived at Athens, and, consequently, was a matter of common conversation at the time.

“The new governor, unaccustomed to have the same intercourse with the Christians as his predecessor, had, of course, the barbarous Turkish ideas with regard to women. In consequence, and in compliance with the strict letter of the Mohammedan law, he ordered this girl to be sewed up in a sack, and thrown into the sea — as is, indeed, quite customary at Constantinople. As you were returning from bathing in the Piræus, you met the procession going down to execute the sentence of the Waywode on this unhappy girl. Report continues to say, that on finding out what the object of their journey was, and who was the miserable sufferer, you immediately interfered; and on some delay in obeying your orders, you were obliged to inform the leader of the escort that force should make him comply; that, on further hesitation, you drew a pistol, and told him, that if he did not immediately obey your orders, and come back with you to the Aga's house, you would shoot him dead. On this the man turned about and went with you to the governor's house; here you succeeded, partly by personal threats, and partly by bribery and entreaty, in procuring her pardon, on condition of her leaving Athens. I was told that you then conveyed her in safety to the convent, and despatched her off at night to Thebes, where she found a safe asylum. Such is the story I heard, as nearly as I can recollect it at present. Should you wish to ask me any further questions about it, I shall be very ready and willing to answer them.

I remain, my dear Byron,

Yours very sincerely,
Sligo.

326 — to James Wedderburn Webster

September 2nd, 1813.

My dear Webster, — You are just the same generous and I fear careless gentleman of the years of *indifferent* memory 1806 — but I must not burthen you with my entire household. Joe is, I believe, necessary for the present as a fixture, to keep possession till every thing is arranged; and were it otherwise, you don't know what a perplexity he would prove — honest and faithful, but fearfully superannuated: now *this* I ought and do bear, but as he has not been fifty years in your family, it would be rather hard to convert your mansion into a hospital for decayed domestics. Rushton is, or may be made useful, and I am less *compunctious* on his account.

“Will I be Godfather?”

Yea, verily! I believe it is the only species of parentage I shall ever encounter, for all my acquaintance, Powerscourt, Jocelyn, yourself, Delawarr, Stanhope, with a long list of happy *etceteras*, are married; most of them my juniors too, and I as single and likely to remain so as, nay more than, if I were seventy.

If it is a *girl* why not also? Georgina, or even *Byron* will make a classical name for a spinster, if Mr. Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* is any authority in your estimation.

My ship is not settled. My passage in the *Boyne* was only for *one* Servant, and would not do, of course. You ask after the expense, a question no less interesting to the married than the single. Unless things are much altered, no establishment in the Mediterranean Countries could amount to the quarter of the expenditure requisite in England for the same or an inferior household.

I am interrupted, and have only time to offer my best thanks for all your good wishes and intentions, and to beg you will believe me,

Equally yours ever,

B.

P.S. — Rushton shall be sent on Saturday next.

“almost chuckled with joy or irony,” and said, “Well, I cautioned you, and told you that my name would almost damn any thing or creature.”

(MS. note by Wedderburn Webster.)

327 — to Thomas Moore

Sept. 5, 1813.

You need not tie yourself down to a day with Toderini, but send him at your leisure, having anatomised him into such annotations as you want; I do not believe that he has ever undergone that process before, which is the best reason for not sparing him now.

Rogers has returned to town, but not yet recovered of the *Quarterly*. What fellows these reviewers are! “these bugs do fear us all.”

They made you fight, and me (the milkiest of men) a satirist, and will end by making Rogers madder than Ajax. I have been reading *Memory* again, the other day, and *Hope* together, and retain all my preference of the former.

His elegance is really wonderful — there is no such thing as a vulgar line in his book.

What say you to Buonaparte? Remember, I back him against the field, barring catalepsy and the Elements. Nay, I almost wish him success against all countries but this, — were it only to choke the *Morning Post*, and his undutiful father-in-law, with that rebellious bastard of Scandinavian adoption, Bernadotte. Rogers wants me to go with him on a crusade to the Lakes, and to besiege you on our way. This last is a great temptation, but I fear it will not be in my power, unless you would go on with one of us somewhere — no matter where. It is too late for Matlock, but we might hit upon some scheme, high life or low, — the last would be much the best for amusement. I am so sick of the other, that I quite sigh for a cider-cellar, or a cruise in a smuggler’s sloop.

You cannot wish more than I do that the Fates were a little more accommodating to our parallel lines, which prolong *ad infinitum* without coming a jot nearer. I almost wish I were married, too — which is saying much. All my friends, seniors and juniors, are in for it, and ask me to be godfather, — the only species of parentage which, I believe, will ever come to my share in a lawful way; and, in an unlawful one, by the blessing of Lucina, we can never be certain, — though the parish may. I suppose I shall hear from you tomorrow. If not, this goes as it is; but I leave room for a P.S., in case any thing requires an answer.

Ever, *etc.*

No letter — *n’importe*. Rogers thinks the *Quarterly* will be at *me* this time; if so, it shall be a war of extermination — no *quarter*. From the youngest devil

down to the oldest woman of that review, all shall perish by one fatal lampoon. The ties of nature shall be torn asunder, for I will not even spare my bookseller; nay, if one were to include readers also, all the better.

“tavern continued to be frequented by young men, and ‘much in vogue for devilled kidneys, oysters, and Welch rabbits, cigars, “goes” of brandy, and great supplies of London stout’ (also for comic songs), till it was absorbed in the extensions of the Adelphi Theatre.”

328 — to Thomas Moore.

September 8, 1813.

I am sorry to see Toderini again so soon, for fear your scrupulous conscience should have prevented you from fully availing yourself of his spoils. By this coach I send you a copy of that awful pamphlet *The Giaour*, which has never procured me half so high a compliment as your modest alarm. You will (if inclined in an evening) perceive that I have added much in quantity, — a circumstance which may truly diminish your modesty upon the subject.

You stand certainly in great need of a “lift” with Mackintosh. My dear Moore, you strangely under-rate yourself. I should conceive it an affectation in any other; but I think I know you well enough to believe that you don’t know your own value. However, ‘tis a fault that generally mends; and, in your case, it really ought. I have heard him speak of you as highly as your wife could wish; and enough to give all your friends the jaundice.

Yesterday I had a letter from *Ali Pacha!* brought by Dr. Holland, who is just returned from Albania. It is in Latin, and begins “Excellentissime *nec non* Carissime,” and ends about a gun he wants made for him; — it is signed “Ali Vizir.” What do you think he has been about? H. tells me that, last spring, he took a hostile town, where, forty-two years ago, his mother and sisters were treated as Miss Cunigunde was by the Bulgarian cavalry. He takes the town, selects all the survivors of this exploit — children, grandchildren, *etc.* to the tune of six hundred, and has them shot before his face. Recollect, he spared the rest of the city, and confined himself to the Tarquin pedigree, — which is more than I would. So much for “dearest friend.”

“On ne vous a done pas violé? on ne vous a point fendu le ventre, comme le philosophe Pangloss me l’avait assuré? Si fait, dit la belle Cunégonde; mais on ne meurt pas toujours de ces deux accidents.”

329 — to Thomas Moore

Sept. 9, 1813.

I write to you from Mr. Murray's, and I may say, from Murray, who, if you are not predisposed in favour of any other publisher, would be happy to treat with you, at a fitting time, for your work. I can safely recommend him as fair, liberal, and attentive, and certainly, in point of reputation, he stands among the first of "the trade." I am sure he would do you justice. I have written to you so much lately, that you will be glad to see so little now.

Ever, etc., etc.

330 — to James Wedderburn Webster

September 15th, 1813.

My dear Webster, — I shall not resist your second invitation, and shortly after the receipt of this you may expect me. You will excuse me from the races. As a guest I have no "antipathies" and few preferences.... You won't mind, however, my *not* dining with you — every day at least. When we meet, we can talk over our respective plans: mine is very short and simple; viz. to sail when I can get a passage. If I remained in England I should live in the Country, and of course in the vicinity of those whom I knew would be most agreeable.

I did not know that Jack's graven image was at Newstead. If it be, pray transfer it to Aston. It is my hope to see you so shortly, tomorrow or next day, that I will not now trouble you with my speculations.

Ever yours very faithfully,

Byron.

P.S. — I don't know how I came to sign myself with the "i." It is the old spelling, and I sometimes slip into it. When I say I can't *dine* with you, I mean that sometimes I don't dine at all. Of course, when I do, I conform to all hours and domestic arrangements.

331 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

[Wednesday], Sept'r. 15th, 1813.

My dear Augusta, — I joined my friend Scrope about 8, and before eleven we had swallowed six bottles of his burgundy and Claret, which left him very unwell and me rather feverish; we were *tête à tête*. I remained with him next day and set off last night for London, which I reached at three in the morning. Tonight I shall leave it again, perhaps for Aston or Newstead. I have not yet determined, nor does it much matter. As you perhaps care more on the subject than I do, I will tell you when I know myself.

When my departure is arranged, and I can get this long-evaded passage, you will be able to tell me whether I am to expect a visit or not, and I can come for or meet you as you think best. If you write, address to Bennet Street.

Yours very truly,

B.

332 — to John Murray

Sept. 15, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Will you pray enquire after any ship with a convoy *taking passengers* and get me one if possible? I mean not in a ship of war, but anything that may be *paid* for. I have a friend and 3 servants — Gibraltar or Minorca — or Zante.

Yours ever,

B.

333 — to James Wedderburn Webster

Stilton, September 25th, 1813.

My Dear W., — Thus far can I “report progress,” and as a solid token of my remembrance I send you a *cheese* of 13 lbs. to enable your digestion to go through the race week. It will go to night; pray let your retainers enquire after it. The date of this letter will account for so homely a present. On my arrival in town I will write more on our different concerns. In the mean time I wish you and yours all the gratification on Doncaster you can wish for yourselves. My love to the faithless Nettle (who I dare say is *wronging* me during my absence), and my best Compliments to all in your house who will receive them.

Ever, dear W., yours truly,

B.

334 — to Sir James Mackintosh

Sept. 27, 1813.

Dear Sir James, — I was to have left London on Friday, but will certainly remain a day longer (and believe I *would a year*) to have the honour of meeting you. My best respects to Lady Mackintosh.

Ever your obliged and faithful servant,

Byron.

335 — to Thomas Moore

September 27, 1813.

Thomas Moore, — (Thou wilt never be called “*true* Thomas,” like he of Ercildoune,) why don’t you write to me? — as you won’t, I must. I was near you at Aston the other day, and hope I soon shall be again. If so, you must and shall meet me, and go to Matlock and elsewhere, and take what, in *flash* dialect, is poetically termed “a lark,” with Rogers and me for accomplices. Yesterday, at Holland House, I was introduced to Southey — the best-looking bard I have seen for some time. To have that poet’s head and shoulders, I would almost have written his Sapphics. He is certainly a prepossessing person to look on, and a man of talent, and all that, and — *there* is his eulogy.

— — read me *part* of a letter from you. By the foot of Pharaoh, I believe there was abuse, for he stopped short, so he did, after a fine saying about our correspondence, and *looked* — I wish I could revenge myself by attacking you, or by telling you that I have *had* to defend you — an agreeable way which one’s friends have of recommending themselves by saying — “Ay, ay, *I* gave it Mr. Such-a-one for what he said about your being a plagiary, and a rake, and so on.” But do you know that you are one of the very few whom I never have the satisfaction of hearing abused, but the reverse; — and do you suppose I will forgive *that*?

I have been in the country, and ran away from the Doncaster races. It is odd, — I was a visitor in the same house which came to my sire as a residence with Lady Carmarthen (with whom he adulterated before his majority — by the by, remember *she* was not my mamma), — and they thrust me into an old room,

with a nauseous picture over the chimney, which I should suppose my papa regarded with due respect, and which, inheriting the family taste, I looked upon with great satisfaction. I stayed a week with the family, and behaved very well — though the lady of the house is young, and religious, and pretty, and the master is my particular friend. I felt no wish for any thing but a poodle dog, which they kindly gave me. Now, for a man of my courses not even to have *coveted*, is a sign of great amendment. Pray pardon all this nonsense, and don't "snub me when I'm in spirits."

Ever yours,

BN.

Here's an impromptu for you by a "person of quality," written last week, on being reproached for low spirits:

When from the heart where Sorrow sits,
Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
And clouds the brow, or fills the eye:
Heed not that gloom, which soon shall sink;
My Thoughts their dungeon know too well —
Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
And bleed within their silent cell.

"I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then — snubbing this way when I'm in spirits."

336 — to John Murray

Sept. 29, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Pray suspend the *proofs* for I am bitten again and have quantities for other parts of *The Giaour*.

Yours ever,

B.

P. S. — You shall have these in the course of the day.

337 — to James Wedderburn Webster

September 30th, 1813.

My dear Webster, — Thanks for your letter. I had answered it by *anticipation* last night, and this is but a postscript to my reply. My yesterday's contained some advice, which I now see you don't want, and hope you never will.

So! Petersham has not joined you. I pity the poor women. No one can properly repair such a deficiency; but rather than such a chasm should be left utterly unfathomable, I, even I, the most awkward of attendants and deplorable of dangles, would have been of your forlorn hope, on this expedition. Nothing but business, and the notion of my being utterly superfluous in so numerous a party, would have induced me to resign so soon my quiet apartments never interrupted but by the sound, or the more harmonious barking of Nettle, and clashing of billiard balls.

On Sunday I shall leave town and mean to join you immediately. I have not yet had my sister's answer to Lady Frances's very kind invitation, but expect it tomorrow. Pray assure Lady Frances that I never can forget the obligation conferred upon me in this respect, and I trust that even Lady Catherine will, in this instance, not question my "stability."

I yesterday wrote you rather a long tirade about La Comtesse, but you seem in no immediate peril; I will therefore burn it. Yet I don't know why I should, as you may relapse: it shall e'en go.

I have been passing my time with Rogers and Sir James Mackintosh; and once at Holland House I met Southey; he is a person of very *epic* appearance, and has a fine head — as far as the outside goes, and wants nothing but taste to make the inside equally attractive.

Ever, my dear W., yours,

Biron.

P.S. — I read your letter thus: "the Countess is *miserable*" instead of which it is "*inexorable*" a very different thing. The best way is to let her alone; she must be a *diablesse* by what you told me. You have probably not *bid* high enough. Now you are not, perhaps, of my opinion; but I would not give the tithe of a Birmingham farthing for a woman who could or would be purchased, nor indeed for any woman *quoad mere woman*; that is to say, unless I loved her for something more than her sex. If she *loves*, a little *pique* is not amiss, nor even if she don't; the next thing to a woman's *love* in a man's favour is her *hatred*, — a seeming paradox but true. Get them once out of *indifference* and circumstance, and their passions will do wonders for a *dasher* which I suppose you are, though I seldom had the impudence or patience to follow them up.

“making a particular sort of blacking, which he said would eventually supersede every other.”

His snuff-mixture was famous among tobacconists, and he gave his name to a fashionable great-coat. In his collection of snuff-boxes, one of the finest in England, he was supposed to have a box for every day in the year. Gronow (*ibid.*)

“heard him, on the occasion of a delightful old light-blue Sèvres box he was using being admired, say, in his lisping way, ‘Yes, it is a nice summer box, but would not do for winter wear.’“

Lord Petersham, who never went out of doors before 6 p.m., was celebrated for his brown carriages, brown horses, brown harness, and brown liveries.

338 — to Francis Hodgson

October 1, 1813.

My Dear H., — I leave town again for Aston on Sunday, but have messages for you. Lord Holland desired me repeatedly to bring you; he wants to know you much, and begged me to say so: you will like him. I had an invitation for you to dinner there this last Sunday, and Rogers is perpetually screaming because you don’t call, and wanted you also to dine with him on Wednesday last. Yesterday we had Curran there — who is beyond all conception! and Mackintosh and the wits are to be seen at H. H. constantly, so that I think you would like their society. I will be a judge between you and the attorney. So B[utler] may mention me to Lucien if he still adheres to his opinion. Pray let Rogers be one; he has the best taste extant. Bland’s nuptials delight me; if I had the least hand in bringing them about it will be a subject of selfish satisfaction to me these three weeks. Desire Drury — if he loves me — to kick Dwyer thrice for frightening my horses with his flame-coloured whiskers last July. Let the kicks be hard, *etc.*

339 — to Thomas Moore

October 2, 1813.

You have not answered some six letters of mine. This, therefore, is my penultimate. I will write to you once more, but, after that — I swear by all the saints — I am silent and supercilious. I have met Curran at Holland House — he beats every body; — his imagination is beyond human, and his humour (it is difficult to define what is wit) perfect. Then he has fifty faces, and twice as

many voices, when he mimics — I never met his equal. Now, were I a woman, and eke a virgin, that is the man I should make my Scamander.

He is quite fascinating. Remember, I have met him but once; and you, who have known him long, may probably deduct from my panegyric. I almost fear to meet him again, lest the impression should be lowered. He talked a great deal about you — a theme never tiresome to me, nor any body else that I know. What a variety of expression he conjures into that naturally not very fine countenance of his! He absolutely changes it entirely. I have done — for I can't describe him, and you know him. On Sunday I return to Aston, where I shall not be far from you. Perhaps I shall hear from you in the mean time. Good night.

Saturday morn. — Your letter has cancelled all my anxieties. I did *not suspect* you in *earnest*. Modest again! Because I don't do a very shabby thing, it seems, I "don't fear your competition." If it were reduced to an alternative of preference, I *should* dread you, as much as Satan does Michael. But is there not room enough in our respective regions? Go on — it will soon be my turn to forgive. To-day I dine with Mackintosh and Mrs. *Stale* — as John Bull may be pleased to denominate Corinne — whom I saw last night, at Covent Garden, yawning over the humour of Falstaff.

The reputation of "gloom," if one's friends are not included in the *reputants*, is of great service; as it saves one from a legion of impertinents, in the shape of common-place acquaintance. But thou know'st I can be a right merry and conceited fellow, and rarely *larmoyant*. Murray shall reinstate your line forthwith.

I believe the blunder in the motto was mine; — and yet I have, in general, a memory for you, and am sure it was rightly printed at first.

I do "blush" very often, if I may believe Ladies H. and M.; — but luckily, at present, no one sees me. Adieu.

In Byron's *Detached Thoughts* (1821) occurs the following passage:

"I was much struck with the simplicity of Grattan's manners in private life. They were odd, but they were natural. Curran used to take him off, bowing to the very ground, and 'thanking God that he had no peculiarities of gesture or appearance,' in a way irresistibly ludicrous. Rogers used to call him a 'Sentimental Harlequin;' but Rogers backbites everybody, and Curran, who used to quiz his great friend Godwin to his very face, would hardly respect a fair mark of mimicry in another. To be sure, Curran *was* admirable! to hear his description of the examination of an Irish witness was next to hearing his own speeches; the latter I never heard, but I have the former."

Elsewhere (*ibid.*) he returns to the subject:

“Curran! Curran’s the man who struck me most — such imagination! There never was anything like it, that ever I saw or heard of. His *published* life — his published speeches — give you no idea of the man; none at all. He was a *Machine* of imagination, as some one said that Piron was an ‘Epigrammatic Machine.’ I did not see a great deal of Curran, — only in 1813; but I met him at home (for he used to call on me), and in society, at Mackintosh’s, Holland House, etc., etc. And he was wonderful, even to me, who had seen many remarkable men of the time.”

The following notes on this passage are in the handwriting of Walter Scott:

“When Mathews first began to imitate Curran in Dublin — in society, I mean, — Curran sent for him and said, the moment he entered the room, ‘Mr. Mathews, you are a first-rate artist, and, since you are to do my picture, pray allow me to give you a sitting.’ Everyone knows how admirably Mathews succeeded in furnishing at last the portraiture begun under these circumstances. No one was more aware of the truth than Curran himself. In his latter and feeble days, he was riding in Hyde Park one morning, bowed down over the saddle and bitterly dejected in his air. Mathews happened to observe and saluted him. Curran stopped his horse for a moment, squeezed Charles by the hand, and said in that deep whisper which the comedian so exquisitely mimics, ‘Don’t speak to me, my dear Mathews; you are the only Curran now!’”

“Did you know Curran?” asked Byron of Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, p. 176); “he was the most wonderful person I ever saw. In him was combined an imagination the most brilliant and profound, with a flexibility and wit that would have justified the observation applied to — — , that his heart was in his head.”

Moore (*Journal*, etc., vol. i. p. 40) quotes a couplet by Mrs. Battier upon Curran, which “commemorates in a small compass two of his most striking peculiarities, namely, his very unprepossessing personal appearance, and his great success, notwithstanding, in pursuits of gallantry...:

“For though his monkey face might fail to woo her,
Yet, ah! his monkey tricks would quite undo her.”

“It is the custom of maidens, on the eve of their marriage, to wash in the waters of the Scamander, and then to utter this almost sacred formula,

‘Take, O Scamander, my virginity’

“The motto to *The Giaour*:

One fatal remembrance — one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes,’ *etc.*

which is taken from one of the *Irish Melodies*, had been quoted by him incorrectly in the first editions of the poem” (Moore).

340 — to John Murray

Stilton, Oct. 3, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have just recollected an alteration you may make in the proof to be sent to Aston. — Among the lines on Hassan’s Serai, not far from the beginning, is this:

Unmeet for Solitude to share.

Now to share implies more than *one*, and Solitude is a single gentlewoman; it must be thus:

For many a gilded chamber’s there,
Which Solitude might well forbear;

and so on. — My address is Aston Hall, Rotherham. Will you adopt this correction? and pray accept a cheese from me for your trouble.

Ever yours,

B.

P. S. — I leave this to your discretion; if any body thinks the old line a good one or the cheese a bad one, don’t accept either. But, in that case, the word *share* is repeated soon after in the line:

To share the Master’s “bread and salt;”

and must be altered to:

To break the Master’s bread and salt.

This is not so well, though — confound it! If the old line stands, let the other run thus:

Nor there will weary traveller halt,
To bless the sacred “bread and salt.”

Note. — To partake of food — to break bread and taste salt with your host —

ensures the safety of the guest; even though an enemy, his person from that moment becomes sacred.

There is another additional note sent yesterday — on the Priest in the Confessional.

341 — to John Hanson

Nottingham, Octr. 10th, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I am disposed to advance a loan of £1000 to James Webster Wedderburne Webster, Esqre., of Aston Hall, York County, and request you will address to me *there a bond and judgement* to be signed by the said as soon as possible. Of Claughton's payments I know nothing further, and the demands on myself I know also; but W. is a very old friend of mine, and a man of property, and, as I can command the money, he shall have it. I do not at all wish to inconvenience you, and I also know that, when we balance accounts, it will be much in your favour; but if you could replace the sum at Hoare's from my advance of two thousand eight hundred in July, it would be a favour; or, still better, if C. makes further payments, which will render it unnecessary. Don't let the first part of the last sentence embarrass you at all; the last part about Claughton I would wish you to attend to. I have written this day — about his opening the cellar.

Pray send the bond and judgement to Aston as directed.

Ever, dear Sir,

B.

P. S. — Many, many thanks for your kind invitation; but it was too late. I was in this county before it arrived. My best remembrances to Mrs. H. and all the family.

342 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

[Sunday], October 10th, 1813.

My dearest Augusta, — I have only time to say that I am not in the least angry, and that my silence has merely arisen from several circumstances which I cannot now detail. I trust you are better, and will continue *best*. Ever, my dearest,

Yours,

B.

343 — to John Murray

Oct. 12, 1813.

Dear Sir, — You must look *The Giaour* again over carefully; there are a few lapses, particularly in the last page, — "I *know* 'twas false; she could not die;" it was, and ought to be — "*knew*." Pray observe this and similar mistakes.

I have received and read the *British Review*.

I really think the writer in most parts very right. The only mortifying thing is the accusation of imitation.

Crabbe's passage I never saw; and Scott I no further meant to follow than in his *lyric* measure, which is Gray's, Milton's, and any one's who likes it. *The Giaour* is certainly a bad character, but not dangerous: and I think his fate and his feelings will meet with few proselytes. I shall be very glad to hear from or of you, when you please; but don't put yourself out of your way on my account.

Yours ever,

B.

"Those are like wax — apply them to the fire,
Melting, they take th' impressions you desire:
Easy to mould, and fashion as you please,
And again moulded with an equal ease:
Like smelted iron these the forms retain;
But, once impress'd, will never melt again."

344 — to the Hon. Augusta Leigh

(Monday), Nov'r. 8th, 1813.

My Dearest Augusta, — I have only time to say that I shall write tomorrow, and that my present and long silence has been occasioned by a thousand things (with which *you* are not concerned). It is not L'y C. nor O.; but perhaps you may *guess*, and, if you do, do not tell.

You do not know what mischief your being with me might have prevented. You shall hear from me tomorrow; in the mean time don't be alarmed. I am in *no immediate* peril.

Believe me, ever yours,
B.

345 — to John Murray

(Nov. 12, 1813. With first proof of *Bride of Abydos* correct.)

Dear Sir, — I have looked over — corrected — and added — *all* of which you may do too — at least *certainly* the *two* first. There is more MS. *within*. Let me know tomorrow at your leisure *how* and *when* we shall proceed! It looks better than I thought at first. *Look over* again. I suspect some omissions on my part and on the printers’.

Yours ever,

B.

Always print “een” “even.” I utterly abhor “een” — if it must be contracted, be it “ev’n.”

346 — to William Gifford

November 12, 1813.

My Dear Sir, — I hope you will consider, when I venture on any request, that it is the reverse of a certain Dedication, and is addressed, *not* to “The Editor of the *Quarterly Review*” but to Mr. Gifford. You will understand this, and on that point I need trouble you no farther.

You have been good enough to look at a thing of mine in MS. — a Turkish story, and I should feel gratified if you would do it the same favour in its probationary state of printing. It was written, I cannot say for amusement, nor “obliged by hunger and request of friends,” but in a state of mind, from circumstances which occasionally occur to “us youth,” that rendered it necessary for me to apply my mind to something, any thing but reality; and under this not very brilliant inspiration it was composed. Being done, and having at least diverted me from myself, I thought you would not perhaps be offended if Mr. Murray forwarded it to you. He has done so, and to apologise for his doing so a second time is the object of my present letter.

I beg you will *not* send me any answer. I assure you very sincerely I know your time to be occupied, and it is enough, more than enough, if you read; you are not to be bored with the fatigue of answers.

A word to Mr. Murray will be sufficient, and send it either to the flames or

“A hundred hawkers’ load,
On wings of wind to fly or fall abroad.”

It deserves no better than the first, as the work of a week, and scribbled *stans pede in uno*, (by the by, the only foot I have to stand on); and I promise never to trouble you again under forty cantos, and a voyage between each. Believe me ever,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

Byron.

347 — to John Murray

Nov. 12, 1813.

Two friends of mine (Mr. Rogers and Mr. Sharpe) have advised me not to risk at present any single publication separately, for various reasons. As they have not seen the one in question, they can have no bias for or against the merits (if it has any) or the faults of the present subject of our conversation. You say all the last of *The Giaour* are gone — at least out of your hands. Now, if you think of publishing any new edition with the last additions which have not yet been before the reader (I mean distinct from the two-volume publication), we can add “*The Bride of Abydos*,” which will thus steal quietly into the world: if liked, we can then throw off some copies for the purchasers of former “*Giaours*,” and, if not, I can omit it in any future publication. What think you? I really am no judge of those things; and, with all my natural partiality for one’s own productions, I would rather follow any one’s judgment than my own.

P. S. — Pray let me have the proofs. I sent *all* to-night. I have some alterations that I have thought of that I wish to make speedily. I hope the proof will be on separate pages, and not all huddled together on a mile-long, ballad-singing sheet, as those of *The Giaour* sometimes are: for then I can’t read them distinctly.

“A Turkish tale I shall unfold,
A sweeter tale was never told;

But then the facts, I must allow,
Are in the east not common now;
Tho' in the 'olden time,' the scene
My Goaour (*sic*) describes had often been.
What is the cause! Perhaps the fair
Are now more cautious than they were;
Perhaps the Christians not so bold,
So enterprising as of old.
No matter what the cause may be,
It is a subject fit for me.

"Take my disjointed fragments then,
The offspring of a willing pen.
And give them to the public, pray,
On or before the month of May.
Yes, my disjointed fragments take,
But do not ask *how much they'll make*.
Perhaps not fifty pages — well,
I in a little space can tell
Th' adventures of an infidel;
Of *quantity* I never boast,
For *quality*'s, approved of most.

"It is a handsome sum to touch,
Induces authors to write much;
But in this much, alas! my friend,
How little is there to commend.
So, Mr. M — — y, I disdain,
To sacrifice my muse for gain.
I wish it to be understood,
The little which I write is good.

"I do not like the quarto size,
Th' octavo, therefore, I advise.
Then do not, Mr. M — — y, fail,
To publish this, my Turkish Tale;
For tho' the volume may be thin,
A thousand readers it will win;
And when my pages they explore,

They'll gladly read them o'er and o'er;
And all the ladies, I engage,
With tears will moisten every page."

"Mr. Canning returned the poem to-day with very warm expressions of delight. I told him your delicacy as to separate publication, of which he said you should remove every apprehension."

348 — to John Murray

Nov. 13, 1813.

Will you forward the letter to Mr. Gifford with the proof? There is an alteration I may make in Zuleika's speech, in second canto (the only one of *hers* in that canto). It is now thus:

And curse — if I could curse — the day.
It must be:

And mourn — I dare not curse — the day,
That saw my solitary birth, etc., *etc.*

Ever yours,
B.

In the last MS. lines sent, instead of "living heart," correct to "quivering heart."
It is in line 9th of the MS. passage.
Ever yours again,

349 — to John Murray

Alteration of a line in Canto 2nd. Instead of:
And tints tomorrow with a *fancied* ray
Print:
And tints tomorrow with *prophetic* ray.

The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
And tints tomorrow with prophetic ray;

Or,
And {gilds/tints} the hope of Morning with its ray;
Or,
And gilds tomorrow's hope with heavenly ray.
Dear Sir, — I wish you would ask Mr. G. which of them is best, or rather *not*
worst.
Ever yours, B.
You can send the request contained in this at the same time with the *revise*,
after I have seen the *said revise*.

350 — to John Murray

Nov. 13, 1813.

Certainly. Do you suppose that no one but the Galileans are acquainted with *Adam*, and *Eve*, and *Cain*, and *Noah*? — Surely, I might have had Solomon, and Abraham, and David, and even Moses, or the other. When you know that *Zuleika* is the *Persian poetical* name for *Potiphar's* wife, on whom and Joseph there is a long poem in the Persian, this will not surprise you. If you want authority look at Jones, D'Herbelot, *Vathek*, or the notes to the *Arabian Nights*; and, if you think it necessary, model this into a *note*.

Alter, in the inscription, “the most affectionate respect,” to “with every sentiment of regard and respect,”

“Some doubt had been expressed by Murray as to the propriety of his putting the name of Cain into the mouth of a Mussulman.”
(Moore).

351 — to John Murray

Nov. 14, 1813.

I send you a note for the *ignorant*, but I really wonder at finding *you* among them. I don't care one lump of Sugar for my *poetry*; but for my *costume*, and my *correctness* on those points (of which I think the *funeral* was a proof), I will combat lustily.

Yours ever,
B.

352 — to John Murray

November 15, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Mr. Hodgson has looked over and *stopped*, or rather *pointed*, this revise, which must be the one to print from. He has also made some suggestions, with most of which I have complied, as he has always, for these ten years, been a very sincere, and by no means (at times) flattering critic of mine. *He* likes it (you will think *flatteringly*, in this instance) better than *The Giaour*, but doubts (and so do I) its being so popular; but, contrary to some others, advises a separate publication. On this we can easily decide. I confess I like the *double* form better. Hodgson says, it is *better versified* than any of the others; which is odd, if true, as it has cost me less time (though more *hours* at a time) than any attempt I ever made.

Yours ever, B.

P. S. — Do attend to the punctuation: I can't, for I don't know a comma — at least where to place one.

That Tory of a printer has omitted two lines of the opening, and *perhaps more*, which were in the MS. Will you, pray, give him a hint of accuracy? I have reinserted the 2, but they were in the manuscript, I can swear.

353 — to John Murray

November 17, 1813.

My Dear Sir, — That you and I may distinctly understand each other on a subject, which, like “the dreadful reckoning when men smile no more,” makes conversation not very pleasant, I think it as well to *write* a few lines on the topic. — Before I left town for Yorkshire, you said that you were ready and willing to give five hundred guineas for the copyright of *The Giaour*; and my answer was — from which I do not mean to recede — that we would discuss the point at Christmas. The new story may or may not succeed; the probability, under present circumstances, seems to be, that it may at least pay its expences — but even that remains to be proved, and till it is proved one way or the other, we will say nothing about it. Thus then be it: I will postpone all arrangement about it, and *The Giaour* also, till Easter, 1814; and you shall then, according to your own notions of fairness, make your own offer for the two. At the same time, I do not rate the last in my own estimation at half *The Giaour*; and according to your own

notions of its worth and its success within the time mentioned, be the addition or deduction to or from whatever sum may be your proposal for the first, which has already had its success.

My account with you since my last payment (which I believe cleared it off within five pounds) I presume has not *much* increased — but whatever it is have the goodness to send it to me — that I may at least meet you on even terms.

The pictures of Phillips I consider as *mine*, all three; and the one (not the Arnaut) of the two best is much at *your service*, if you will accept it as a present, from Yours very truly, **Biron**.

P. S. — The expence of engraving from the miniature send me in my account, as it was destroyed by my desire; and have the goodness to burn that detestable print from it immediately.

“So comes a reckoning when the banquet’s o’er,
The dreadful reckoning, and men smile no more.”

“I restore the *Giaour* to your Lordship entirely, and for *it*, the *Bride of Abydos*, and the miscellaneous poems intended to fill up the volume of the small edition, I beg leave to offer you the sum of One Thousand Guineas, and I shall be happy if you perceive that my estimation of your talents in my character of a man of business is not much under my admiration of them as a man.”

354 — to John Murray

November 20, 1813.

More work for the Row. I am doing my best to beat “*The Giaour*” — *no* difficult task for any one but the author. Yours truly,
B.

355 — to John Murray

November 22, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have no time to *cross-investigate*, but I believe and hope all is right. I care less than you will believe about its success, but I can't survive a single *misprint*; it *choaks* me to see words misused by the Printers. Pray look over, in case of some eyesore escaping me. Ever yours, B.

P. S. — Send the earliest copies to Mr. Frere, Mr. Canning, Mr. Heber, Mr. Gifford, Lord Holland, Lady Melbourne (Whitehall), Lady C. L. (Brockton), Mr. Hodgson (Cambridge), Mr. Merivale, Mr. Ward, from the author.

356 — to John Murray

November 23, 1813.

Dear Sir, — You wanted some *reflections*, and I send you *per Selim* (see his speech in Canto 2d, page 46.), eighteen lines in decent couplets, of a pensive, if not an *ethical* tendency. One more revise — *poz.* the *last*, if decently done — at any rate the *penultimate*. Mr. Canning's approbation (*if* he did approve) I need not say makes me proud.

As to printing, print as you will and how you will — by itself, if you like; but let me have a few copies in *sheets*.

Ever yours,
B.

“I received the books, and, among them, *The Bride of Abydos*. It is very, very beautiful. Lord Byron (when I met him, one day, at dinner at Mr. Ward's) was so kind as to promise to give me a copy of it. I mention this, not to save my purchase, but because I should be really flattered by the present. I can now say that I have read enough of *Mad. de Staël* to be highly pleased and instructed by her. The second volume delights me particularly. I have not yet finished the third, but am taking it with me on my journey to Liverpool.”

357 — to John Murray

November 24, 1813.

You must pardon me once more, as it is all for your good: it must be thus: He makes a Solitude, and calls it Peace.

“*Makes*” is closer to the passage of Tacitus, from which the line is taken, and is, besides, a stronger word than “*leaves*.”

Mark where his carnage and his conquests cease —
He makes a Solitude, and calls it — peace.

You will perceive that the sense is now clearer, the “*He*” refers to “*Man*” in the preceding couplet.

Yours ever,
B.

“*Solitudinem faciunt — pacem appellant.*”
Tacitus, *Agricola*, 30.

358 — to John Murray

November 27, 1813.

Dear Sir, — If you look over this carefully by the *last proof* with my corrections, it is probably right; this *you* can *do* as well or better; — I have not now time. The copies I mentioned to be sent to different friends last night, I should wish to be made up with the new Giaours, if it also is ready. If not, send *The Giaour* afterwards.

The *Morning Post* says *I* am the author of *Nourjahad*!! This comes of lending the drawings for their dresses; but it is not worth a *formal contradiction*. Besides, the criticisms on the *supposition* will, some of them, be quite amusing and furious. The *Orientalism* — which I hear is very splendid — of the Melodrame (whosever it is, and I am sure I don’t know) is as good as an Advertisement for your Eastern Stories, by filling their heads with glitter. Yours ever, B.

P. S. — You will of course say the truth, that I am *not* the Melo-dramatist — if any one charges me in your presence with the performance.

359 — to John Murray

November 28, 1813.

Dear Sir, — Send another copy (if not too much of a request) to Lady Holland of

the *Journal*, in my name, when you receive this; it is for *Earl Grey* — and I will relinquish my own. Also to Mr. Sharpe, Lady Holland, and Lady Caroline Lamb, copies of *The Bride*, as soon as convenient.

Ever yours,

Biron.

P. S. — Mr. W. and myself still continue our purpose; but I shall not trouble you on any arrangement on the score of *The Giaour* and *The Bride* till our return, — or, at any rate, before *May*, 1814, — that is, six months from hence: and before that time you will be able to ascertain how far your offer may be a losing one: if so, you can deduct proportionably; and if not, I shall not at any rate allow you to go higher than your present proposal, which is very handsome, and more than fair.

I have had — but this must be *entre nous* — a very kind note, on the subject of *The Bride*, from Sir James Mackintosh, and an invitation to go there this evening, which it is now too late to accept.

“Lord Byron is the author of the day; six thousand of his *Bride of Abydos* have been sold within a month.”

Sir James Mackintosh (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 271).

360 — to John Murray.

November 29, 1813.

Sunday — Monday morning — three o’clock — in my doublet and hose, — *swearing*.

Dear Sir, — I send you in time an Errata page, containing an omission of mine, which must be thus added, as it is too late for insertion in the text. The passage is an imitation altogether from Medea in Ovid, and is incomplete without these two lines. Pray let this be done, and directly; it is necessary, will add one page to your book (*-making*), and can do no harm, and is yet in time for the *public*. Answer me, thou Oracle, in the affirmative. You can send the loose pages to those who have copies already, if they like; but certainly to all the *Critical* copyholders.

Ever yours, **Biron.**

P. S. — I have got out of my bed (in which, however, I could not sleep,

whether I had amended this or not), and so good morning. I am trying whether *De l'Allemagne* will act as an opiate, but I doubt it.

“Then, if my lip once murmurs, it must be
No sigh for Safety, but a prayer for thee.”

361 — to John Murray

November 29, 1813.

“*You have looked at it!*” to much purpose, to allow so stupid a blunder to stand; it is *not* “*courage*” but “*carnage*,” and if you don’t want me to cut my own throat, see it altered.

I am very sorry to hear of the fall of Dresden.

362 — to John Murray

Nov. 29, 1813, Monday.

Dear Sir, — You will act as you please upon that point; but whether I go or stay, I shall not say another word on the subject till May — nor then, unless quite convenient to yourself. I have many things I wish to leave to your care, principally papers. The *vases* need not be now sent, as Mr. W. is gone to Scotland. You are right about the Er[rata] page; place it at the beginning. Mr. Perry is a little premature in his compliments: these may do harm by exciting expectation, and I think *we* ought to be above it — though I see the next paragraph is on the *Journal*, which makes me suspect *you* as the author of both.

Would it not have been as well to have said in 2 cantos in the advertisement? they will else think of *fragments*, a species of composition very well for *once*, like *one ruin* in a view; but one would not build a town of them. *The Bride*, such as it is, is my first *entire* composition of any length (except the Satire, and be damned to it), for *The Giaour* is but a string of passages, and *Childe Harold* is, and I rather think always will be, unconcluded. I return Mr. Hay’s note, with thanks to him and you.

There have been some epigrams on Mr. W[ard]: one I see to-day.

The first I did not see, but heard yesterday. The second seems very bad and Mr. P[erry] has placed it over *your* puff. I only hope that Mr. W. does not

believe that I had any connection with either. The Regent is the only person on whom I ever expectorated an epigram, or ever should; and even if I were disposed that way, I like and value Mr. W. too well to allow my politics to contract into spleen, or to admire any thing intended to annoy him or his. You need not take the trouble to answer this, as I shall see you in the course of the afternoon.

Yours very truly, B.

P. S. — I have said this much about the epigrams, because I live so much in the *opposite camp*, and, from my post as an Engineer, might be suspected as the flinger of these hand Grenadoes; but with a worthy foe I am all for open war, and not this bush-fighting, and have [not] had, nor will have, any thing to do with it. I do not know the author.

“Lord Byron’s muse is extremely fruitful. He has another poem coming out, entitled *The Bride of Abydos*, which is spoken of in terms of the highest encomium.”

“Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it; —
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.”

363 — to John Murray

Tuesday evening, Nov. 30, 1813.

Dear Sir, — For the sake of correctness, particularly in an Errata page, the alteration of the couplet I have just sent (half an hour ago) must take place, in spite of delay or cancel; let me see the *proof* early tomorrow. I found out *murmur* to be a neuter *verb*, and have been obliged to alter the line so as to make it a substantive, thus:

The deepest murmur of this life shall be
No sigh for Safety, but a prayer for thee!

Don’t send the copies to the *country* till this is all right.

Yours,
B.

November 30, 1813.

Since I last wrote to you, much has occurred, good, bad, and indifferent, — not to make me forget you, but to prevent me from reminding you of one who, nevertheless, has often thought of you, and to whom *your* thoughts, in many a measure, have frequently been a consolation. We were once very near neighbours this autumn; and a good and bad neighbourhood it has proved to me. Suffice it to say, that your French quotation was confoundedly to the purpose, — though very *unexpectedly* pertinent, as you may imagine by what I *said* before, and my silence since. However, “Richard’s himself again,” and except all night and some part of the morning, I don’t think very much about the matter.

All convulsions end with me in rhyme; and to solace my midnights, I have scribbled another Turkish story — not a Fragment — which you will receive soon after this. It does not trench upon your kingdom in the least, and if it did, you would soon reduce me to my proper boundaries. You will think, and justly, that I run some risk of losing the little I have gained in fame, by this further experiment on public patience; but I have really ceased to care on that head. I have written this, and published it, for the sake of the *employment*, — to wring my thoughts from reality, and take refuge in “imaginings,” however “horrible;” and, as to success! those who succeed will console me for a failure — excepting yourself and one or two more, whom luckily I love too well to wish one leaf of their laurels a tint yellower. This is the work of a week, and will be the reading of an hour to you, or even less, — and so, let it go — — .

P.S. — Ward and I *talk* of going to Holland. I want to see how a Dutch canal looks after the Bosphorus. Pray respond.

“I am sorry I must wait till ‘we are veterans’ before you will open to me ‘the story of your wandering life, wherein you find more hours *due to repentance* ... than time hath told you yet.’ Is it so with you, or are you, like me, reprobate enough to look back with complacency on what you have done? I suppose repentance *must bring up the rear* with us all; but at present I should say with old Fontenelle, *Si je recommençais ma carrière, je ferais tout ce que j’ai fait.*”

“Conscience, avaunt! Richard’s himself again.”

“Horrible imaginings.”

Macbeth, act i. sc. 3.

365 — to Francis Hodgson

Nov'r — Dec'r 1st, 1813.

I have just heard that *Knapp* is acquainted with what I was but too happy in being enabled to do for you.

Now, my dear Hn., you, or Drury, must have told this, for, upon my own honour, not even to Scrope, nor to one soul, (Drury knew it before) have I said one syllable of the matter. So don't be out of humour with me about it, but you can't be more so than I am. I am, however, glad of one thing; if you ever conceived it to be in the least an obligation, this disclosure most fairly and fully releases you from it:

“To John I owe some obligation,
But John unluckily thinks fit
To publish it to all the nation,
So John and I are more than quit.”

And so there's an end of the matter.

Ward *wavers* a little about the Dutch, till matters are more sedative, and the French more sedentary.

The *Bride* will blush upon you in a day or two; there is *much*, at least a *little* addition. I am happy to say that Frere and Heber, and some other “good men and true,” have been kind enough to adopt the same opinion that you did.

Pray write when you like, and believe me,
Ever yours,

Byron.

P.S. — Murray has *offered* me a thousand guineas for the *two* (*Giaour* and *Bride*), and told M'e. de Stael that he had *paid* them to me!! I should be glad to be able to tell her so too. But the truth is, he would; but I thought the fair way was to decline it till May, and, at the end of 6 months, he can safely say whether he can afford it or not — without running any risk by Speculation. If he paid them now and lost by it, it would be hard. If he gains, it will be time enough when he has already funded his profits. But he needed not have told “*la Baronne*” such a devil of an uncalled for piece of — premature *truth*, perhaps —

but, nevertheless, a *lie* in the mean time.

“My noble-hearted friend, Lord Byron, after many offers of a similar kind, which I felt bound to refuse, has irresistibly in my present circumstances ... volunteered to pay all my debts, and within a few pounds it is done! Oh, if you knew (but *you* do know) the exultation of heart, aye, and of head too, I feel at being free from these depressing embarrassments, you would, as I do, bless my dearest friend and brother Byron.”

366 — to John Murray

Dec. 2, 1813.

Dear Sir, — When you can, let the couplet enclosed be inserted either in the page, or in the Errata page. I trust it is in time for some of the copies. This alteration is in the same part — the page *but one* before the last correction sent.

Yours, etc.,

B.

P. S. — I am afraid, from all I hear, that people are rather inordinate in their expectations, which is very unlucky, but cannot now be helped. This comes of Mr. Perry and one's wise friends; but do not *you* wind *your* hopes of success to the same pitch, for fear of accidents, and I can assure you that my philosophy will stand the test very fairly; and I have done every thing to ensure you, at all events, from positive loss, which will be some satisfaction to both.

367 — to Leigh Hunt

4, Bennet St., Dec. 2, 1813.

My dear Sir, — Few things could be more welcome than your note, and on Saturday morning I will avail myself of your permission to thank you for it in person. My time has not been passed, since we met, either profitably or agreeably. A very short period after my last visit, an incident occurred with which, I fear, you are not unacquainted, as report, in many mouths and more than one paper, was busy with the topic. That, naturally, gave me much uneasiness. Then I nearly incurred a lawsuit on the sale of an estate; but that is now arranged: next — but why should I go on with a series of selfish and silly details? I merely wish to assure you that it was not the frivolous forgetfulness of a mind, occupied by what is called pleasure (*not* in the true sense of Epicurus),

that kept me away; but a perception of my, then, unfitness to share the society of those whom I value and wish not to displease. I hate being *larmoyant*, and making a serious face among those who are cheerful.

It is my wish that our acquaintance, or, if you please to accept it, friendship, may be permanent. I have been lucky enough to preserve some friends from a very early period, and I hope, as I do not (at least now) select them lightly, I shall not lose them capriciously. I have a thorough esteem for that independence of spirit which you have maintained with sterling talent, and at the expense of some suffering. You have not, I trust, abandoned the poem you were composing, when Moore and I partook of your hospitality in the summer. I hope a time will come when he and I may be able to repay you in kind for the *latter* — for the rhyme, at least in *quantity*, you are in arrear to both.

Believe me, very truly and affectionately yours,
Byron.

“My dear Lord, — I need not tell you how much your second letter has gratified me, for I am apt to speak as sincerely as I think (you must suffer me to talk in this way after what you have been kind enough to say of my independence), and it always rejoices me to find that those whom I wish to regard will take me at my word. But I shall grow egotistical upon the strength of your Lordship’s good opinion. I shall be heartily glad to see you on Saturday morning, and perhaps shall prevail upon you to take a luncheon with us at our dinner-time (3). The nature of your letter would have brought upon you a long answer, filled perhaps with an enthusiasm that might have made you smile; but I am keeping your servant in the cold, and so, among other good offices, you see what he has done for you. However, I would not make a light thing of so good a matter as I mean my enthusiasm to be, and intend, before I have done, that you shall have as sound a regard for it, as I have for the feelings on your Lordship’s part that have called it forth.

Yours, my dear Lord, most sincerely and cordially,
Leigh Hunt.
Surrey Jail, 2’d Dec’r., 1813.”

368 — to John Murray

Dec. 3, 1813.

I send you a *scratch* or *two*, the which *heal*. The *Christian Observer* is very savage, but certainly uncommonly well written — and quite uncomfortable at

the naughtiness of book and author. I rather suspect you won't much like the *present* to be more moral, if it is to share also the usual fate of your virtuous volumes.

Let me see a proof of the *six* before *incorporation*.

“He never attempts to deceive the world by representing the profligate as happy.... And his testimony is of the more value, as his situation in life must have permitted him to see the experiment tried under the most favourable circumstances. He has probably seen more than one example of young men of high birth, talents, and expectancies, ... sink under the burden of unsubdued tempers, licentious alliances, and enervating indulgence.... He has *seen* all this; nay, perhaps — But we check our pen,” etc., etc.

369 — to John Murray

Dec. 3, 1813.

My dear Sir, — Look out the Encyclopedia article *Mecca* whether it is there or at *Medina* the Prophet is entombed, if at Medina the first lines of my alteration must run:

Blest as the call which from Medina's dome
Invites Devotion to her Prophet's tomb, etc.

If at “Mecca” the lines may stand as before. Page 45, C°. 2nd, *Bride of Abydos*. Yours, B.

You will find this out either by Article *Mecca*, *Medina* or *Mahommed*. I have no book of reference by me.

370 — to John Murray

[No date.]

Did you look out? is it *Medina* or *Mecca* that contains the *holy* Sepulchre? don't make me blaspheme by your negligence. I have no books of reference or I would save you the trouble. I *blush* as a good Mussulman to have confused the point. Yours, B.

371 — to John Murray

Dec. 4, 1813.

Dear Sir, — I have redde through your Persian Tales, and have taken the liberty of making some remarks on the *blank* pages. There are many beautiful passages, and an interesting story; and I cannot give you a stronger proof that such is my opinion, than by the *date* of the *hour* — *two o'clock*, — till which it has kept me awake *without a yawn*.

The conclusion is not quite correct in *costume*: there is no *Mussulman suicide* on record — at least for *love*. But this matters not. The tale must have been written by some one who has been on the spot, and I wish him, and he deserves, success. Will you apologise to the author for the liberties I have taken with his MS.? Had I been less awake to, and interested in, his theme, I had been less obtrusive; but you know *I* always take this in good part, and I hope he will. It is difficult to say what *will* succeed, and still more to pronounce what *will not*. *I* am at this moment in *that uncertainty* (on your *own* score); and it is no small proof of the author's powers to be able to *charm* and *fix* a *mind's* attention on similar subjects and climates in such a predicament. That he may have the same effect upon all his readers is very sincerely the wish, and hardly the *doubt*, of

Yours truly, B.

"I tried at 'Ilderim;'
Ahem!"

372 — to John Murray

Dear Sir, — It is all very well, except that the lines are not numbered properly, and a diabolical mistake, page 67., which *must* be corrected with the *pen*, if no other way remains; it is the omission of "*not*" before "*disagreeable*" in the *note* on the *amber* rosary. This is really horrible, and nearly as bad as the stumble of mine at the Threshold — I mean the *misnomer* of bride. Pray do not let a copy go without the "*not*;" it is nonsense, and worse than nonsense, as it now stands. I wish the printer was saddled with a vampire.

Yours ever, B.

P. S. — It is still *hath* instead of *have* in page 20; never was any one so

misused as I am by your Devils of printers.

P. S. — I hope and trust the “*not*” was inserted in the first Edition. We must have something — any thing — to set it right. It is enough to answer for one’s own bulls, without other people’s.

373 — to Thomas Moore

December 8, 1813.

Your letter, like all the best, and even kindest things in this world, is both painful and pleasing. But, first, to what sits nearest. Do you know I was actually about to dedicate to you, — not in a formal inscription, as to one’s *elders*, — but through a short prefatory letter, in which I boasted myself your intimate, and held forth the prospect of *your* poem; when, lo! the recollection of your strict injunctions of secrecy as to the said poem, more than *once* repeated by word and letter, flashed upon me, and marred my intents. I could have no motive for repressing my own desire of alluding to you (and not a day passes that I do not think and talk of you), but an idea that you might, yourself, dislike it. You cannot doubt my sincere admiration, waving personal friendship for the present, which, by the by, is not less sincere and deep rooted. I have you by rote and by heart; of which *ecce signum!* When I was at Aston, on my first visit, I have a habit, in passing my time a good deal alone, of — I won’t call it singing, for that I never attempt except to myself — but of uttering, to what I think tunes, your “Oh breathe not,” “When the last glimpse,” and “When he who adores thee,” with others of the same minstrel; — they are my matins and vespers. I assuredly did not intend them to be overheard, but, one morning, in comes, not *La Donna*, but *Il Marito*, with a very grave face, saying, “Byron, I must request you won’t sing any more, at least of those songs.” I stared, and said, “Certainly, but why?” — “To tell you the truth,” quoth he, “they make my wife *cry*, and so melancholy, that I wish her to hear no more of them.”

Now, my dear M., the effect must have been from your words, and certainly not my music. I merely mention this foolish story to show you how much I am indebted to you for even your pastimes. A man may praise and praise, but no one recollects but that which pleases — at least, in composition. Though I think no one equal to you in that department, or in satire, — and surely no one was ever so popular in both, — I certainly am of opinion that you have not yet done all *you* can do, though more than enough for any one else. I want, and the world expects, a longer work from you; and I see in you what I never saw in poet

before, a strange diffidence of your own powers, which I cannot account for, and which must be unaccountable, when a *Cossac* like me can appal a *cuirassier*. Your story I did not, could not, know, — I thought only of a Peri. I wish you had confided in me, not for your sake, but mine, and to prevent the world from losing a much better poem than my own, but which, I yet hope, this *clashing* will not even now deprive them of.

Mine is the work of a week, written, *why* I have partly told you, and partly I cannot tell you by letter — some day I will.

Go on — I shall really be very unhappy if I at all interfere with you. The success of mine is yet problematical; though the public will probably purchase a certain quantity, on the presumption of their own propensity for *The Giaour* and such “horrid mysteries.” The only advantage I have is being on the spot; and that merely amounts to saving me the trouble of turning over books which I had better read again. If *your chamber* was furnished in the same way, you have no need to *go there* to describe — I mean only as to *accuracy* — because I drew it from recollection.

This last thing of mine *may* have the same fate, and I assure you I have great doubts about it. But, even if not, its little day will be over before you are ready and willing. Come out — “screw your courage to the sticking-place.”

Except the *Post Bag* (and surely you cannot complain of a want of success there), you have not been *regularly* out for some years. No man stands higher, — whatever you may think on a rainy day, in your provincial retreat.

“Aucun homme, dans aucune langue, n’a été, peut-être, plus complètement le poète du cœur et le poète des femmes. Les critiques lui reprochent de n’avoir représenté le monde ni tel qu’il est, ni tel qu’il doit être; *mais les femmes répondent qu’il l’a représenté tel qu’elles le désirent.*”

I should have thought Sismondi had written this for you instead of Metastasio.

Write to me, and tell me of *yourself*. Do you remember what Rousseau said to some one — “Have we quarrelled? you have talked to me often, and never once mentioned yourself.”

P. S. — The last sentence is an indirect apology for my egotism, — but I believe in letters it is allowed. I wish it was *mutual*. I have met with an odd reflection in Grimm; it shall not — at least the bad part — be applied to you or me, though *one* of us has certainly an indifferent name — but this it is: — “Many people have the reputation of being wicked, with whom we should be too happy to pass our lives.” I need not add it is a woman’s saying — a Mademoiselle de Sommery’s.

“Among the stories intended to be introduced into *Lalla Rookh*, which I had begun, but, from various causes, never finished, there was one which I had made some progress in, at the time of the appearance of *The Bride*, and which, on reading that poem, I found to contain such singular coincidences with it, not only in locality and costume, but in plot and characters, that I immediately gave up my story altogether, and began another on an entirely new subject — the Fire-worshippers. To this circumstance, which I immediately communicated to him, Lord Byron alludes in this letter. In my hero (to whom I had even given the name of ‘Zelim,’ and who was a descendant of Ali, outlawed, with all his followers, by the reigning Caliph) it was my intention to shadow out, as I did afterwards in another form, the national cause of Ireland. To quote the words of my letter to Lord Byron on the subject: ‘I chose this story because one writes best about what one feels most, and I thought the parallel with Ireland would enable me to infuse some vigour into my hero’s character. But to aim at vigour and strong feeling after *you* is hopeless; — that region “was made for Cæsar.”’“
(Moore).

“Que de gens ont la réputation d’être méchants, avec lesquels on serait trop heureux de passer sa vie.”

The *Biographie Universelle* says of her,

“Elle avait du talent pour écrire; mais elle ne l’exerça que fort tard Le premier livre qu’elle publia, n’étant plus très jeune, fut un recueil de pensées détachées, dédié aux mânes de Saurin, qu’elle intitula *Doutes sur différentes Opinions reçues dans la Société*. Ce recueil eut un véritable succès.”

Mlle. de Sommery also published, besides the *Doutes* (1782), *Lettres de Madame la Comtesse de L. à M. le Comte de R.* (1785); *Lettres de Mlle. de Tourville à Madame la Comtesse de Lénoncourt* (1788); *L’Oreille, conte Asiatique* (1789).

374 — to John Galt

Dec. 11, 1813.

My dear Galt, — There was no offence — there *could* be none. I thought it by no means impossible that we might have hit on something similar, particularly as you are a dramatist, and was anxious to assure you of the truth, viz., that I had not wittingly seized upon plot, sentiment, or incident; and I am very glad that I

have not in any respect trenched upon your subjects. Something still more singular is, that the *first* part, where you have found a coincidence in some events within your observations on *life*, was *drawn* from *observations* of mine also, and I meant to have gone on with the story, but on *second* thoughts, I thought myself *two centuries* at least too late for the subject; which, though admitting of very powerful feeling and description, yet is not adapted for this age, at least this country, though the finest works of the Greeks, one of Schiller's and Alfieri's in modern times, besides several of our *old* (and best) dramatists, have been grounded on incidents of a similar cast. I therefore altered it as you perceive, and in so doing have weakened the whole, by interrupting the train of thought: and in composition I do not think *second* thoughts are the best, though *second* expressions may improve the first ideas.

I do not know how other men feel towards those they have met abroad, but to me there seems a kind of tie established between all who have met together in a foreign country, as if we had met in a state of pre-existence, and were talking over a life that has ceased: but I always look forward to renewing my travels; and though *you*, I think, are now stationary, if I can at all forward your pursuits *there* as well as here, I shall be truly glad in the opportunity.

Ever yours very sincerely, B.

P. S. — I leave town for a day or two on Monday, but after that I am always at home, and happy to see you till half-past two.

On this poem Byron seems to have been particularly sensitive. He is accused of borrowing the opening lines from Mignon's song in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*:

"Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühn?"

Cyrus Redding (*Yesterday and To-day*, vol. ii. pp. 14, 15) suggests that Byron used the translation of the poem which he himself had made and published in 1812 or 1813.

Byron was also charged with pilfering them from Madame de Staël.

"Do you know de Staël's lines?" he asked Lady Blessington (*Conversations*, pp. 326, 327); "for if I am a thief, she must be the plundered, as I don't read German and do French: yet I could almost swear that I never saw her verses when I wrote mine, nor do I even now remember them. I think the first began with 'Cette terre,' etc., etc.; but the rest I forget. As you have a good memory, perhaps you would repeat them."

"I did so," says Lady Blessington, "and they are as follows:

'Cette terre où les myrtes fleurissent

— OÙ les rayons des cieux tombent avec amour,
Où des sons enchanteurs dans les airs retentissent,
Où la plus douce nuit succède au plus beau jour, ' etc."

375 — to John Murray

Decr. y'r 14th, 1813.

Deare Sir, — Send y'e E'r of ye new R'w a copy as he hath had y'e trouble of two walks on y't acct.

As to the man of the *Satirist* — I hope you have too much spirit to allow a single Sheet to be offered as a peace offering to him or any one. If you *do*, expect *never* to be *forgiven* by me — if he is not personal he is quite welcome to his opinion — and if he is, I have my own remedy.

Send a copy *double* to Dr. Clarke (y'e traveller) Cambrigge by y'e first opportunitie — and let me see you in y'e morninge y't I may mention certain thinges y'e which require sundrie though slight alterations.

Sir, your Servitor,
Biroñ

376 — to Thomas Ashe

4, Bennet Street, St. James's, Dec. 14, 1813.

Sir, — I leave town for a few days tomorrow. On my return, I will answer your letter more at length.

Whatever may be your situation, I cannot but commend your resolution to abjure and abandon the publication and composition of works such as those to which you have alluded. Depend upon it they amuse *few*, disgrace both *reader* and *writer*, and benefit *none*. It will be my wish to assist you, as far as my limited means will admit, to break such a bondage. In your answer, inform me what sum you think would enable you to extricate yourself from the hands of your employers, and to regain, at least, temporary independence, and I shall be glad to contribute my mite towards it. At present, I must conclude. Your name is not unknown to me, and I regret, for your own sake, that you have ever lent it to the works you mention. In saying this, I merely repeat your *own words* in your

letter to me, and have no wish whatever to say a single syllable that may appear to insult your misfortunes. If I have, excuse me; it is unintentional.

Yours, etc.,

Byron.

His first novel, *The Spirit of "The Book,"* gained some success from its subject. In 1806-7 Lady Douglas brought certain charges against the Princess of Wales, which were answered on her behalf by Spencer Perceval. The extraordinary secrecy with which this defence, called "The Book," was printed, and its complete suppression, excited curiosity, which was increased by the following advertisement in the *Times* for March 27, 1809:

"'A Book' — Any Person having in their possession a COPY of a CERTAIN BOOK, printed by Mr. Edwards, in 1807, but *never published*, with W. Lindsell's Name as the Seller of the same on the title page, and will bring it to W. Lindsell, Bookseller, Wimpole-Street, will receive a handsome gratuity."

The subject-matter of this book, then unknown to the public, Ashe professes to embody in *The Spirit of "The Book;"* or, *Memoirs of Caroline, Princess of Hasburgh, a Political and Amatory Romance* (3 vols., 1811). The letters, which purport to be written from Caroline to Charlotte, and contain (vol. ii. pp. 152-181) an attack on the Lady Jersey, who attended the princess, are absolutely dull, and scarcely even indecent.

Ashe's *Memoirs and Confessions* (3 vols., 1815) are dedicated to the Duke of Northumberland and to Byron, to whom, in a preface written at Havre, he acknowledges his "transcendent obligations."

377 — to Professor Clarke

Dec. 15, 1813.

Your very kind letter is the more agreeable, because, setting aside talents, judgment, and the *laudari a laudato*, etc., you have been on the spot; you have seen and described more of the East than any of your predecessors — I need not say how ably and successfully; and (excuse the bathos) you are one of the very few men who can pronounce how far my costume (to use an affected but expressive word) is correct. As to poesy, that is, as "men, gods, and columns," please to decide upon it; but I am sure that I am anxious to have an observer's, particularly a famous observer's, testimony on the fidelity of my manners and

dresses; and, as far as memory and an oriental twist in my imagination have permitted, it has been my endeavour to present to the Franks, a sketch of that of which you have and will present them a complete picture. It was with this notion, that I felt compelled to make my hero and heroine relatives, as you well know that none else could there obtain that degree of intercourse leading to genuine affection; I had nearly made them rather too much akin to each other; and though the wild passions of the East, and some great examples in Alfieri, Ford, and Schiller (to stop short of antiquity), might have pleaded in favour of a copyist, yet the time and the north (not Frederic, but our climate) induced me to alter their consanguinity and confine them to cousinship. I also wished to try my hand on a female character in Zuleika, and have endeavoured, as far as the grossness of our masculine ideas will allow, to preserve her purity without impairing the ardour of her attachment.

As to criticism, I have been reviewed about a hundred and fifty times — praised and abused. I will not say that I am become indifferent to either eulogy or condemnation, but for some years at least I have felt grateful for the former, and have never attempted to answer the latter. For success equal to the first efforts, I had and have no hope; the novelty was over, and the “Bride,” like all other brides, must suffer or rejoice for and with her husband. By the bye, I have used “bride” Turkishly, as affianced, not married; and so far it is an English bull, which, I trust, will be at least a comfort to all Hibernians not bigotted to monopoly. You are good enough to mention your quotations in your third volume. I shall not only be indebted to it for a renewal of the high gratification received from the two first, but for preserving my relics embalmed in your own spices, and ensuring me readers to whom I could not otherwise have aspired.

I called on you, as bounden by duty and inclination, when last in your neighbourhood; but I shall always take my chance; you surely would not have me inflict upon you a formal annunciation; I am proud of your friendship, but not so fond of myself as to break in upon your better avocations. I trust that Mrs. Clarke is well; I have never had the honour of presentation, but I have heard so much of her in many quarters, that any notice she is pleased to take of my productions is not less gratifying than my thanks are sincere, both to her and you; by all accounts I may safely congratulate you on the possession of “a bride” whose mental and personal accomplishments are more than poetical.

P. S. — Murray has sent, or will send, a double copy of the *Bride* and *Giaour*; in the last one, some lengthy additions; pray accept them, according to old custom, “from the author” to one of his better brethren. Your Persian, or any memorial, will be a most agreeable, and it is my fault if not an useful present. I trust your third will be out before I sail next month; can I say or do anything for

you in the Levant? I am now in all the agonies of equipment, and full of schemes, some impracticable, and most of them improbable; but I mean to fly “freely to the green earth’s end,” though not quite so fast as Milton’s sprite.

P. S. 2nd. — I have so many things to say. — I want to show you Lord Sligo’s letter to me detailing, as he heard them on the spot, the Athenian account of our adventure (a personal one), which certainly first suggested to me the story of *The Giaour*. It was a strange and not a very long story, and his report of the reports (he arrived just after my departure, and I did not know till last summer that he knew anything of the matter) is not very far from the truth. Don’t be alarmed. There was nothing that led further than to the water’s edge; but one part (as is often the case in life) was more singular than any of the *Giaour*’s adventures. I never have, and never should have, alluded to it on my own authority, from respect to the ancient proverb on Travellers.

“I open my letter to say that when Lord Byron went to give his vote just now in the Senate House, the young men burst out into the most rapturous applause.”

The next day he writes again:

“I should add that as I was going to vote I met him coming away, and presently saw that something had happened, by his extreme paleness and agitation. Dr. Clark, who was with him, told me the cause, and I returned with B. to my room. There I begged him to sit down and write a letter and communicate this event, which he did not feel up to, but wished *I* would. So down I sate, and commenced my acquaintance with Miss Milbanke by writing her an account of this most pleasing event, which, although nothing at Oxford, is here very unusual indeed.”

The following was Miss Milbanke’s answer (*ibid.*, pp. 296, 297), dated, “Seaham, November 25, 1814:”

“Dear Sir, — It will be easier for you to imagine than for me to express the pleasure which your very kind letter has given me. Not only on account of its gratifying intelligence, but also as introductory to an acquaintance which I have been taught to value, and have sincerely desired. Allow me to consider Lord Byron’s friend as not ‘a stranger,’ and accept, with my sincerest thanks, my best wishes for your own happiness.

I am, dear sir, your faithful servant,
A. I. MILBANKE.”

“I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth’s end.”

378 — to Leigh Hunt

Dec. 22, 1813.

My Dear Sir, — I am indeed “in your debt,” — and, what is still worse, am obliged to follow *royal* example (he has just apprised *his* creditors that they must wait till the next meeting), and intreat your indulgence for, I hope, a very short time. The nearest relation and almost the only friend I possess, has been in London for a week, and leaves it tomorrow with me for her own residence. I return immediately; but we meet so seldom, and are so *minuted* when we meet at all, that I give up all engagements till *now*, without reluctance. On my return, I must see you to console myself for my past disappointment. I should feel highly honoured in Mr. B.’s permission to make his acquaintance, and *there* you are in *my* debt; for it is a promise of last summer which I still hope to see performed. Yesterday I had a letter from Moore; you have probably heard from him lately; but if not, you will be glad to learn that he is the same in heart, head, and health.

379 — to John Murray

December 27, 1813.

Lord Holland is laid up with the gout, and would feel very much obliged if you could obtain, and send as soon as possible, Madame D’Arblay’s (or even Miss Edgeworth’s) new work. I know they are not out; but it is perhaps possible for your *Majesty* to command what we cannot with much suing purchase, as yet. I need not say that when you are able or willing to confer the same favour on me, I shall be obliged. I would almost fall sick myself to get at Madame D’Arblay’s writings.

P. S. — You were talking to-day of the American E’n of a certain unquenchable memorial of my younger days. As it can’t be helped now, I own I have some curiosity to see a copy of transatlantic typography. This you will perhaps obtain, and one for yourself; but I must beg that you will not *import more*, because, *seriously*, I *do wish* to have that thing forgotten as much as it has been forgiven.

If you send to the *Globe* E’r, say that I want neither excuse nor contradiction, but merely a discontinuance of a most ill-grounded charge. I never was consistent in any thing but my politics; and as my redemption depends on that solitary virtue, it is murder to carry away my last anchor.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I — Articles from *The Monthly Review*

1. *Poems*, by W. R. Spencer. (vol. 67, 1812, pp. 54-60.)

Art. VII. Poems by William Robert Spencer. 8vo. 10s. Boards. Cadell and Davies. 1811.

The author of this well-printed volume has more than once been introduced to our readers, and is known to rank among that class of poetical persons who have never been highly favoured by stern criticism. The “mob of gentlemen who write with ease” has indeed of late years (like other mobs) become so importunate, as to threaten an alarming rivalry to the regular body of writers who are not fortunate enough to be either easy or genteel. Hence the jaundiced eye with which the real author regards the red Morocco binding of the presumptuous “Littérateur;” we say, *the binding*, for into the book itself he cannot condescend to look, at least not beyond the frontispiece. — Into Mr. Spencer’s volume, however, he may dip farther, and will find sufficient to give him pleasure or pain, in proportion to his own candour. It consists chiefly of “*Vers de Société*,” calculated to prove very delightful to a large circle of fashionable acquaintance, and pleasing to a limited number of vulgar purchasers. These last, indeed, may be rude enough to expect something more for their specie during the present scarcity of change, than lines to “Young Poets and Poetesses,” “Epitaphs upon Years,” Poems “to my Grammatical Niece,” “Epistle from Sister Dolly in Cascadia to Sister Tanny in Snowdonia,” etc.: but we doubt not that a long list of persons of quality, wit, and honour, “in town and country,” who are here addressed, will be highly pleased with themselves and with the poet who has *shewn them off* in a very handsome volume: as will doubtless the “Butterfly at the end of Winter,” provided that he is fortunate enough to survive the present inclemencies. We are, however, by no means convinced that the Bellman will relish Mr. S.’s usurpation of a “Christmas Carol;” which looks so very like his own, that we advise him immediately to put in his claim, and it will be universally allowed.

With the exception of these and similar productions, the volume contains poems eminently beautiful; some which have been already published, and others that are well worthy of present publication. Of “Leonora,” with which it opens,

we made our report many years ago (in vol. xx. N.S. p. 451): but our readers, perhaps, will not be sorry to see another short extract. We presume that they are well acquainted with the story, and therefore select one of the central passages:

“See, where fresh blood-gouts mat the green,
Yon wheel its reeking points advance;
There, by the moon’s wan light half seen,
Grim ghosts of tombless murderers dance.
‘Come, spectres of the guilty dead,
With us your goblin morris ply,
Come all in festive dance to tread,
Ere on the bridal couch we lie.’

“Forward th’ obedient phantoms push,
Their trackless footsteps rustle near,
In sound like autumn winds that rush
Through withering oak or beech-wood sere.
With lightning’s force the courser flies,
Earth shakes his thund’ring hoofs beneath,
Dust, stones, and sparks, in whirlwind rise,
And horse and horseman heave for breath.

“Swift roll the moon-light scenes away,
Hills chasing hills successive fly;
E’en stars that pave th’ eternal way,
Seem shooting to a backward sky.
‘Fear’st thou, my love? the moon shines clear;
Hurrah! how swiftly speed the dead!
The dead does Leonora fear?
Oh God! oh leave, oh leave the dead!’“

Such a specimen of “the Terrible” will place the merit of the poem in a proper point of view: but we do not think that some of the alterations in this copy of *Leonora* are altogether so judicious as Mr. S.’s well-known taste had led us to expect. “Reviving Friendship” (p. 5) is perhaps less expressive than “Relenting,” as it once stood; and the phrase, “ten thousand *furlowed* heroes” (*ibid.*), throws a new light on the heroic character. It is extremely proper that heroes should have “furlows,” since school-boys have holidays, and lawyers have long vacations: but we very much question whether young gentlemen of the scholastic, legal, or

heroic calling, would be flattered by any epithet derived from the relaxation of their respectable pursuits. We should feel some hesitation in telling an interesting youth, of any given battalion from Portugal, that he was a “furrowed hero,” lest he should prove to us that his “furrow” had by no means impaired his “heroism.” The old epithet, “war-worn,” was more adapted to heroism and to poetry; and, if we mistake not, it has very recently been superseded by an epithet which precludes “otium cum dignitate” from the soldier, without imparting either ease or dignity to the verse. Why is “horse and horsemen *pant* for breath” changed to “*heave* for breath,” unless for the alliteration of the too tempting aspirate? “Heaving” is appropriate enough to coals and to sighs, but “panting” *belongs* to successful lovers and spirited horses; and why should Mr. S.’s horse and horseman not have panted as heretofore?

The next poem in arrangement as well as in merit is the “Year of Sorrow;” to which we offered a tribute of praise in our 45th vol. N. S. p. 288. — We are sorry to observe that the compliment paid to Mr. Wedgewood by a “late traveller” (see note, p. 50), viz. that “an Englishman in journeying from Calais to Ispahan may have his dinner served every day on Wedgewood’s ware,” is no longer a matter of fact. It has lately been the good or evil fortune of one of our travelling department to pass near to Calais, and to have journeyed through divers Paynim lands to no very remote distance from Ispahan; and neither in the palace of the Pacha nor in the caravanseraï of the traveller, nor in the hut of the peasant, was he so favoured as to masticate his pilaff from that fashionable service. Such is, in this and numerous other instances, the altered state of the continent and of Europe, since the annotation of the “late traveller;” and on the authority of a *later*, we must report that the ware has been all broken since the former passed that way. We wish that we could efficiently exhort Mr. Wedgewood to send out a fresh supply, on all the *turnpike roads* by the route of Bagdad, for the convenience of the “latest travellers.”

Passing over the “Chorus from Euripides,” which might as well have slept in quiet with the rest of the author’s school-exercises, we come to “the Visionary,” which we gladly extract as a very elegant specimen of the lighter poems:

“When midnight o’er the moonless skies
Her pall of transient death has spread,
When mortals sleep, when spectres rise,
And nought is wakeful but the dead!

“No bloodless shape my way pursues,
No sheeted ghost my couch annoys.

Visions more sad my fancy views,
Visions of long departed joys!

“The shade of youthful hope is there,
That linger’d long, and latest died;
Ambition all dissolved to air,
With phantom honours at her side.

“What empty shadows glimmer nigh!
They once were friendship, truth, and love!
Oh, die to thought, to mem’ry die,
Since lifeless to my heart ye prove!”

We cannot forbear adding the beautiful stanzas in pages 166, 167:

“To **The Lady Anne Hamilton.**

“Too late I staid, forgive the crime,
Unheeded flew the hours;
How noiseless falls the foot of Time,
That only treads on flow’rs!

“What eye with clear account remarks
The ebbing of his glass,
When all its sands are di’mond sparks,
That dazzle as they pass?

“Ah! who to sober measurement
Time’s happy swiftness brings,
When birds of Paradise have lent
Their plumage for his wings?”

The far greater part of the volume, however, contains pieces which can be little gratifying to the public: — some are pretty; and all are besprinkled with “gems,” and “roses,” and “birds,” and “diamonds,” and such like cheap poetical adornments, as are always to be obtained at no great expense of thought or of metre. — It is happy for the author that these *bijoux* are presented to persons of high degree; countesses, foreign and domestic; “Maids of Honour to Louisa Landgravine of Hesse D’Armstadt;” Lady Blank, and Lady Asterisk, besides — -, and — -, and others anonymous; who are exactly the kind of people to be best

pleased with these sparkling, shining, fashionable trifles. We will solace our readers with three stanzas of the soberest of these odes:

“Addressed to Lady Susan Fincastle, now Countess Of Dunmore.

“What ails you, Fancy? you’re become
Colder than Truth, than Reason duller!
Your wings are worn, your chirping’s dumb,
And ev’ry plume has lost its colour.

“You droop like geese, whose cacklings cease
When dire St. Michael they remember,
Or like some *bird* who just has heard
That Fin’s preparing for September?

“Can you refuse your sweetest spell
When I for Susan’s praise invoke you?
What, sulkier still? you pout and swell
As if that lovely name would choke you.”

We are to suppose that “Fin preparing for September” is the lady with whose “lovely name” Fancy runs some risk of being “choked;” and, really, if *killing partridges* formed a part of her Ladyship’s accomplishments, both “Fancy” and Feeling were in danger of a quinsey. Indeed, the whole of these stanzas are couched in that most exquisite irony, in which Mr. S. has more than once succeeded. All the songs to “persons of quality” seem to be written on that purest model, “the song by a person of quality;” whose stanzas have not been fabricated in vain. This sedulous imitation extends even to the praise of things inanimate:

“When an Eden zephyr hovers
O’er a slumb’ring cherub’s lyre,
Or when sighs of seraph lovers
Breathe upon th’ unfinger’d wire.”

If namby-pamby still leads to distinction, Mr. S., like Ambrose Phillips, will be “preferred for wit.”

“Heav’n must hear — a bloom more tender
Seems to tint the wreath of May,

Lovelier beams the noon-day splendour,
Brighter dew-drops gem the spray!

“Is the breath of angels moving
O’er each flow’ret’s heighten’d hue?
Are their smiles the day improving,
Have their tears enrich’d the dew?”

Here we have “angels’ tears,” and “breath,” and “smiles,” and “Eden zephyrs,” “sighs of seraph lovers,” and “lyres of slumbering cherubs,” dancing away to “the Pedal Harp!” How strange it is that Thomson, in his stanzas on the Æolian lyre (see the *Castle of Indolence*), never dreamed of such things, but left all these prettinesses to the last of the Cruscanti!

One of the best pieces in the volume is an “Epistle to T. Moore, Esq.,” which though disfigured with “Fiends on sulphur nurst,” and “*Hell’s chilliest Winter*” (“poor Tom’s a’-cold!”), and some other vagaries of the same sort, forms a pleasant specimen of poetical friendship. — We give the last ten lines:

“The triflers think your varied powers
Made only for life’s gala bow’rs,
To smooth Reflection’s mentor-frown,
Or Pillow joy on softer down. —
Fools! — yon blest orb not only glows
To chase the cloud, or paint the rose;
These are the pastimes of his might,
Earth’s torpid bosom drinks his light;
Find there his wondrous pow’r’s true measure,
Death turn’d to life, and dross to treasure!”

We have now arrived at Mr. Spencer’s French and Italian poesy; the former of which is written sometimes in new and sometimes in old French, and, occasionally, in a kind of tongue neither old nor new. We offer a sample of the two former:

“‘*Qu’est ce que c’est que le Genie?*’

“Brillant est cet esprit privé de sentiment;
Mais ce n’est qu’un soleil trop vif et trop constant,
Tendre est ce sentiment qu’ aucun esprit n’anime,

Mais ce n'est qu'un jour doux, que trop de pluie abime!
Quand un brillant esprit de ses rares couleurs,
Orne du sentiment les aimables douleurs,
Un *Phénomène* en naît, le plus beau de la vie!
C'est alors que les ris en se mêlant aux pleurs,
Font ces *Iris de l'ame*, appellê le Genie!"

"C'y gist un povre menestrel,
Occis par maint enmiict cruel —
Ne plains pas trop sa destinée —
N'est icy que son corps mortel:
Son ame est toujours à Gillwell,
Et n'est ce pas là l'Elysée?"

We think that Mr. Spencer's Italian rhymes are better finished than his French; and indeed the facility of composing in that most poetical of all languages must be obvious: but, as a composer in Italian, he and all other Englishmen are much inferior to Mr. Mathias. It is very perceptible in many of Mr. S.'s smaller pieces that he has suffered his English versification to be vitiated with Italian *concetti*; and we should have been better pleased with his compositions in a foreign language, had they not induced him to corrupt his mother-tongue. Still we would by no means utterly proscribe these excursions into other languages; though they remind us occasionally of that aspiring Frenchman who placed in his grounds the following inscription in honour of Shenstone and the Leasowes:

"See this stone
For William Shenstone —
Who planted groves rural,
And wrote verse natural!"

The above lines were displayed by the worthy proprietor, in the pride of his heart, to all English travellers, as a tribute of respect for the resemblance of his paternal chateau to the Leasowes, and a striking coincidence between Shenstone's versification and his own. — We do not mean to insinuate that Mr. Spencer's French verses ("*Cy gist un povre menestrel*," with an Urn inscribed W. R. S. at the top) are *precisely* a return in kind for the quatrain above quoted: but we place it as a beacon to all young gentlemen of poetical propensities on the French Parnassus. Few would proceed better on the Gallic Pegasus, than the

Anglo-troubadour on ours.

We now take our leave of Mr. Spencer, without being blind to his errors or insensible to his merits. As a poet, he may be placed rather below Mr. Moore and somewhat above Lord Strangford; and if his volume meet with half their number of purchasers, he will have no reason to complain either of our judgment or of his own success.

2. *Neglected Genius*, by W. H. Ireland.

(Vol. 70, 1813, pp. 203-205.)

Art. XV. *Neglected Genius*: a Poem. Illustrating the untimely and unfortunate Fall of many British Poets; from the Period of Henry VIII. to the Æra of the unfortunate Chatterton. Containing Imitations of their different Styles, etc., etc. By W.H. Ireland, Author of the *Fisher-Boy*, *Sailor-Boy*, *Cottage-Girl*, etc., etc., etc. 8vo. pp. 175. 8s. Boards. Sherwood & Co. 1812.

This volume, professing in a moderately long title-page to be “illustrative of the untimely and unfortunate fate of *many* British Poets,” might with great propriety include the author among the number; for if his “imitations of their different styles” resemble the originals, the consequent starvation of “many British poets” is a doom which is calculated to excite pity rather than surprize. The book opens with a dedication to the present, and a Monody on the late Duke of Devonshire (one of the neglected bards, we presume, on whom the author holds his inquest), in which it were difficult to say whether the “enlightened understanding” of the living or the “intellect” of the deceased nobleman is more justly appreciated or more elegantly eulogized. Lest the Monody should be mistaken for anything but itself, of which there was little danger, it is dressed in marginal mourning, like a dying speech, or an American Gazette after a defeat. The following is a specimen — the poet is addressing the Duchess:

“Chaste widow’d Mourner, still with tears bedew
That sacred Urn, which can imbue
Thy worldly thoughts, thus kindling mem’ry’s glow:
Each retrospective virtue, fadeless beam,
Embalms thy *Truth* in heavenly dream,
To soothe the bosom’s agonizing woe.

“Yet soft — more poignantly to wake the soul,
And ev’ry pensive thought controul,

Truth shall with energy his worth proclaim;
Here I'll record his *philanthropic mind*,
Eager to bless all human kind,
Yet *modest shrinking* from the voice of *Fame*.

“As *Patriot* view him shun the courtly crew,
And dauntless ever keep in view
That bright palladium, England's dear renown.
The people's Freedom and the Monarch's good,
Purchas'd with Patriotic blood,
The surest safeguard of the state and crown.

“Or now behold his glowing soul extend,
To shine the polish'd social *friend*;
His country's *matchless Prince* his worth rever'd;
Gigantic Fox, true Freedom's darling child,
By kindred excellence beguil'd,
To lasting *amity* the temple rear'd.

“As *Critic* chaste, his judgment could explore
The beauties of poetic lore,
Or classic strains mellifluous infuse;
Yet glowing genius and expanded sense
Were crown'd with *innate diffidence*,
The sure attendant of a genuine muse.”

Page 9 contains, forsooth, a very correct imitation of Milton:

“To thee, gigantic genius, next I'll sound;
The clarion string, and fill fame's vasty round;
'Tis *Milton* beams upon the wond'ring sight,
Rob'd in the splendour of Apollo's light;
As when from ocean bursting on the view,
His orb dispenses ev'ry brilliant hue,
Crowns with resplendent gold th' horizon wide,
And cloathes with countless gems the buoyant tide;
While through the boundless realms of æther blaze,
On spotless azure, streamy saffron rays: —
So o'er the world of genius *Milton* shone,

Profound in science — as the bard — alone.”

We must not pass over the imitative specimen of “Nahum Tate,” because in this the author approximates nearest to the style of his original:

“Friend of great *Dryden*, though of humble fame,
The Laureat Tate, shall here record his name;
Whose sorrowing numbers breath’d a nation’s pain,
When death from mortal to immortal reign
Translated royal *Anne*, our island’s boast,
Victorious sov’ reign, dread of Gallia’s host;
Whose arms by land and sea with fame were crown’d,
Whose statesmen grave for wisdom were renown’d,
Whose reign with science dignifies the page;
Bright noon of genius — *great Augustan age*.
Such was thy Queen, and such th’ illustrious time
That nurs’d thy muse, and tun’d thy soul to rhyme;
Yet wast thou fated sorrow’s shaft to bear,
Augmenting still this catalogue of care;
The gripe of penury thy bosom knew,
A gloomy jail obscur’d bright freedom’s view;
So life’s gay visions faded to thy sight,
Thy brilliant hopes enscarf’d in sorrow’s night.”

Where did Mr. Ireland learn that *hold fast* and *ballâst*, *stir* and *hungêr*, *please* and *kidnêys*, *plane* and *capstâne*, *expose* and *windôws*, *forgot* and *pilôt*, *sail on* and *Deucalôn*! (Lemprière would have saved him a scourging at school by telling him that there was an *i* in the word), were legitimate Hudibrastic rhymes? (see pp. 116, etc.). Chatterton is a great favourite of this imitative gentleman; and Bristol, where he appears to have been held in no greater estimation than Mr. Ireland himself deserves, is much vituperated in some sad couplets, seemingly for this reason, “All for love, and a little for the bottle,” as Bannister’s song runs, — “All for Chatterton, and a little for myself,” thinks Mr. Ireland.

The notes communicate, among other novelties, the new title of “Sir Horace” to the Honourable H. Walpole: surely a perusal of the life of the unfortunate boy, whose fate Mr. I. deplures, might have prevented this piece of ignorance, twice repeated in the same page; and we wonder at the malicious fun of the printer’s devil in permitting it to stand, for *he* certainly knew better. We must be excused from a more detailed notice of Mr. Ireland for the present; and indeed we hope to

hear no more of his lamentations, very sure that none but reviewers ever will peruse them: unless, perhaps, the unfortunate persons of quality whom he may henceforth single out as proper victims of future dedication. Though his dedications are enough to kill the living, his anticipated monodies, on the other hand, must add considerably to the natural dread of death in such of his patrons as may be liable to common sense or to chronic diseases.

APPENDIX II — Parliamentary Speeches

1. Debate On The Frame-work Bill, In The House Of Lords, February 27, 1812.

The order of the day for the second reading of this Bill being read,

Lord **Byron** rose, and (for the first time) addressed their Lordships as follows:

My Lords, — The subject now submitted to your Lordships for the first time, though new to the House, is by no means new to the country. I believe it had occupied the serious thoughts of all descriptions of persons, long before its introduction to the notice of that legislature, whose interference alone could be of real service. As a person in some degree connected with the suffering county, though a stranger not only to this House in general, but to almost every individual whose attention I presume to solicit, I must claim some portion of your Lordships' indulgence, whilst I offer a few observations on a question in which I confess myself deeply interested.

To enter into any detail of the riots would be superfluous: the House is already aware that every outrage short of actual bloodshed has been perpetrated, and that the proprietors of the frames obnoxious to the rioters, and all persons supposed to be connected with them, have been liable to insult and violence. During the short time I recently passed in Nottinghamshire, not twelve hours elapsed without some fresh act of violence; and on the day I left the county I was informed that forty frames had been broken the preceding evening, as usual, without resistance and without detection.

Such was then the state of that county, and such I have reason to believe it to be at this moment. But whilst these outrages must be admitted to exist to an alarming extent, it cannot be denied that they have arisen from circumstances of the most unparalleled distress: the perseverance of these miserable men in their proceedings tends to prove that nothing but absolute want could have driven a large, and once honest and industrious, body of the people, into the commission of excesses so hazardous to themselves, their families, and the community. At the time to which I allude, the town and county were burdened with large detachments of the military; the police was in motion, the magistrates assembled; yet all the movements, civil and military, had led to — nothing. Not

a single instance had occurred of the apprehension of any real delinquent actually taken in the fact, against whom there existed legal evidence sufficient for conviction. But the police, however useless, were by no means idle: several notorious delinquents had been detected, — men, liable to conviction, on the clearest evidence, of the capital crime of poverty; men, who had been nefariously guilty of lawfully begetting several children, whom, thanks to the times! they were unable to maintain.

Considerable injury has been done to the proprietors of the improved frames. These machines were to them an advantage, inasmuch as they superseded the necessity of employing a number of workmen, who were left in consequence to starve. By the adoption of one species of frame in particular, one man performed the work of many, and the superfluous labourers were thrown out of employment. Yet it is to be observed, that the work thus executed was inferior in quality; not marketable at home, and merely hurried over with a view to exportation. It was called, in the cant of the trade, by the name of “Spider-work.” The rejected workmen, in the blindness of their ignorance, instead of rejoicing at these improvements in arts so beneficial to mankind, conceived themselves to be sacrificed to improvements in mechanism. In the foolishness of their hearts they imagined that the maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor were objects of greater consequence than the enrichment of a few individuals by any improvement, in the implements of trade, which threw the workmen out of employment, and rendered the labourer unworthy of his hire.

And it must be confessed that although the adoption of the enlarged machinery in that state of our commerce which the country once boasted might have been beneficial to the master without being detrimental to the servant; yet, in the present situation of our manufactures, rotting in warehouses, without a prospect of exportation, with the demand for work and workmen equally diminished, frames of this description tend materially to aggravate the distress and discontent of the disappointed sufferers. But the real cause of these distresses and consequent disturbances lies deeper. When we are told that these men are leagued together not only for the destruction of their own comfort, but of their very means of subsistence, can we forget that it is the bitter policy, the destructive warfare of the last eighteen years, which has destroyed their comfort, your comfort, all men’s comfort? that policy, which, originating with “great statesmen now no more,” has survived the dead to become a curse on the living, unto the third and fourth generation! These men never destroyed their looms till they were become useless, worse than useless; till they were become actual impediments to their exertions in obtaining their daily bread. Can you, then, wonder that in times like these, when bankruptcy, convicted fraud, and imputed

felony are found in a station not far beneath that of your Lordships, the lowest, though once most useful portion of the people, should forget their duty in their distresses, and become only less guilty than one of their representatives? But while the exalted offender can find means to baffle the law, new capital punishments must be devised, new snares of death must be spread for the wretched mechanic, who is famished into guilt. These men were willing to dig, but the spade was in other hands: they were not ashamed to beg, but there was none to relieve them: their own means of subsistence were cut off, all other employments pre-occupied; and their excesses, however to be deplored and condemned, can hardly be subject of surprise.

It has been stated that the persons in the temporary possession of frames connive at their destruction; if this be proved upon inquiry, it were necessary that such material accessories to the crime should be principals in the punishment. But I did hope, that any measure proposed by his Majesty's government for your Lordships' decision, would have had conciliation for its basis; or, if that were hopeless, that some previous inquiry, some deliberation, would have been deemed requisite; not that we should have been called at once, without examination and without cause, to pass sentences by wholesale, and sign death-warrants blindfold. But, admitting that these men had no cause of complaint; that the grievances of them and their employers were alike groundless; that they deserved the worst; — what inefficiency, what imbecility has been evinced in the method chosen to reduce them! Why were the military called out to be made a mockery of, if they were to be called out at all? As far as the difference of seasons would permit, they have merely parodied the summer campaign of Major Sturgeon; and, indeed, the whole proceedings, civil and military, seemed on the model of those of the mayor and corporation of Garratt. — Such marchings and countermarchings! — from Nottingham to Bullwell, from Bullwell to Banford, from Banford to Mansfield! And when at length the detachments arrived at their destination, in all “the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,” they came just in time to witness the mischief which had been done, and ascertain the escape of the perpetrators, to collect the “*spolia opima*” in the fragments of broken frames, and return to their quarters amidst the derision of old women, and the hootings of children.

Now, though, in a free country, it were to be wished that our military should never be too formidable, at least to ourselves, I cannot see the policy of placing them in situations where they can only be made ridiculous. As the sword is the worst argument that can be used, so should it be the last. In this instance it has been the first; but providentially as yet only in the scabbard. The present measure will, indeed, pluck it from the sheath; yet had proper meetings been

held in the earlier stages of these riots, had the grievances of these men and their masters (for they also had their grievances) been fairly weighed and justly examined, I do think that means might have been devised to restore these workmen to their avocations, and tranquillity to the county. At present the county suffers from the double infliction of an idle military and a starving population. In what state of apathy have we been plunged so long, that now for the first time the House has been officially apprised of these disturbances? All this has been transacting within 130 miles of London; and yet we, “good easy men, have deemed full sure our greatness was a-ripening,” and have sat down to enjoy our foreign triumphs in the midst of domestic calamity. But all the cities you have taken, all the armies which have retreated before your leaders, are but paltry subjects of self-congratulation, if your land divides against itself, and your dragoons and your executioners must be let loose against your fellow-citizens. — You call these men a mob, desperate, dangerous, and ignorant; and seem to think that the only way to quiet the “*Bellua multorum capitum*” is to lop off a few of its superfluous heads. But even a mob may be better reduced to reason by a mixture of conciliation and firmness, than by additional irritation and redoubled penalties. Are we aware of our obligations to a mob? It is the mob that labour in your fields and serve in your houses, — that man your navy, and recruit your army, — that have enabled you to defy all the world, and can also defy you when neglect and calamity have driven them to despair! You may call the people a mob; but do not forget that a mob too often speaks the sentiments of the people.

And here I must remark, with what alacrity you are accustomed to fly to the succour of your distressed allies, leaving the distressed of your own country to the care of Providence or — the parish. When the Portuguese suffered under the retreat of the French, every arm was stretched out, every hand was opened, from the rich man’s largess to the widow’s mite, all was bestowed, to enable them to rebuild their villages and replenish their granaries. And at this moment, when thousands of misguided but most unfortunate fellow-countrymen are struggling with the extremes of hardships and hunger, as your charity began abroad it should end at home. A much less sum, a tithe of the bounty bestowed on Portugal, even if those men (which I cannot admit without inquiry) could not have been restored to their employments, would have rendered unnecessary the tender mercies of the bayonet and the gibbet. But doubtless our friends have too many foreign claims to admit a prospect of domestic relief; though never did such objects demand it. I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula, I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never under the most despotic of infidel governments did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I

have seen since my return in the very heart of a Christian country. And what are your remedies? After months of inaction, and months of action worse than inactivity, at length comes forth the grand specific, the never-failing nostrum of all state physicians, from the days of Draco to the present time. After feeling the pulse and shaking the head over the patient, prescribing the usual course of warm water and bleeding, — the warm water of your mawkish police, and the lancets of your military, — these convulsions must terminate in death, the sure consummation of the prescriptions of all political Sangrados. Setting aside the palpable injustice and the certain inefficiency of the Bill, are there not capital punishments sufficient in your statutes? Is there not blood enough upon your penal code, that more must be poured forth to ascend to Heaven and testify against you? How will you carry the Bill into effect? Can you commit a whole county to their own prisons? Will you erect a gibbet in every field, and hang up men like scarecrows? or will you proceed (as you must to bring this measure into effect) by decimation? place the county under martial law? depopulate and lay waste all around you? and restore Sherwood Forest as an acceptable gift to the crown, in its former condition of a royal chase and an asylum for outlaws? Are these the remedies for a starving and desperate populace? Will the famished wretch who has braved your bayonets be appalled by your gibbets? When death is a relief, and the only relief it appears that you will afford him, will he be dragooned into tranquillity? Will that which could not be effected by your grenadiers be accomplished by your executioners? If you proceed by the forms of law, where is your evidence?

Those who have refused to impeach their accomplices when transportation only was the punishment, will hardly be tempted to witness against them when death is the penalty. With all due deference to the noble lords opposite, I think a little investigation, some previous inquiry, would induce even them to change their purpose. That most favourite state measure, so marvellously efficacious in many and recent instances, temporising, would not be without its advantages in this. When a proposal is made to emancipate or relieve, you hesitate, you deliberate for years, you temporise and tamper with the minds of men; but a death-bill must be passed off-hand, without a thought of the consequences. Sure I am, from what I have heard, and from what I have seen, that to pass the Bill under all the existing circumstances, without inquiry, without deliberation, would only be to add injustice to irritation, and barbarity to neglect. The framers of such a bill must be content to inherit the honours of that Athenian law-giver whose edicts were said to be written not in ink but in blood. But suppose it passed; suppose one of these men, as I have seen them, — meagre with famine, sullen with despair, careless of a life which your Lordships are perhaps about to

value at something less than the price of a stocking-frame; — suppose this man surrounded by the children for whom he is unable to procure bread at the hazard of his existence, about to be torn for ever from a family which he lately supported in peaceful industry, and which it is not his fault that he can no longer so support; — suppose this man — and there are ten thousand such from whom you may select your victims — dragged into court, to be tried for this new offence, by this new law; still, there are two things wanting to convict and condemn him; and these are, in my opinion, — twelve butchers for a jury, and a Jeffreys for a judge!

2. Debate on the Earl of Donoughmore's Motion for a Committee on the Roman Catholic Claims, April 21, 1812.

[Byron's notes for a portion of his speech are in the possession of Mr. Murray.]

Lord **Byron** rose and said:

My Lords, — The question before the House has been so frequently, fully, and ably discussed, and never perhaps more ably than on this night, that it would be difficult to adduce new arguments for or against it. But with each discussion difficulties have been removed, objections have been canvassed and refuted, and some of the former opponents of Catholic emancipation have at length conceded to the expediency of relieving the petitioners. In conceding thus much, however, a new objection is started; it is not the time, say they, or it is an improper time, or there is time enough yet. In some degree I concur with those who say it is not the time exactly; that time is past; better had it been for the country that the Catholics possessed at this moment their proportion of our privileges, that their nobles held their due weight in our councils, than that we should be assembled to discuss their claims. It had indeed been better:

“Non tempore tali
Cogere concilium cum muros obsidet hostis.”

The enemy is without, and distress within. It is too late to cavil on doctrinal points, when we must unite in defence of things more important than the mere ceremonies of religion. It is indeed singular, that we are called together to deliberate, not on the God we adore, for in that we are agreed; not about the king

we obey, for to him we are loyal; but how far a difference in the ceremonials of worship, how far believing not too little, but too much (the worst that can be imputed to the Catholics), how far too much devotion to their God may incapacitate our fellow-subjects from effectually serving their king.

Much has been said, within and without doors, of church and state; and although those venerable words have been too often prostituted to the most despicable of party purposes, we cannot hear them too often: all, I presume, are the advocates of church and state, — the church of Christ, and the state of Great Britain; but not a state of exclusion and despotism; not an intolerant church; not a church militant, which renders itself liable to the very objection urged against the Romish communion, and in a greater degree, for the Catholic merely withholds its spiritual benediction (and even that is doubtful), but our church, or rather our churchmen, not only refuse to the Catholic their spiritual grace, but all temporal blessings whatsoever. It was an observation of the great Lord Peterborough, made within these walls, or within the walls where the Lords then assembled, that he was for a “parliamentary king and a parliamentary constitution, but not a parliamentary God and a parliamentary religion.” The interval of a century has not weakened the force of the remark. It is indeed time that we should leave off these petty cavils on frivolous points, these Lilliputian sophistries, whether our “eggs are best broken at the broad or narrow end.”

The opponents of the Catholics may be divided into two classes; those who assert that the Catholics have too much already, and those who allege that the lower orders, at least, have nothing more to require. We are told by the former, that the Catholics never will be contented: by the latter, that they are already too happy. The last paradox is sufficiently refuted by the present as by all past petitions: it might as well be said, that the negroes did not desire to be emancipated; but this is an unfortunate comparison, for you have already delivered them out of the house of bondage without any petition on their part, but many from their taskmasters to a contrary effect; and for myself, when I consider this, I pity the Catholic peasantry for not having the good fortune to be born black. But the Catholics are contented, or at least ought to be, as we are told; I shall, therefore, proceed to touch on a few of those circumstances which so marvellously contribute to their exceeding contentment. They are not allowed the free exercise of their religion in the regular army; the Catholic soldier cannot absent himself from the service of the Protestant clergyman; and unless he is quartered in Ireland, or in Spain, where can he find eligible opportunities of attending his own? The permission of Catholic chaplains to the Irish militia regiments was conceded as a special favour, and not till after years of remonstrance, although an Act, passed in 1793, established it as a right. But are

the Catholics properly protected in Ireland? Can the church purchase a rood of land whereon to erect a chapel? No! all the places of worship are built on leases of trust or sufferance from the laity, easily broken, and often betrayed. The moment any irregular wish, any casual caprice of the benevolent landlord meets with opposition, the doors are barred against the congregation. This has happened continually, but in no instance more glaringly than at the town of Newton Barry, in the county of Wexford. The Catholics enjoying no regular chapel, as a temporary expedient hired two barns; which, being thrown into one, served for public worship. At this time, there was quartered opposite to the spot an officer whose mind appears to have been deeply imbued with those prejudices which the Protestant petitions now on the table prove to have been fortunately eradicated from the more rational portion of the people; and when the Catholics were assembled on the Sabbath as usual, in peace and good-will towards men, for the worship of their God and yours, they found the chapel door closed, and were told that if they did not immediately retire (and they were told this by a yeoman officer and a magistrate), the Riot Act should be read, and the assembly dispersed at the point of the bayonet! This was complained of to the middle-man of government, the secretary at the Castle in 1806, and the answer was (in lieu of redress), that he would cause a letter to be written to the colonel, to prevent, if possible, the recurrence of similar disturbances. Upon this fact no very great stress need be laid; but it tends to prove that while the Catholic church has not power to purchase land for its chapels to stand upon, the laws for its protection are of no avail. In the mean time, the Catholics are at the mercy of every "pelting petty officer," who may choose to play his "fantastic tricks before high heaven," to insult his God, and injure his fellow-creatures.

Every schoolboy, any footboy (such have held commissions in our service), any footboy who can exchange his shoulder-knot for an epaulette, may perform all this and more against the Catholic by virtue of that very authority delegated to him by his sovereign for the express purpose of defending his fellow-subjects to the last drop of his blood, without discrimination or distinction between Catholic and Protestant.

Have the Irish Catholics the full benefit of trial by jury? They have not; they never can have until they are permitted to share the privilege of serving as sheriffs and under-sheriffs. Of this a striking example occurred at the last Enniskillen assizes. A yeoman was arraigned for the murder of a Catholic named Macvournagh; three respectable, uncontradicted witnesses, deposed that they saw the prisoner load, take aim, fire at, and kill the said Macvournagh. This was properly commented on by the judge; but, to the astonishment of the bar, and indignation of the court, the Protestant jury acquitted the accused. So glaring was

the partiality, that Mr. Justice Osborne felt it his duty to bind over the acquitted, but not absolved assassin, in large recognizances; thus for a time taking away his licence to kill Catholics.

Are the very laws passed in their favour observed? They are rendered nugatory in trivial as in serious cases. By a late Act, Catholic chaplains are permitted in gaols; but in Fermanagh county the grand jury lately persisted in presenting a suspended clergyman for the office, thereby evading the statute, notwithstanding the most pressing remonstrances of a most respectable magistrate named Fletcher to the contrary. Such is law, such is justice, for the happy, free, contented Catholic!

It has been asked, in another place, Why do not the rich Catholics endow foundations for the education of the priesthood? Why do you not permit them to do so? Why are all such bequests subject to the interference, the vexatious, arbitrary, peculating interference of the Orange commissioners for charitable donations?

As to Maynooth college, in no instance, except at the time of its foundation, when a noble Lord (Camden), at the head of the Irish administration, did appear to interest himself in its advancement, and during the government of a noble Duke (Bedford), who, like his ancestors, has ever been the friend of freedom and mankind, and who has not so far adopted the selfish policy of the day as to exclude the Catholics from the number of his fellow-creatures; with these exceptions, in no instance has that institution been properly encouraged. There was indeed a time when the Catholic clergy were conciliated, while the Union was pending, that Union which could not be carried without them, while their assistance was requisite in procuring addresses from the Catholic counties; then they were cajoled and caressed, feared and flattered, and given to understand that “the Union would do every thing”; but the moment it was passed, they were driven back with contempt into their former obscurity.

In the conduct pursued towards Maynooth college, every thing is done to irritate and perplex — every thing is done to efface the slightest impression of gratitude from the Catholic mind; the very hay made upon the lawn, the fat and tallow of the beef and mutton allowed, must be paid for and accounted upon oath. It is true, this economy in miniature cannot sufficiently be commended, particularly at a time when only the insect defaulters of the Treasury, your Hunts and your Chinnerys, when only those “gilded bugs” can escape the microscopic eye of ministers. But when you come forward, session after session, as your paltry pittance is wrung from you with wrangling and reluctance, to boast of your liberality, well might the Catholic exclaim, in the words of Prior:

“To John I owe some obligation,
But John unluckily thinks fit
To publish it to all the nation,
So John and I are more than quit.”

Some persons have compared the Catholics to the beggar in *Gil Blas*: who made them beggars? Who are enriched with the spoils of their ancestors? And cannot you relieve the beggar when your fathers have made him such? If you are disposed to relieve him at all, cannot you do it without flinging your farthings in his face? As a contrast, however, to this beggarly benevolence, let us look at the Protestant Charter Schools; to them you have lately granted £41,000: thus are they supported; and how are they recruited? Montesquieu observes on the English constitution, that the model may be found in Tacitus, where the historian describes the policy of the Germans, and adds, “This beautiful system was taken from the woods;” so in speaking of the charter schools, it may be observed, that this beautiful system was taken from the gipsies. These schools are recruited in the same manner as the Janissaries at the time of their enrolment under Amurath, and the gipsies of the present day, with stolen children, with children decoyed and kidnapped from their Catholic connections by their rich and powerful Protestant neighbours: this is notorious, and one instance may suffice to show in what manner: — The sister of a Mr. Carthy (a Catholic gentleman of very considerable property) died, leaving two girls, who were immediately marked out as proselytes, and conveyed to the charter school of Coolgreny; their uncle, on being apprised of the fact, which took place during his absence, applied for the restitution of his nieces, offering to settle an independence on these his relations; his request was refused, and not till after five years’ struggle, and the interference of very high authority, could this Catholic gentleman obtain back his nearest of kindred from a charity charter school. In this manner are proselytes obtained, and mingled with the offspring of such Protestants as may avail themselves of the institution. And how are they taught? A catechism is put into their hands, consisting of, I believe, forty-five pages, in which are three questions relative to the Protestant religion; one of these queries is, “Where was the Protestant religion before Luther?” Answer: “In the Gospel.” The remaining forty-four pages and a half regard the damnable idolatry of Papists!

Allow me to ask our spiritual pastors and masters, is this training up a child in the way which he should go? Is this the religion of the Gospel before the time of Luther? that religion which preaches “Peace on earth, and glory to God”? Is it bringing up infants to be men or devils? Better would it be to send them any where than teach them such doctrines; better send them to those islands in the

South Seas, where they might more humanely learn to become cannibals; it would be less disgusting that they were brought up to devour the dead, than persecute the living. Schools do you call them? call them rather dung-hills, where the viper of intolerance deposits her young, that when their teeth are cut and their poison is mature, they may issue forth, filthy and venomous, to sting the Catholic. But are these the doctrines of the Church of England, or of churchmen? No, the most enlightened churchmen are of a different opinion. What says Paley?

“I perceive no reason why men of different religious persuasions should not sit upon the same bench, deliberate in the same council, or fight in the same ranks, as well as men of various religious opinions upon any controverted topic of natural history, philosophy, or ethics.”

It may be answered, that Paley was not strictly orthodox; I know nothing of his orthodoxy, but who will deny that he was an ornament to the church, to human nature, to Christianity?

I shall not dwell upon the grievance of tithes, so severely felt by the peasantry; but it may be proper to observe, that there is an addition to the burden, a percentage to the gatherer, whose interest it thus becomes to rate them as highly as possible, and we know that in many large livings in Ireland the only resident Protestants are the tithe proctor and his family.

Amongst many causes of irritation, too numerous for recapitulation, there is one in the militia not to be passed over, — I mean the existence of Orange lodges amongst the privates. Can the officers deny this? And if such lodges do exist, do they, can they tend to promote harmony amongst the men, who are thus individually separated in society, although mingled in the ranks? And is this general system of persecution to be permitted; or is it to be believed that with such a system the Catholics can or ought to be contented? If they are, they belie human nature; they are then, indeed, unworthy to be any thing but the slaves you have made them. The facts stated are from most respectable authority, or I should not have dared in this place, or any place, to hazard this avowal. If exaggerated, there are plenty as willing, as I believe them to be unable, to disprove them. Should it be objected that I never was in Ireland, I beg leave to observe, that it is as easy to know something of Ireland, without having been there, as it appears with some to have been born, bred, and cherished there, and yet remain ignorant of its best interests.

But there are who assert that the Catholics have already been too much indulged. See (cry they) what has been done: we have given them one entire college; we allow them food and raiment, the full enjoyment of the elements, and leave to fight for us as long as they have limbs and lives to offer; and yet

they are never to be satisfied! — Generous and just declaimers! To this, and to this only, amount the whole of your arguments, when stripped of their sophistry. Those personages remind me of a story of a certain drummer, who, being called upon in the course of duty to administer punishment to a friend tied to the halberts, was requested to flog high, he did — to flog low, he did — to flog in the middle, he did, — high, low, down the middle, and up again, but all in vain; the patient continued his complaints with the most provoking pertinacity, until the drummer, exhausted and angry, flung down his scourge, exclaiming, “The devil burn you, there’s no pleasing you, flog where one will!” Thus it is, you have flogged the Catholic high, low, here, there, and every where, and then you wonder he is not pleased. It is true that time, experience, and that weariness which attends even the exercise of barbarity, have taught you to flog a little more gently; but still you continue to lay on the lash, and will so continue, till perhaps the rod may be wrested from your hands, and applied to the backs of yourselves and your posterity.

It was said by somebody in a former debate, (I forget by whom, and am not very anxious to remember,) if the Catholics are emancipated, why not the Jews? If this sentiment was dictated by compassion for the Jews, it might deserve attention, but as a sneer against the Catholic, what is it but the language of Shylock transferred from his daughter’s marriage to Catholic emancipation:

“Would any of the tribe of Barabbas
Should have it rather than a Christian!”

I presume a Catholic is a Christian, even in the opinion of him whose taste only can be called in question for his preference of the Jews.

It is a remark often quoted of Dr. Johnson, (whom I take to be almost as good authority as the gentle apostle of intolerance, Dr. Duigenan,) that he who could entertain serious apprehensions of danger to the church in these times, would have “cried fire in the deluge.” This is more than a metaphor; for a remnant of these antediluvians appear actually to have come down to us, with fire in their mouths and water in their brains, to disturb and perplex mankind with their whimsical outcries. And as it is an infallible symptom of that distressing malady with which I conceive them to be afflicted (so any doctor will inform your Lordships), for the unhappy invalids to perceive a flame perpetually flashing before their eyes, particularly when their eyes are shut (as those of the persons to whom I allude have long been), it is impossible to convince these poor creatures that the fire against which they are perpetually warning us and themselves is nothing but an *ignis fatuus* of their own drivelling imaginations. What rhubarb,

senna, or “what purgative drug can scour that fancy thence?” — It is impossible, they are given over, — theirs is the true

“Caput insanabile tribus Anticyris.”

These are your true Protestants. Like Bayle, who protested against all sects whatsoever, so do they protest against Catholic petitions, Protestant petitions, all redress, all that reason, humanity, policy, justice, and common sense can urge against the delusions of their absurd delirium. These are the persons who reverse the fable of the mountain that brought forth a mouse; they are the mice who conceive themselves in labour with mountains.

To return to the Catholics: suppose the Irish were actually contented under their disabilities; suppose them capable of such a bull as not to desire deliverance, — ought we not to wish it for ourselves? Have we nothing to gain by their emancipation? What resources have been wasted? What talents have been lost by the selfish system of exclusion? You already know the value of Irish aid; at this moment the defence of England is intrusted to the Irish militia; at this moment, while the starving people are rising in the fierceness of despair, the Irish are faithful to their trust. But till equal energy is imparted throughout by the extension of freedom, you cannot enjoy the full benefit of the strength which you are glad to interpose between you and destruction. Ireland has done much, but will do more. At this moment the only triumph obtained through long years of continental disaster has been achieved by an Irish general: it is true he is not a Catholic; had he been so, we should have been deprived of his exertions: but I presume no one will assert that his religion would have impaired his talents or diminished his patriotism; though, in that case, he must have conquered in the ranks, for he never could have commanded an army.

But he is fighting the battles of the Catholics abroad; his noble brother has this night advocated their cause, with an eloquence which I shall not depreciate by the humble tribute of my panegyric; whilst a third of his kindred, as unlike as unequal, has been combating against his Catholic brethren in Dublin, with circular letters, edicts, proclamations, arrests, and dispersions; — all the vexatious implements of petty warfare that could be wielded by the mercenary guerillas of government, clad in the rusty armour of their obsolete statutes. Your Lordships will doubtless divide new honours between the Saviour of Portugal, and the Disperser of Delegates. It is singular, indeed, to observe the difference between our foreign and domestic policy; if Catholic Spain, faithful Portugal, or the no less Catholic and faithful king of the one Sicily, (of which, by the by, you have lately deprived him,) stand in need of succour, away goes a fleet and an army, an ambassador and a subsidy, sometimes to fight pretty hardly, generally to negotiate very badly, and always to pay very dearly for our Popish allies. But

let four millions of fellow-subjects pray for relief, who fight and pay and labour in your behalf, they must be treated as aliens; and although their “father’s house has many mansions,” there is no resting-place for them. Allow me to ask, are you not fighting for the emancipation of Ferdinand VII, who certainly is a fool, and, consequently, in all probability a bigot? and have you more regard for a foreign sovereign than your own fellow-subjects, who are not fools, for they know your interest better than you know your own; who are not bigots, for they return you good for evil; but who are in worse durance than the prison of an usurper, inasmuch as the fetters of the mind are more galling than those of the body?

Upon the consequences of your not acceding to the claims of the petitioners, I shall not expatiate; you know them, you will feel them, and your children’s children when you are passed away. Adieu to that Union so called, as “*Lucus a non lucendo*” an Union from never uniting, which in its first operation gave a death-blow to the independence of Ireland, and in its last may be the cause of her eternal separation from this country. If it must be called an Union, it is the union of the shark with his prey; the spoiler swallows up his victim, and thus they become one and indivisible. Thus has great Britain swallowed up the Parliament, the constitution, the independence of Ireland, and refuses to disgorge even a single privilege, although for the relief of her swollen and distempered body politic.

And now, my Lords, before I sit down, will his Majesty’s ministers permit me to say a few words, not on their merits, for that would be superfluous, but on the degree of estimation in which they are held by the people of these realms? The esteem in which they are held has been boasted of in a triumphant tone on a late occasion within these walls, and a comparison instituted between their conduct and that of noble lords on this side of the House.

What portion of popularity may have fallen to the share of my noble friends (if such I may presume to call them), I shall not pretend to ascertain; but that of his Majesty’s ministers it were vain to deny. It is, to be sure, a little like the wind, “no one knows whence it cometh or whither it goeth;” but they feel it, they enjoy it, they boast of it. Indeed, modest and unostentatious as they are, to what part of the kingdom, even the most remote, can they flee to avoid the triumph which pursues them? If they plunge into the midland counties, there will they be greeted by the manufacturers, with spurned petitions in their hands, and those halters round their necks recently voted in their behalf, imploring blessings on the heads of those who so simply, yet ingeniously, contrived to remove them from their miseries in this to a better world. If they journey on to Scotland, from Glasgow to John o’ Groat’s, every where will they receive similar marks of

approbation. If they take a trip from Portpatrick to Donaghadee, there will they rush at once into the embraces of four Catholic millions, to whom their vote of this night is about to endear them for ever. When they return to the metropolis, if they can pass under Temple Bar without unpleasant sensations at the sight of the greedy niches over that ominous gateway, they cannot escape the acclamations of the livery, and the more tremulous, but not less sincere, applause, the blessings, “not loud, but deep,” of bankrupt merchants and doubting stockholders. If they look to the army, what wreaths, not of laurel, but of nightshade, are preparing for the heroes of Walcheren! It is true, there are few living deponents left to testify to their merits on that occasion; but a “cloud of witnesses” are gone above from that gallant army which they so generously and piously despatched, to recruit the “noble army of martyrs.”

What if in the course of this triumphal career (in which they will gather as many pebbles as Caligula’s army did on a similar triumph, the prototype of their own,) they do not perceive any of those memorials which a grateful people erect in honour of their benefactors; what although not even a sign-post will condescend to depose the Saracen’s head in favour of the likeness of the conquerors of Walcheren, they will not want a picture who can always have a caricature, or regret the omission of a statue who will so often see themselves exalted into effigy. But their popularity is not limited to the narrow bounds of an island; there are other countries where their measures, and, above all, their conduct to the Catholics, must render them pre-eminently popular. If they are beloved here, in France they must be adored. There is no measure more repugnant to the designs and feelings of Bonaparte than Catholic emancipation; no line of conduct more propitious to his projects than that which has been pursued, is pursuing, and, I fear, will be pursued towards Ireland. What is England without Ireland, and what is Ireland without the Catholics? It is on the basis of your tyranny Napoleon hopes to build his own. So grateful must oppression of the Catholics be to his mind, that doubtless (as he has lately permitted some renewal of intercourse) the next cartel will convey to this country cargoes of Sevres china and blue ribands, (things in great request, and of equal value at this moment,) blue ribands of the Legion of Honour for Dr. Duigenan and his ministerial disciples. Such is that well-earned popularity, the result of those extraordinary expeditions, so expensive to ourselves, and so useless to our allies; of those singular inquiries, so exculpatory to the accused, and so dissatisfactory to the people; of those paradoxical victories, so honourable, as we are told, to the British name, and so destructive to the best interests of the British nation: above all, such is the reward of the conduct pursued by ministers towards the Catholics.

I have to apologise to the House, who will, I trust, pardon one not often in the habit of intruding upon their indulgence, for so long attempting to engage their attention. My most decided opinion is, as my vote will be, in favour of the motion.

3. Debate on Major Cartwright's Petition. June 1, 1813.

Lord **Byron** rose and said:

My Lords, — the petition which I now hold for the purpose of presenting to the House is one which, I humbly conceive, requires the particular attention of your Lordships, inasmuch as, though signed but by a single individual, it contains statements which (if not disproved) demand most serious investigation. The grievance of which the petitioner complains is neither selfish nor imaginary. It is not his own only, for it has been and is still felt by numbers. No one without these walls, nor indeed within, but may to-morrow be made liable to the same insult and obstruction, in the discharge of an imperious duty for the restoration of the true constitution of these realms, by petitioning for reform in Parliament. The petitioner, my Lords, is a man whose long life has been spent in one unceasing struggle for the liberty of the subject, against that undue influence which has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished; and whatever difference of opinion may exist as to his political tenets, few will be found to question the integrity of his intentions. Even now oppressed with years, and not exempt from the infirmities attendant on his age, but still unimpaired in talent, and unshaken in spirit — "*frangas non flectes*" — he has received many a wound in the combat against corruption; and the new grievance, the fresh insult, of which he complains, may inflict another scar, but no dishonour. The petition is signed by John Cartwright; and it was in behalf of the people and Parliament, in the lawful pursuit of that reform in the representation which is the best service to be rendered both to Parliament and people, that he encountered the wanton outrage which forms the subject-matter of his petition to your Lordships. It is couched in firm, yet respectful language — in the language of a man, not regardless of what is due to himself, but at the same time, I trust, equally mindful of the deference to be paid to this House. The petitioner states, amongst other matter of equal, if not greater importance, to all who are British in their feelings, as well as blood and birth, that on the 21st January, 1813, at Huddersfield, himself and six other persons, who, on hearing of his arrival, had waited on him merely as a testimony of respect, were seized by a military and civil force, and

kept in close custody for several hours, subjected to gross and abusive insinuation from the commanding officer, relative to the character of the petitioner; that he (the petitioner) was finally carried before a magistrate, and not released till an examination of his papers proved that there was not only no just, but not even statutable charge against him; and that, notwithstanding the promise and order from the presiding magistrates of a copy of the warrant against your petitioner, it was afterwards withheld on divers pretexts, and has never until this hour been granted. The names and condition of the parties will be found in the petition. To the other topics touched upon in the petition I shall not now advert, from a wish not to encroach upon the time of the House; but I do most sincerely call the attention of your Lordships to its general contents — it is in the cause of the Parliament and people that the rights of this venerable freeman have been violated, and it is, in my opinion, the highest mark of respect that could be paid to the House, that to your justice, rather than by appeal to any inferior court, he now commits himself. Whatever may be the fate of his remonstrance, it is some satisfaction to me, though mixed with regret for the occasion, that I have this opportunity of publicly stating the obstruction to which the subject is liable, in the prosecution of the most lawful and imperious of his duties, the obtaining by petition reform in Parliament. I have shortly stated his complaint; the petitioner has more fully expressed it. Your Lordships will, I hope, adopt some measure fully to protect and redress him, and not him alone, but the whole body of the people, insulted and aggrieved in his person, by the interposition of an abused civil and unlawful military force between them and their right of petition to their own representatives.

His Lordship then presented the petition from Major Cartwright, which was read, complaining of the circumstances at Huddersfield, and of interruptions given to the right of petitioning in several places in the northern parts of the kingdom, and which his Lordship moved should be laid on the table.

Several lords having spoken on the question,

Lord **Byron** replied, that he had, from motives of duty, presented this petition to their Lordships' consideration. The noble Earl had contended that it was not a petition, but a speech; and that, as it contained no prayer, it should not be received. What was the necessity of a prayer? If that word were to be used in its proper sense, their Lordships could not expect that any man should pray to others. He had only to say, that the petition, though in some parts expressed strongly perhaps, did not contain any improper mode of address, but was couched in respectful language towards their Lordships; he should therefore trust their Lordships would allow the petition to be received.

APPENDIX III — Lady Caroline Lamb and Byron

1. The following letter is one of the first which Lady Caroline wrote to Byron, in the spring of 1812:

“The Rose Lord Byron gave Lady Caroline Lamb died in despite of every effort made to save it; probably from regret at its fallen Fortunes. Hume, at least, who is no great believer in most things, says that many more die of broken hearts than is supposed. When Lady Caroline returns from Brocket Hall, she will dispatch the *Cabinet Maker* to Lord Biron, with the Flower she wishes most of all others to resemble, as, however deficient its beauty and even use, it has a noble and aspiring mind, and, having once beheld in its full lustre the bright and unclouded sun that for one moment condescended to shine upon it, never while it exists could it think any lower object worthy of its worship and Admiration. Yet the sunflower was punished for its temerity; but its fate is more to be envied than that of many less proud flowers. It is still permitted to gaze, though at the humblest distance, on him who is superior to every other, and, though in this cold foggy atmosphere it meets no doubt with many disappointments, and though it never could, never will, have reason to boast of any peculiar mark of condescension or attention from the bright star to whom it pays constant homage, yet to behold it sometimes, to see it gazed at, to hear it admired, will repay all. She hopes, therefore, when brought by the little Page, it will be graciously received without any more Taunts and cuts about ‘Love of what is New.’

“Lady Caroline does not plead guilty to this most unkind charge, at least no further than is laudable, for that which is rare and is distinguished and singular ought to be more prized and sought after than what is commonplace and disagreeable. How can the other accusation, of being easily pleased, agree with this? The very circumstance of seeking out that which is of high value shows at least a mind not readily satisfied. But to attempt excuses for faults would be impossible with Lady Caroline. They have so long been rooted in a soil suited to their growth that a far less penetrating eye than Lord Byron’s might perceive them — even on the shortest acquaintance. There is not one, however, though long indulged, that shall not be instantly got rid of, if L’d Byron thinks it worth while to name them. The reproof and abuse of some, however severe and just, may be valued more than the easily gained encomiums of the rest of the world.

“Miss Mercer, were she here, would join with Lady Caroline in a last request during their absence, that, besides not forgetting his new acquaintances, he would eat and drink like an English man till their return. The lines upon the only dog ever loved by L’d Byron are beautiful. What wrong then, that, having such proof of the faith and friendship of this animal, L’d Byron should censure the whole race by the following unjust remarks:

“Perchance my dog will whine in vain
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long e’er I come back again,
He’d tear me where he stands.’

“March 27th, 1812, *Good Friday*.”

2. The following are the lines written by Lady Caroline when she burned Byron in effigy at Brocket Hall (endorsed, in Mrs. Leigh’s handwriting, “December, 1812”):

“Address Spoken by the Page at Brocket Hall, before the Bonfire.

“Is this Guy Faux you burn in effigy?
Why bring the Traitor here? What is Guy Faux to me?
Guy Faux betrayed his country, and his laws.
England revenged the wrong; his was a public cause.
But I have private cause to raise this flame.
Burn also those, and be their fate the same.

[Puts the Basket in the fire under the figure.]

See here are locks and braids of coloured hair
Worn oft by me, to make the people stare;
Rouge, feathers, flowers, and all those tawdry things,
Besides those Pictures, letters, chains, and rings —
All made to lure the mind and please the eye,
And fill the heart with pride and vanity —
Burn, fire, burn; these glittering toys destroy.
While thus we hail the blaze with throats of joy.
Burn, fire, burn, while wondering Boys exclaim,
And gold and trinkets glitter in the flame.

Ah! look not thus on me, so grave, so sad;
Shake not your heads, nor say the Lady's mad.
Judge not of others, for there is but one
To whom the heart and feelings can be known.
Upon my youthful faults few censures cast.
Look to the future — and forgive the past.
London, farewell; vain world, vain life, adieu!
Take the last tears I e'er shall shed for you.
Young tho' I seem, I leave the world for ever,
Never to enter it again — no, never — never!"

3. The following letter was apparently written in the summer of 1812:

"You have been very generous and kind if you have not betray'd me, and I do *not think you have*. My remaining in Town and seeing you thus is sacrificing the last chance I have left. I expose myself to every eye, to every unkind observation. You think me weak, and selfish; you think I do not struggle to withstand my own feelings, but indeed it is exacting more than human nature can bear, and when I came out last night, which was of itself an effort, and when I heard your name announced, the moment after I saw nothing more, but seemed in a dream. Miss Berry's very loud laugh and penetrating eyes did not restore me. She, however, [was] good natur'd and remain'd near me, and Mr. Moor (*sic*), though he really does not approve one feeling I have, had kindness of heart to stay near me. Otherwise I felt so ill I could not have struggled longer. Lady Cahir said, 'You are ill; shall we go away?' which I [was] very glad to accept; but we could not get through, and so I fear it caus'd you pain to see me intrude again. I sent a groom to Holmes twice yesterday morning, to prevent his going to you, or giving you a letter full of flippant jokes, written in one moment of gaiety, which is quite gone since. I am so afraid he has been to you; if so, I entreat you to forgive it, and to do just what you think right about the Picture.

"I have been drawing you Mad. de Staël, as the last I sent was not like. If you do not approve this, give it Murray, and pray do not be angry with me.

"Do not marry yet, or, if you do, let me know it first. I shall not suffer, if she you chuse be worth you, but she will never love you as I did. I am going to the Chapple Royal at St. James. Do you ever go there? It begins at 1/2 past 5, and lasts till six; it is the most beautiful singing I ever heard; the choristers sing 'By the waters of Babylon.'

“The Peers sit below; the Women quite apart. But for the evening service very few go; I wonder that more do not, — it is really most beautiful, for those who like that style of music. If you never heard it, go there some day, but not when it is so cold as this. How very pale you are! What a contrast with Moore! *‘Mai io l’ho veduto piu bello che jeri, ma e la belta della morte,’* or a statue of white marble so colourless, and the dark brow and hair such a contrast. I never see you without wishing to cry; if any painter could paint me that face as it is, I would give them any thing I possess on earth, — not one has yet given the countenance and complexion as it is. I only could, if I knew how to draw and paint, because one must feel it to give it the real expression.”

4. The following letter was evidently written at the time when the separation of Lord and Lady Byron was first rumoured:

“Melbourne House, Thursday.

“When so many wiser and better surround you, it is not for me to presume to hope that anything I can say will find favour in your sight; but yet I must venture to intrude upon you, even though your displeasure against me be all I gain for so doing. All others may have some object or interest in their’s; I have none, but the wish to save you. Will you generously consent to what is for the peace of both parties? and will you act in a manner worthy of yourself? I am sure in the end you will consent. Even were everything now left to your own choice, you never could bring yourself to live with a person who felt desirous of being separated from you. I know you too well to believe this possible, and I am sure that a separation nobly and generously arranged by you will at once silence every report spread against either party. Believe me, Lord Byron, you will feel happier when you act thus, and all the world will approve your conduct, which I know is not a consideration with you, but still should in some measure be thought of. They tell me that you have accused me of having spread injurious reports against you. Had you the heart to say this? I do not greatly believe it; but it is affirmed and generally thought that you said so. You have often been unkind to me, but never as unkind as this.

“Those who are dear to you cannot feel more anxious for your happiness than I do. They may fear to offend you more than I ever will, but they cannot be more ready to serve you. I wish to God that I could see one so superior in mind and talents and every grace and power that can fascinate and delight, happier. You might still be so, Lord Byron, if you would believe what some day you will find true. Have you ever thought for one moment seriously? Do you wish to heap

such misery upon yourself that you will no longer be able to endure it? Return to virtue and happiness, for God's sake, whilst it is yet time. Oh, Lord Byron, let one who has loved you with a devotion almost profane find favour so far as to incline you to hear her. Sometimes from the mouth of a sinner advice may be received that a proud heart disdains to take from those who are upon an equality with themselves. If this is so, may it now, even now, have some little weight with you. Do not drive things to desperate extremes. Do not, even though you may have the power, use it to ill. God bless and sooth you, and preserve you. I cannot see all that I once admired and loved so well ruining himself and others without feeling it deeply. If what I have said is unwise, at least believe the motive was a kind one; and would to God it might avail.

"I cannot believe that you will not act generously in this instance.

"Yours, unhappily as it has proved for me,

"Caroline.

"Those of my family who have seen Lady Byron have assured me that, whatever her sorrow, she is the last in the world to reproach or speak ill of you. She is most miserable. What regret will yours be evermore if false friends or resentment impel you to act harshly on this occasion? Whatever my feelings may be towards you or her, I have, with the most scrupulous care for both your sakes, avoided either calling, or sending, or interfering. To say that I have spread reports against either is, therefore, as unjust as it is utterly false. I fear no enquiry."

5. The following letter probably refers to the publication of the lines, "Fare thee Well," in April, 1816:

"At a moment of such deep agony, and I may add shame — when utterly disgraced, judge, Byron, what my feelings must be at Murray's shewing me some beautiful verses of yours. I do implore you for God sake not to publish them. Could I have seen you one moment, I would explain why. I have only time to add that, however those who surround you may make you disbelieve it, you will draw ruin on your own head and hers if at this moment you shew these. I know not from what quarter the report originates. You accused *me*, and falsely; but if you could hear all that is said at this moment, you would believe one, who, though your enemy, though for ever alienated from you, though resolved never more, whilst she lives, to see or speak to or forgive you, yet would perhaps die to

save you.

“Byron, hear me. My own misery I have scarce once thought of. What is the loss of one like me to the world? But when I see such as you are ruined for ever, and utterly insensible of it, I must [speak out]. Of course, I cannot say to Murray what I think of those verses, but to you, to you alone, I will say I think they will prove your ruin.”

6. In 1824, after the death of Byron, and after the publication of Captain Medwin’s *Recollections of Lord Byron*, Lady Caroline Lamb sent a letter to Mr. Henry Colburn, the publisher, enclosing one to be given to Medwin and published. Both are given here, and the latter should be read in substantiation or correction of what is stated in the notes. The letter is printed *verbatim et literatim*.

(1) Lady Caroline Lamb to Henry Colburn.

“[November (?), 1824.]

“**My Dear Sir**, — Walter who takes this will explain my wishes. Will you enable him to deliver my letter to Captain Medwin, and will you publish it? you are to give him ten pound for it; I will settle it with you. I am on my death bed, do not fail to obey my wishes. I send you my journals but do not publish them until I am dead.

“Yours,

“**Caroline Lamb.**”

(2) Lady Caroline Lamb to Captain Thomas Medwin.

[Endorsed, “This copy to be carefully preserved.” Hy. Cn. (Henry Colburn?).]
“[November (?), 1824.]

“**Sir**, — I hope you will excuse my intruding upon your time, with the most intense interest I have just finished your book which does you credit as to the manner in which it is executed and after the momentary pain in part which it

excites in many a bosom, will live in despite of censure — and be gratefully accepted by the Public as long as Lord Byron's name is remembered — yet as you have left to one who adored him a bitter legacy, and as I feel secure the lines 'remember thee — thou false to him thou fiend to me' — were his — and as I have been very ill & am not likely to trouble any one much longer — you will I am sure grant me one favour — let me to you at least confide the truth of the past — you owe it to me — you will not I know refuse me.

“It was when the first Child Harold came out upon Lord Byron's return from Greece that I first had the misfortune to be acquainted with him — at that time I was the happiest and gayest of human beings I do believe without exception — *I had married for love* and love the most romantic and ardent — my husband and I were so fond of each other that false as I too soon proved he never would part with me. Devonshire House was at that time closed from my Uncle's death for one year — at Melbourne House where I lived the Waltzes and Quadrilles were being daily practised, Lady Jersey, Lady Cowper, the Duke of Devonshire, Miss Milbanke and a number of foreigners coming there to learn — You may imagine what forty or fifty people dancing from 12 in the morning until near dinner time all young gay and noisy were — in the evenings we either had opposition suppers or went out to Balls and routs — such was the life I then led when Moore and Rogers introduced Lord Byron to me — What you say of his falling upstairs and of Miss Milbanke is all true. Lord Byron 3 days after this brought me a Rose and Carnation and used the very words I mentioned in Glenarvon — with a sort of half sarcastic smile — saying, 'Your Ladyship I am told likes all that is new and rare for a moment' — I have them still, and the woman who through many a trial has kept these relics with the romance of former ages — deserves not that you should speak of her as you do. Byron never never could say I had no heart. He never could say, either, that I had not loved my husband. In his letters to me he is perpetually telling me I love him the best of the two; and my only charm, believe me, in his eyes was, that I was innocent, affectionate, and enthusiastic.

Recall those words, and let me not go down with your book as heartless. Tell the truth; it is bad enough; but not what is worse. It makes me so nervous to write that I must stop — will it tire you too much if I continue? I was not a woman of the world. Had I been one of that sort, why would he have devoted nine entire months almost entirely to my society; have written perhaps ten times in a day; and lastly have press'd me to leave all and go with him — and this at the very moment when he was made an Idol of, and when, as he and you justly observe, I had few personal attractions. Indeed, indeed I tell the truth. Byron did

not affect — but he loved me as never woman was loved. I have had one of his letters copied in the stone press for you; one just before we parted. See if it looks like a mere lesson. Besides, he was then very good, to what he grew afterwards; & his health being delicate, he liked to read with me & stay with me out of the crowd. Not but what we went about everywhere together, and were at last invited always as if we had been married — It was a strange scene — but it was not vanity misled me. I grew to love him better than virtue, Religion — all prospects here. He broke my heart, & still I love him — witness the agony I experienced at his death & the tears your book has cost me. Yet, sir, allow me to say, although you have unintentionally given me pain, I had rather have experienced it than not have read your book. Parts of it are beautiful; and I can vouch for the truth of much, as I read his own Memoirs before Murray burnt them. Keep Lord Byron's letter to me (I have the original) & some day add a word or two to your work from his own words, not to let every one think I am heartless. The cause of my leaving Lord Byron was this; my dearest Mother, now dead, grew so terrified about us — that upon hearing a false report that we were gone off together she was taken dangerously ill & broke a blood vessel. Byron would not believe it, but it was true. When he was convinced, we parted. I went to Ireland, & remained there 3 months. He wrote, every day, long kind entertaining letters; it is these he asked Murray to look out, and extract from, when he published the journal; but I would not part with them — I have them now — they would only burn them, & nothing of his should be burnt. At Dublin, God knows why, he wrote me the cruel letter part of which he acknowledges in Glenarvon (the 9th of November, 1812) — He knew it would destroy my mind and all else — it did so — Lady Oxford was no doubt the instigator. What will not a woman do to get rid of a rival? She knew that he still loved me — I need not tire you with every particular. I was brought to England a mere wreck; & in due time, Lady Melbourne & my mother being seriously alarmed for me, brought me to town, and allowed me to see Lord Byron. Our meeting was not what he insinuates — he asked me to forgive him; he looked sorry for me; he cried. I adored him still, but I felt as passionless as the dead may feel. — Would I had died there! — I should have died pitied, & still loved by him, & with the sympathy of all. I even should have pardoned myself — so deeply had I suffered. But, unhappily, we continued occasionally to meet. Lord Byron liked others, I only him — The scene at Lady Heathcote's is nearly true — he had made me swear I was never to Waltz. Lady Heathcote said, Come, Lady Caroline, you must begin, & I bitterly answered — oh yes! I am in a merry humour. I did so — but whispered to Lord Byron 'I conclude I may waltz *now*' and he answered sarcastically, 'with every body in turn — you always did it

better than any one. I shall have a pleasure in seeing you.” — I did so you may judge with what feelings. After this, feeling ill, I went into a small inner room where supper was prepared; Lord Byron & Lady Rancliffe entered after; seeing me, he said, ‘I have been admiring your dexterity.’ I clasped a knife, not intending anything. ‘Do, my dear,’ he said. ‘But if you mean to act a Roman’s part, mind which way you strike with your knife — be it at your own heart, not mine — you have struck there already.’ ‘Byron,’ I said, and ran away with the knife. I never stabbed myself. It is false. Lady Rancliffe & Tankerville screamed and said I would; people pulled to get it from me; I was terrified; my hand got cut, & the blood came over my gown. I know not what happened after — but this is the very truth. After this, long after, Ld. Byron abused by every one, made the theme of every one’s horror, yet pitied me enough to come & see me; and still, in spite of every one, William Lamb had the generosity to retain me. I never held my head up after — never could. It was in all the papers, and put not truly. It is true I burnt Lord Byron in Effigy, & his book, ring & chain. It is true I went to see him as a Carman, after all that! But it is also true, that, the last time we parted for ever, as he pressed his lips on mine (it was in the Albany) he said ‘poor Caro, if every one hates me, you, I see, will never change — No, not with ill usage!’ & I said, ‘yes, I *am* changed, & shall come near you no more.’ — For then he showed me letters, & told me things I cannot repeat, & all my attachment went. This was our last parting scene — well I remember it. It had an effect upon me not to be conceived — 3 years I had *worshipped* him.

“Shortly after he married, once, Lady Melbourne took me to see his Wife in Piccadilly. It was a cruel request, but Lord Byron himself made it. It is to this wedding visit he alludes. Mrs. Leigh, myself, Lady Melbourne, Lady Noel, & Lady Byron, were in the room. I never looked up. Annabella was very cold to me. Lord Byron came in & seemed agitated — his hand was cold, but he seemed kind. This was the last time upon this earth I ever met him. Soon after, the battle of Waterloo took place. My Brother was wounded, & I went to Brussels. I had one letter while at Paris from Ld. Byron; a jesting one; hoping I was as happy with the regiment as he was with his ‘Wife Bell.’ When I returned, the parting between them occurred — & my page affair — & Glenarvon. I wrote it in a month under circumstances would surprise every body, but which I am not at liberty to mention. Besides, it has nothing to do with your book and would only tire you. Previous to this, I once met, & once only, Lady Byron. It was just after the separation occurred. She was so altered I could hardly know her — she appeared heart broken. What she then said to me *I may not repeat* — she was however sent away, she did not go willingly.

She accused me of knowing every thing, & reproached me for not having stopped the marriage. How could I! She had been shewn my letters, and every one else. It is utterly false that she ever opened the desk — the nurse had nothing to do with the separation —

“From that hour, Lady Byron & I met no more, & it was after this, that, indignant & miserable, I wrote Glenarvon. Lady B. was more angry at it than he was — From that time, I put the whole as much as I could from my mind. Ld. Byron never once wrote to me — and always spoke of me with contempt. I was taken ill in March this year — Mrs. Russell Hunter & a nurse sat up with me. In the middle of the night I fancied I saw Ld. Byron — I screamed, jumped out of bed & desired them to save me from him. He looked horrible, & ground his teeth at me; he did not speak; his hair was straight; he was fatter than when I knew him, & not near so handsome. I felt convinced I was to die. This dream took possession of my mind. I had not dreamed of him since we had parted. It was, besides, like no other dream except one of my Mother that I ever had. I am glad to think it occurred before his death as I never did & hope I never shall see a Ghost. I have even avoided enquiring about the exact day for fear I should believe it — it made enough impression as it was. I told William, and my Brother & Murray at the time. Judge what my horror was, as well as grief, when, long after, the news came of his death, it was conveyed to me in two or 3 words — ‘Caroline, behave properly, I know it will shock you — Lord Byron is dead’ — This letter I received when laughing at Brockett Hall. Its effect or some other cause produced a fever from which I never yet have recovered — It was also singular that the first day I could go out in an open Carriage, as I was slowly driving up the hill here, — Lord Byron’s Hearse was at that moment passing under these very walls, and rested at Welwyn. William Lamb, who was riding on before me, met the procession at the Turnpike, & asked whose funeral it was. He was very much affected and shocked — I of course was not told; but, as I kept continually asking where & when he was to be buried, & had read in the papers it was to be at Westminster Abbey, I heard it too soon, & it made me very ill again.”

APPENDIX IV — Letters of Bernard Barton

The two following letters were written to Byron in 1814, by Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet (see Letter 238, 1): —

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“Woodbridge, Suffolk, Apl. 14th, 1814.

“**My Lord**, — I received this morning the reply with which your Lordship honour’d my last, and now avail myself of the permission you have so kindly granted to state as briefly as I can the circumstances which have induced me to make this application, and the extent of my wishes respecting your Lordship’s interference.

“Eight years since, I went into business in this place as a Merchant. I was then just of age, and, shortly after, married. The business in which I was engaged was of a very precarious Nature; and after vainly trying for 4 Years to make the best of it, I was compell’d to relinquish it altogether. Just then, to add to my distress, I lost my best, my firmest, my tenderest friend — the only being for whose sake I ever desir’d wealth, and the only one who could have cheer’d the gloom of Poverty. My Capital being a borrow’d one, I returned it as far as I could to the person who had lent it. Since that time, my Lord, I have been struggling to make the best of a Clerkship of £80 per ann., out of which I have to meet every expence, and still to maintain a respectable appearance in a Place where I have resided under different circumstances. Had I enter’d my present Situation free of all debts, I should have made it an inviolable rule to have limited my expenditure to my Income; but beginning in debt, compell’d by peculiar circumstances to mix with those much superior to myself, I have gone on till I find it quite impossible to go on any longer, and I am compelled to seek for some asylum where, by rigid frugality and indefatigable exertion, I may free myself from my present humiliating embarrassments; but while I am here the thing seems impracticable. Your Lordship will naturally inquire why I do not avail myself of the influence of those friends by whom I am known. As you have, my Lord, done me the honour to encourage me to state my position frankly, I will, without hesitation, inform you. I am, nominally at least, a Quaker. The persons to whom I should, in my present difficulties, naturally look for assistance are among the most respectable of that body; but my attachments to literary and metaphysical studies, and a line of conduct not compatible with the strictness of Quaker discipline, have, I am afraid, brought me into disrepute with those to whom I

should otherwise have confided my situation. Were I to disclose it, it would only be consider'd as a fit judgment on me for my scepticism and infidelity.

“This, my Lord, is a brief but faithful statement of my present situation; it is, as I before told your Lordship, in every respect an untenable one. I must relinquish it, and throw myself an outcast on society. *Can you, will you*, my Lord, exert *your influence* to save me from irretrievable ruin? Can you, my Lord, in any possible way, afford employment to me? Can you take me into your service — a young man, not totally destitute of talents, eager to exert them, and willing to do anything or be anything in his power? If you can, my Lord, I will promise to serve you not servilely, but faithfully in any manner you shall point out. Do not, I beg of you, my Lord, refuse my application the moment you peruse it. The mouse, you know, once was able to show its gratitude to the lion; and it may be in my power, if your Lordship will but give me the opportunity, to evince my deep gratitude for any kindness you may show me, not by *words*, but *deeds*. Be assur'd you will not have cause to repent any interest you have taken or may take in my concerns. For the civility you shewed me on a former occasion, my Lord, I felt, as I ought, much indebted; but infinitely more for the generosity of feeling and soundness of judgment which dictated the letter you then did me the honour to address to me. Ever since then I have entertain'd the highest opinion both of your head and your heart. Is it, then, strange, my Lord, that, surrounded by difficulties, perplexed at every step I take, I should look up to your Lordship for *advice*, and, if possible, for assistance? Be the consequences what they may, I have ventur'd on the presumption of doing so. If I have taken too great a liberty, I beg you, my Lord, to forgive me, and let the tale of my perplexities and my misfortunes, my impertinence and its punishment, be alike forgotten; it can, at any rate, only give your Lordship the trouble of reading a letter. If, on the other hand, your Lordship can in any way realize the hopes I have long enthusiastically cherished, why, the ‘blessing of him who is ready to perish shall fall on you.’ Be the event what it may, ‘*Crede Byron*’ is, your Lordship sees, my motto.

“I am, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s very obt. servt,

“**B. Barton.**

“P. S. — I shall wait with no common anxiety to see whether your Lordship will so far forgive this intrusion as to answer it.”

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“Woodbridge, April 15th, 1814.

“My Lord, — I should be truly sorry if my importunity should defeat its own purpose, and, instead of interesting your Lordship on my behalf, should make you regret the indulgence you have already granted me; but I really feel as if I had staked every remaining hope on the cast of the die, and, therefore, before it is thrown, I wish, my Lord, to make one or two more observations.

“Although in my last, which, as I before observed, was hastily written, I express’d my wish to be allow’d, *in some capacity or other*, to serve your Lordship, yet I am not so foolish as to think of fastening myself on you, my Lord, *bon gré ou malgré*. One reason for my expressing that wish, was an idea that your Lordship might go abroad before long; and, added to my own wish to see something of the world on which fate has thrown me, it occurred to me at the moment, that on such an occasion the services of one who is warmly attach’d to you, perhaps *romantically*, for I know nothing of your Lordship but by your writings, might be acceptable.

But, my Lord, although I have thus alluded to what would most gratify my own wishes, it was not intended to dictate to you the manner in which you might promote my interest. If your Lordship’s superior judgment and greater knowledge of the world can suggest anything else for my consideration, it shall receive every attention.

“One more remark, my Lord, and I have done. I am very sensible that in this application to your Lordship I have been guilty of what would be term’d by some a piece of great impertinence, and by most an act of consummate folly. Will you allow me, my Lord, frankly to state to you the arguments on which my resolutions were founded?

“I have not address’d you, my Lord, on the impulse of the moment, dictated by desperation, and adopted without reflection. No, my Lord; I had, or, at least, I thought I had, better reasons. I remembered that you had once condescended to address me ‘*candidly, not critically*,’ that you had even kindly interested yourself on my behalf. I thought that, amid all the keenness and poignancy of your habitual feelings, as powerfully pourtrayed in your writings, I could discern the workings of a heart *truly noble*. I imagin’d that what to a superficial observer appear’d only the overflowings of misanthropy, were, in reality, the effusions of deep sensibility. I convinc’d myself, by repeated perusals of your different productions, that though disappointments the most painful, and sensations the most acute, might have stung your heart to its very core, it had yet many feelings of the most exalted kind. From these I hoped everything. Those hopes may be disappointed, but the opinions which gave rise to them have not been hastily

form'd, nor will any selfish feeling of mortification be able to alter them.

"I do not, my Lord, intend the above as any idle complimentary apology for what I have done. I am not, God knows, just now in a complimentary mood; and if I were, you, my Lord, are one of the last persons on earth on whom I should be tempted to play off such trash as idle panegyrics. I esteem you, my Lord, not merely for your rank, still less for your personal qualities. The former I respect as I ought; of the latter I know nothing. But I feel something more than mere respect for your genius and your talents; and from your past conduct towards myself I cannot be insensible to your kindness. For these reasons, my Lord, I acted as I have done. I before told you that I consider'd you *no common character*, and I think your Lordship will admit that I have not treated you as such.

"Permit me once more, my Lord, to take my leave by assuring you that I am,

"With the truest esteem, "Your very obt. and humble servt.,

"Bernard Barton.

"P. S. — I hope your Lordship will find no difficulty in making out this scrawl; but really, not being able to mend my pen, I am forced to write with it backwards. When I have the good luck to find my pen-knife, I will endeavour to furnish myself with a better tool."

Part of the draft of Byron's answer to these two letters is in existence, and runs as follows:

"Albany, April 16th, 1814.

"Sir, — All offence is out of the question. My principal regret is that it is not in my power to be of service. My own plans are very unsettled, and at present, from a variety of circumstances, embarrassed, and, even were it otherwise, I should be both to offer anything like dependence to one, who, from education and acquirements, must doubly feel sensible of such a situation, however I might be disposed to render it tolerable.

"As an adviser I am rather qualified to point out what should be avoided than what may be pursued, for my own life has been but a series of imprudences and conflicts of all descriptions. From these I have only acquired experience; if repentance were added, perhaps it might be all the better, since I do not find the former of much avail without it."

APPENDIX V — Correspondence with Walter Scott

The following is Walter Scott's reply to Byron's of July 6, 1812:

“Abbotsford, near Melrose, 16th July, 1812.

“**My Lord**, — I am much indebted to your Lordship for your kind and friendly letter; and much gratified by the Prince Regent's good opinion of my literary attempts. I know so little of courts or princes, that any success I may have had in hitting off the Stuarts is, I am afraid, owing to a little old Jacobite leaven which I sucked in with the numerous traditionary tales that amused my infancy. It is a fortunate thing for the Prince himself that he has a literary turn, since nothing can so effectually relieve the ennui of state, and the anxieties of power.

“I hope your Lordship intends to give us more of *Childe Harold*. I was delighted that my friend Jeffrey — for such, in despite of many a feud, literary and political, I always esteem him — has made so handsomely the *amende honorable* for not having discovered in the bud the merits of the flower; and I am happy to understand that the retractation so handsomely made was received with equal liberality. These circumstances may perhaps some day lead you to revisit Scotland, which has a maternal claim upon you, and I need not say what pleasure I should have in returning my personal thanks for the honour you have done me. I am labouring here to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, namely, to convert a bare *haugh* and *brae*, of about 100 acres, into a comfortable farm. Now, although I am living in a gardener's hut, and although the adjacent ruins of Melrose have little to tempt one who has seen those of Athens, yet, should you take a tour which is so fashionable at this season, I should be very happy to have an opportunity of introducing you to anything remarkable in my fatherland. My neighbour, Lord Somerville, would, I am sure, readily supply the accommodations which I want, unless you prefer a couch in a closet, which is the utmost hospitality I have at present to offer. The fair, or shall I say the sage, Apreece that was, Lady Davy that is, is soon to show us how much science she leads captive in Sir Humphrey; so your Lordship sees, as the citizen's wife says in the farce, ‘Thread-needle Street has some charms,’ since they procure us such celebrated visitants. As for me, I would rather cross-question your Lordship about the outside of Parnassus, than learn the nature of

the contents of all the other mountains in the world. Pray, when under 'its cloudy canopy' did you hear anything of the celebrated Pegasus? Some say he has been brought off with other curiosities to Britain, and now covers at Tattersal's. I would fain have a cross from him out of my little moss-trooper's Galloway, and I think your Lordship can tell one how to set about it, as I recognise his true paces in the high-mettled description of Ali Pacha's military court.

"A wise man said — or, if not, I, who am no wise man, now say — that there is no surer mark of regard than when your correspondent ventures to write nonsense to you. Having, therefore, like Dogberry, bestowed all my tediousness upon your Lordship, you are to conclude that I have given you a convincing proof that I am very much

"Your Lordship's obliged and very faithful servant,

"Walter Scott."

APPENDIX VI — The Giant and the Dwarf

The reply of Leigh Hunt's friends to Moore's squib, "The 'Living Dog' and the 'Dead Lion'" (see Letter 291, p. 205, 1), ran as follows:

"The Giant and the Dwarf.

"Humbly inscribed to T. Pidcock, Esq., of Exeter 'Change.

"A Giant that once of a Dwarf made a friend,
(And their friendship the Dwarf took care shouldn't be hid),
Would now and then, out of his glooms, condescend
To laugh at his antics, — as every one did.

"This Dwarf-an extremely diminutive Dwarf, —
In birth unlike G — y, though his pride was as big,
Had been taken, when young, from the bogs of Clontarf,
And though born quite a Helot, had grown up a Whig.

"He wrote little verses — and sung them withal,
And the Giant's dark visions they sometimes could charm,
Like the voice of the lute which had pow'r over Saul,
And the song which could Hell and its legions disarm.

"The Giant was grateful, and offered him gold,
But the Dwarf was indignant, and spurn'd at the offer:
'No, never!' he cried, 'shall *my* friendship be sold
For the sordid contents of another man's coffer!

"What would Dwarfland, and Ireland, and every land say?
To what would so shocking a thing be ascribed?
My Lady would think that I was in your pay,
And the *Quarterly* say that I must have been bribed.

"You see how I'm puzzled; I don't say it wouldn't
Be pleasant just now to have just that amount:
But to take it in gold or in bank-notes! — I couldn't,
I *wouldn't* accept it — on any account.

“But couldn’t you just write your Autobiography,
All fearless and personal, bitter and stinging?
Sure *that*, with a few famous heads in lithography,
Would bring me far more than my Songs or my singing.

“You know what I did for poor Sheridan’s Life;
Your’s is sure of my very best superintendence;
I’ll expunge what might point at your sister or wife, —
And I’ll thus keep my priceless, unbought independence!’

“The Giant smiled grimly: he couldn’t quite see
What diff’rence there was on the face of the earth,
Between the Dwarf’s taking the money in fee,
And his taking the same thing *in that money’s worth*.

“But to please him he wrote; and the business was done:
The Dwarf went immediately off to ‘the Row;’
And ere the next night had pass’d over the sun,
The **Memoirs** were purchas’d by Longman and Co.

“**W. Gyngell**, Showman, Bartholomew Fair.”

APPENDIX VII — Attacks on Lord Byron in the Newspapers for February and March, 1814

I: *The Courier*

(1) Lord Byron (*The Courier*, February 1, 1814).

A new Poem has just been published by the above Nobleman, and the *Morning Chronicle* of to-day has favoured its readers with his Lordship's Dedication of it to **Thomas Moore**, Esq., in what that paper calls "an elegant eulogium." If the elegance of an eulogium consist in its extravagance, the *Chronicle's* epithet is well chosen. But our purpose is not with the Dedication, nor the main Poem, *The Corsair*, but with one of the pieces called Poems, published at the end of the *Corsair*. Nearly two years ago (in March, 1812), when the **Regent** was attacked with a bitterness and rancour that disgusted the whole country; when attempts were made day after day to wound every feeling of the heart; there appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* an anonymous *Address to a Young Lady weeping*, upon which we remarked at the time (*Courier of March 7, 1812*), considering it as tending to make the Princess **Charlotte** of **Wales** view the **Prince Regent** her father as an object of suspicion and disgrace. Few of our readers have forgotten the disgust which this address excited. The author of it, however, unwilling that it should sleep in the oblivion to which it had been consigned with the other trash of that day, has republished it, and, placed the first of what are called Poems at the end of this newly published work the *Corsair*, we find this very address: "Weep daughter of a *royal* line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;"

Lord Byron thus avows himself to be the Author.

To be sure the Prince has been extremely *disgraced* by the policy he has adopted, and the events which that policy has produced; and the realm has experienced *great decay*, no doubt, by the occurrences in the Peninsula, the resistance of Russia, the rising in Germany, the counter-revolution in Holland, and the defeat, disgrace, and shame of **Buonaparte**. But, instead of continuing our observations, suppose we parody his Lordship's Address, and apply it to February 1814: **To a Young Lady**.

February, 1814.

“View! daughter of a royal line,
A father’s fame, a realm’s renown:
Ah! happy that that realm is thine,
And that its father is thine own!

“View, and exulting view, thy fate,
Which dooms thee o’er these blissful Isles
To reign, (but distant be the date!)
And, like thy Sire, deserve thy People’s smiles.”

(2) *The Courier*, February 2, 1814.

Lord **Byron**, as we stated yesterday, has discovered and promulgated to the world, in eight lines of choice doggerel, that the realm of England is in decay, that her Sovereign is disgraced, and that the situation of the country is one which claims the tears of all good patriots. To this very indubitable statement, the *Morning Chronicle* of this day exhibits an admirable companion picture, a *genuine* letter from *Paris*, of the 25th ult.

(3) *The Courier*, February 3, 1814

“*The Courier* is indignant,” says the *Morning Chronicle*, “at the discovery now made by Lord BYRON, that he was the author of ‘the Verses to a Young Lady weeping,’ which were inserted about a twelvemonth ago in the *Morning Chronicle*. The Editor thinks it audacious in a hereditary Counsellor of the **King** to admonish the *Heir Apparent*. It may not be *courtly* but it is certainly *British*, and we wish the kingdom had more such honest advisers.”

The discovery of the author of the verses in question was not made by Lord **Byron**. How could it be? When he sent them to the *Chronicle*, *without* his name, he was just as well informed about the author as he is now that he has published them in a pamphlet, *with* his name. The discovery was made to the public. They did not know in March, 1812, what they know in February, 1814. They did not

suspect then what they now find avowed, that a Peer of the Realm was the Author of the attack upon the **Prince**; of the attempt to induce the Princess **Charlotte** of **Wales** to think that her father was an object not of reverence and regard, but of disgrace.

But we “think it audacious in an hereditary Counsellor of the **King** to admonish the Heir Apparent.” No! we do not think it audacious: it is constitutional and proper. But are anonymous attacks the constitutional duty of a Peer of the Realm? Is that the mode in which he should admonish the Heir Apparent? If Lord **Byron** had desired to admonish the **Prince**, his course was open, plain, and known — he could have demanded an audience of the **Prince**; or, he could have given his admonition in Parliament. But to level such an attack — What! — “Kill men i’ the dark!” This, however, is called by the *Chronicle* “certainly *British*,” though it might not be *courtly*, and a strong wish is expressed that “the country had many more such honest advisers” or admonishers. — Admonishers indeed! A pretty definition of admonition this, which consists not in giving advice, but in imputing blame, not in openly proffering counsel, but in secretly pointing censure.

(4) **Byroniana No. 1** (*The Courier*, February 5, 1814).

The Lord **Byron** has assumed such a poetico-political and such a politico-poetical air and authority, that in our double capacity of men of letters and politicians, he forces himself upon our recollection. We say *recollection* for reasons which will bye and by, be obvious to our readers, and will lead them to wonder why this young Lord, whose greatest talent it is to forget, and whose best praise it would be to be forgotten, should be such an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. **Sam Rogers’s** *Pleasures of Memory*.

The most virulent satirists have ever been the most nauseous panegyrists, and they are for the most part as offensive by the praise as by the abuse which they scatter.

His Lordship does not degenerate from the character of those worthy persons, his poetical ancestors: “The mob of Gentlemen who wrote with ease”

who of all authors dealt the most largely in the alternation of flattery and filth. He is the severest satirical and the civilest dedicator of our day; and what completes his reputation for candour, good feeling, and honesty, is that the

persons whom he most reviles, and to whom he most fulsomely dedicates, are identically the same.

We shall indulge our readers with a few instances: — the most obvious case, because the most recent, is that of Mr. **Thomas Moore**, to whom he has dedicated, as we have already stated, his last pamphlet; but as we wish to proceed orderly, we shall postpone this and revert to some instances prior in order of time; we shall afterwards show that his Lordship strictly adheres to **Horace's** rule, in maintaining to the end the ill character in which he appeared at the outset. His Lordship's first dedication was to his guardian and relative, the Earl of **Carlisle**. So late as the year 1808, we find that Lord **Byron** was that noble Lord's "most affectionate kinsman, etc., etc."

Hear how dutifully and affectionately this ingenuous young man celebrates, in a few months after (1809), the praises of his friend: "No Muse will cheer with renovating smile,

The *paralytic puling* of **Carlisle**;

What heterogeneous honours deck the Peer,

Lord, rhymester, petit-maitre, pamphleteer!

So *dull* in youth, so *drivelling* in age,

His scenes alone had damn'd our sinking stage.

But Managers, for once, cried 'hold, enough,'

Nor drugg'd their audience with the tragic stuff.

Yet at their judgment let his Lordship laugh,

And case his volumes in *congenial calf*:

Yes! doff that covering where Morocco shines,

And hang a calf-skin on those recreant lines."

And in explanation of this affectionate effusion, our lordly dedicator subjoins a note to inform us that Lord **Carlisle's** works are splendidly bound, but that "the rest is all but leather and prunella," and a little after, in a very laborious note, in which he endeavours to defend his consistency, he out-Herods Herod, or to speak more forcibly, out-Byrons Byron, in the virulence of his invective against "his guardian and relative, to whom he dedicated his volume of puerile poems." Lord **Carlisle** has, it seems, if we are to believe his word, for a series of years, beguiled "the public with reams of most orthodox, imperial *nonsense*," and Lord **Byron** concludes by asking, "What can ennoble knaves, or *fools*, or cowards?" Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards."

“So says **Pope**,” adds Lord **Byron**. But **Pope** does not say so; the words “*knaves and fools*,” are not in **Pope**, but interpolated by Lord **Byron**, in favour of his “guardian and relative.” Now, all this might have slept in oblivion with Lord **Carlisle’s** Dramas, and Lord **Byron’s** Poems; but if this young Gentleman chooses to erect himself into a spokesman of the public opinion, it becomes worth while to consider to what notice he is entitled; when he affects a tone of criticism and an air of candour, he obliges us to enquire whether he has any just pretensions to either, and when he arrogates the high functions of public praise and public censure, we may fairly inquire what the praise or censure of such a being is worth: “Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.”

(5) **Byroniana No. 2 (*The Courier*, February 8, 1814) .**

“*Crede Byron*” is Lord Byron’s armorial motto; *Trust Byron* is the translation in the Red-book. We cannot but admire the ingenuity with which his Lordship has converted the good faith of his ancestors into a sarcasm on his own duplicity.

“Could nothing but your chief reproach,
Serve for a motto on your coach?”

Poor Lord Carlisle; he, no doubt, *trusted* in his affectionate ward and kinsman, and we have seen how the affectionate ward and kinsman acknowledged, like *Macbeth*, “*the double trust*” only to abuse it. We shall now show how much another Noble Peer, Lord Holland, has to trust to from his *ingenuous* dedicator.

Some time last year Lord Byron published a Poem, called *The Bride of Abydos*, which was inscribed to Lord Holland, “*with every sentiment of regard and respect by his gratefully obliged and sincere friend, Byron.*” “*Grateful and sincere!*” Alas! alas; ‘tis not even so good as what Shakespeare, in contempt, calls “the sincerity of a cold heart.” “*Regard and respect!*” Hear with what regard, and how much respect, he treats this identical Lord Holland. In a tirade against literary assassins (a class of men which Lord Byron may well feel entitled to describe), we have these lines addressed to the Chief of the Critical Banditti: “Known be thy name, unbounded be thy sway,
Thy *Holland’s* banquets shall each toil repay,
While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes,
To Hollands hirelings, and to learnings foes!”

By which it appears, that “ — These wolves that still in darkness prowl;
This coward brood, which mangle, as their prey,
By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;”

are hired by Lord Holland, and it follows, very naturally, that the “*hirelings*” of Lord Holland must be the “*foes of learning*.”

This seems sufficiently caustic; but hear, how our dedicator proceeds:
“Illustrious Holland! hard would be his lot,
His hirelings mention’d, and himself forgot!
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,
Where Scotchmen feed, and Critics may carouse!
Long, long, beneath that hospitable roof
Shall *Grub-street* dine, while duns are kept aloof,
And *grateful* to the founder of the feast
Declare the Landlord can *translate*, at least!”

Lord Byron has, it seems, very accurate notions of *gratitude*, and the word “*grateful*” in these lines, and in his dedication of *The Bride of Abydos*, has a delightful similarity of meaning. His Lordship is pleased to add, in an explanatory note to this passage, that Lord Holland’s life of Lopez de Vega, and his translated specimens of that author, are much “**Bepraised** by *these disinterested guests*.” Lord Byron well knows that *bepraise* and *bespatter* are almost synonymous. There was but one point on which he could have any hope of touching Lord Holland more nearly; and of course he avails himself, in the most gentlemanly and generous manner, of the golden opportunity.

When his club of literary assassins is assembled at Lord Holland’s table, Lord Byron informs us “That lest when heated with the unusual grape,
Some *glowing* thoughts should to the press escape,
And tinge with red the *female* reader’s cheek,
My **Lady** skims the *cream* of each critique;
Breathes o’er each page *her purity* of soul,
Reforms each error, and refines the whole.”

Our readers will, no doubt, duly appreciate the manliness and generosity of these lines; but, to encrease their admiration, we beg to remind them that the next time Lord Byron addresses Lord Holland, it is to dedicate to him, in all friendship, *sincerity*, and gratitude, the story of a young, a pure, an amiable, and an affectionate bride!

The verses were bad enough, but what shall be said, after *such* verses, of the

insult of *such* a dedication!

We forbear to extract any further specimens of this peculiar vein of Lord Byron's satire; our "gorge rises at it," and we regret to have been obliged to say so much. And yet Lord Byron is, "with all regard and *respect*, Lord "Holland's sincere and grateful friend!" It reminds us of the *respect* which Lear's daughters shewed their father, and which the poor old king felt to be "worse than murder."

Some of our readers may perhaps observe that, personally, Lord Holland was not so ill-treated as Lord Carlisle; but let it be recollected, that Lord Holland is only an acquaintance, while Lord Carlisle was "guardian and relation," and had therefore *peculiar* claims to the ingratitude of a mind like Lord Byron's.

Trust Byron, indeed! "him," as Hamlet says "*Him*, I would trust as I would *adders* fang'd."

**(6) Byroniana No. 3 (*The Courier*, February 12, 1814). *Crede Byron* —
"Trust Byron."**

We have seen Lord Byron's past and present opinions of two Noble Persons whom he has honoured with his satire, and vilified by his dedications; let us now compare the evidence which he has given at different and yet not distant times, on the merits of his third *Dedicatee*, Mr. Thomas Moore. To him Lord Byron has inscribed his last poem as a person "of unshaken *public principle*, and the most undoubted and various talents; as the firmest of Irish *patriots*, and the first of Irish bards."

Before we proceed to give Lord Byron's own judgment of this "firmest of patriots," and this "best of poets," we must be allowed to say, that though we consider Mr. Moore as a very good writer of songs, we should very much complain of the poetical supremacy assigned to him, if Lord Byron had not qualified it by calling him the first only of *Irish* poets, and, as we suppose his Lordship must mean, of *Irish* poets of the *present* day. The title may be, for aught we know to the contrary, perfectly appropriate; but we cannot conceive how Mr. Moore comes by the high-sounding name of "*patriot*;" what pretence there is for such an appellation; by what effort of intellect or of courage he has placed his name above those idols of Irish worship, Messrs. Scully, Connell, and Dromgoole. Mr. Moore has written words to Irish tunes; so did Burns for *his* national airs; but who ever called Burns the "firmest of patriots" on the score of his contributions to the *Scots Magazine*?

Mr. Moore, we are aware, has been accused of tuning his harpsichord to the

key-note of a faction, and of substituting, wherever he could, a party spirit for the spirit of poetry: this, in the opinion of most persons, would derogate even from his *poetical* character, but we hope that Lord Byron stands alone in considering that such a prostitution of the muse entitles him to the name of patriot. Mr. Moore, it seems, is an Irishman, and, we believe, a Roman Catholic; he appears to be, at least in his poetry, no great friend to the connexion of Ireland with England. One or two of his ditties are quoted in Ireland as *laments* upon certain worthy persons whose lives were terminated by the hand of the law, in some of the unfortunate disturbances which have afflicted that country; and one of his most admired songs begins with a stanza, which we hope the Attorney-General will pardon us for quoting: “Let Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her *faithless sons betrayed her*,
When Malachy wore the collar of gold,
Which he won from her proud Invader;
When her Kings, with standard of green unfurl’d,
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger,
Ere, the emerald gem of the western world,
Was set in the crown of a Stranger.”

This will pretty well satisfy an English reader, that, if it be any ingredient of patriotism to promote the affectionate connexion of the English isles under the constitutional settlement made at the revolution and at the union; and if the foregoing verses speak Mr. Moore’s sentiments, he has the same claims to the name of “*patriot*” that Lord Byron has to the title of “trustworthy;” but if these and similar verses do not speak Mr. Moore’s political sentiments, then undoubtedly he has never written, or at least published any thing relating to public affairs; and Lord Byron has no kind of pretence for talking of the political character and public principles of an humble individual who is only known as the translator of Anacreon, and the writer, composer, and singer of certain songs, which songs do not (*ex-hypothesi*) speak the sentiments even of the writer himself.

But, hold — we had forgot one circumstance: Mr. Moore has been said to be one of the authors of certain verses on the highest characters of the State, which appeared from time to time in the *Morning Chronicle*, and which were afterwards collected into a little volume; this may, probably, be in Lord Byron’s opinion, a clear title to the name of *patriot*, in which case, his Lordship has also his claim to the same honour; and, indeed that sagacious and loyal person, the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, seems to be of this notion; for when some one ventured to express some, we think not unnatural, indignation at Lord Byron’s

having been the author of some impudent doggrels, of the same vein, which appeared anonymously in that paper reflecting on his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and her Royal Highness his daughter, the Editor before-mentioned exclaimed — "What! and is not a Peer, an hereditary councillor of the Crown, to be permitted to give his constitutional advice?!!!"

If writing such vile and anonymous stuff as one sometimes reads in the *Morning Chronicle* be the duty of a good subject, or the privilege of a Peer of Parliament, then indeed we have nothing to object to Mr. Moore's title of Patriot, or Lord Byron's open, honourable, manly, and constitutional method of advising the Crown.

To return, however, to our main object, Lord Byron's *consistency, truth, and trustworthiness*.

His Lordship is pleased to call Mr. Moore not only Patriot and Poet, but he acquaints us also, that "he is the delight alike of his readers and his friends; the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own."

Let us now turn to Lord Byron's thrice-recorded opinion of "*this Poet of all Circles*." We shall quote from a Poem which was republished, improved, amended, and reconsidered, not more than *three* years ago; since which time Mr. Moore has published no Poem whatsoever; therefore, Lord Byron's former and his present opinions are founded upon the same data, and if they do not agree, it really is no fault of Mr. Moore's, who has published nothing to alter them.

"Now look around and turn each *trifling* page,
Survey the *precious* works that please the age,
While Little's lyrics shine in hot-pressed twelves."

Here, by no great length of induction, we find Little's, *i.e.* Mr. Thomas Moore's lyrics, are *trifling*, "*precious* works," his Lordship ironically adds, that "please times from which," as his Lordship says, "taste and reason are passed away!"

Bye and by his Lordship delivers a still more plain opinion on Mr. Moore's fitness to be the "*Poet of All circles*."

"Who in soft guise, surrounded by a quire
Of virgins *melting*, not to *Vesta's* fire,
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by *passion* flush'd,
Strikes his wild lyre, while listening dames are hush'd?
'Tis Little, young Catullus of his day,

As sweet, but as immoral, in his lay;
Griev'd to condemn, the Muse must yet be just,
Nor spare melodious *advocates of lust!*"

"*O calum et terra!*" as *Lingo* says. What! this purest of Patriots is *immoral*? What! "the Poet of *all* circles" is "the advocate of lust"? Monstrous! But who can doubt Byron? And his Lordship, in a subsequent passage, does not hesitate to speak still more plainly, and to declare, in plain round terms (we shudder while we copy) that Moore, the Poet, the Patriot "Moore, is lewd"!!!

After this, we humbly apprehend that if we were to "trust Byron," Mr. Moore, however he may be the idol of his own circle, would find some little difficulty in obtaining admittance into any other.

Lord Byron having thus disposed, as far as depended upon him, of the moral character of the first of Patriots and Poets, takes an early opportunity of doing justice to the personal honour of this dear "friend;" one, as his Lordship expresses it, of "the magnificent and fiery spirited" sons of Erin.

"In 1806," says Lord Byron, "Messrs. Jeffery and Moore met at Chalk Farm — the duel was prevented by the interference of the Magistracy, and on examination, the balls of the pistols, *like the courage of the combatants*, were found to have *evaporated!*"

"Magnificent and fiery spirit," with a vengeance!

We are far from thinking of Mr. Moore as Lord Byron either did or does; not so degradingly as his Lordship did in 1810; not so extravagantly as he does in 1813. But we think that Mr. Moore has grave reason of complaint, and almost just cause, to exert "his fiery spirit" against Lord Byron, who has the effrontery to drag him twice before the public, and overwhelm him, one day with odium, and another with ridicule.

We regret that Lord Byron, by obliging us to examine the value of his censures, has forced us to contrast his past with his present judgments, and to bring again before the public the objects of his lampoons and his flatteries. We have, however, much less remorse in quoting his satire than his dedications; for, by this time, we believe, the whole world is inclined to admit that his Lordship can pay no compliment so valuable as his censure, nor offer any insult so intolerable as his praise.

(7) Byroniana No. 4 (*The Courier*, February 17, 1814) .

Don Pedro.

What offence have these men done?

Dogberry.

Many, Sir; they have committed false reports; moreover they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixthly and lastly, they have belied a Lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things, and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.”

Much Ado about Nothing.

We have already seen how scurvily Lord Byron has treated *three* of the four persons to whom he has successively dedicated his Poems; but for the fourth he reserved a species of contumely, which we are confident our readers will think more degrading than all the rest. *He has uniformly praised him! and him alone!!!* — The exalted rank, the gentle manners, the polished taste of his guardian and relation, Lord Carlisle; the considerations due to Lord Holland, from his family, his personal character, and his love of letters; the amiability of Mr. Moore’s society, the sweetness of his versification, and the vivacity of his imagination; — all these could not save their possessors from the *brutality* of Lord Byron’s personal satire.

It was, then, for a person only, who should have *none* of these titles to his envy that his Lordship could be expected to reserve the fullness and steadiness of his friendship; and if we had any respect or regard for that small poet and very disagreeable person, Mr. Sam Rogers, we should heartily pity him for being “*damned*” to such “*fame*” as Lord Byron’s uninterrupted praise can give.

But Mr. Sam Rogers has another cause of complaint against Lord Byron, and which he is of a taste to resent more. His Lordship has not deigned to call *him* “the firmest of patriots,” though we have heard that his claims to that title are not much inferior to Mr. Moore’s. Mr. Sam Rogers is reported to have clubb’d with the Irish Anacreon in that scurrilous collection of verses, which we have before mentioned, and which were published under the title of the *Twopenny Post-bag*, and the assumed name of “Thomas Brown.” The rumour may be unfounded; if it be, Messrs. Rogers and Moore will easily forgive us for saying that, much as we are astonished at the effrontery with which Lord Byron has acknowledged his lampoon, we infinitely prefer it to the cowardly prudence of the author or authors of the *Twopenny Post-bag* lurking behind a fictitious name, and “devising impossible slanders,” which he or they have not the spirit to avow.

But, to return to the more immediate subject of our lucubrations: It seems almost like a fatality, that Lord Byron has hardly ever praised any thing that he has not at some other period censured, or censured any thing that he has not, by

and bye, praised or *practised*.

It does not often happen that booksellers are assailed for their too great liberality to authors; yet, in Lord Byron's satire, while Mr. Scott is abused, his publisher, Mr. Murray, is sneered at, in the following lines: "And think'st them, Scott, by vain conceit perchance,

On public taste to foist thy stale romance;
Though *Murray* with his Miller may combine,
To yield thy Muse just Half-a-crown a Line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former *laurels fade*.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who *rack* their *brains* for *lucre*, not for fame:
Low may they sink to *merited contempt*,
And *scorn* remunerate the *mean* attempt."

Now, is it not almost incredible that this very Murray (the only remaining one of the booksellers whom his Lordship had attacked; Miller has left the trade) — is it not, we say, almost incredible that this very Murray should have been soon after selected, by this very Lord Byron, to be his own publisher? But what will our readers say, when we assure them, that not only was Murray so selected, but that this magnanimous young Lord has actually *sold* his works to this same Murray? and, what is a yet more singular circumstance, has received and pocketed, for one of his own "stale romances," a sum amounting, not to "*half-a-crown*," but to *a whole crown, a line!!!*

This fact, monstrous as it seems in the author of the foregoing lines, is, we have the fullest reason to believe, accurately true. And the "*faded laurel*," "*the brains rac'd for lucre*," "*the merited contempt*," "*the scorn*," and the "*meanness*," which this impudent young man dared to attribute to Mr. Scott, appear to have been a mere anticipation of his own future proceedings; and thus, " — Even-handed Justice

Commends the ingredients of his *poison'd* chalice
To his own lips."

How he now likes the taste of it we do not know; about as much, we suspect, as the "incestuous, murderous, damned Dane" did, when *Hamlet* obliged him to "*drink off the potion*" which he had treacherously drugged for the destruction of others.

“He professes no keeping oaths; in breaking them he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool.”

All's Well that ends Well.

We have, we should hope, sufficiently exposed the audacious levity and waywardness of Lord Byron's mind, and yet there are a few touches which we think will give a finish to the portrait, and add, if it be at all wanting, to the strength of the resemblance.

...

It must be amusing to those who know anything of Lord Byron in the circles of London, to find him magnanimously defying in very stout heroics, “ — all the din of *Melbourne House*

And *Lambes'* resentment — ”

and adding that he is “*unscared*” even by “*Holland's spouse*.”

...

To those who may be in the habit of hearing his Lordship's political descants, the following extract will appear equally curious: “Mr. Brougham, in No. 25 of the *Edinburgh Review*, throughout the article concerning Don Pedro Cevallos, has displayed more politics than policy; many of the worthy burgesses of Edinburgh being so *incensed at the Infamous principles it evinces*, as to have withdrawn their subscriptions;” and in the text of this poem, to which the foregoing is a note, he advises the Editor of the Review to “Beware, lest *blundering Brougham* destroy the sale;

Turn beef to bannacks, cauliflower to kail.”

Those who have attended to his Lordship's progress as an author, and observed that he has published *four* poems, in little more than two years, will start at the following lines: “ — Oh cease thy song!

A bard may chaunt too often and too long;

As thou art strong in verse, in mercy spare;

A **Fourth**, alas, were more than we could bear.”

And as the scene of each of these *four* Poems is laid in the Levant, it is curious to recollect, that when his Lordship informed the world that he was about to visit “Afric's coast,” and “Calpe's height,” and “Stamboul's minarets,” and “Beauty's native clime,” he enters into a voluntary and solemn engagement with the public, “That should he back return, no letter'd rage
Shall drag *his* common-place book on the stage;
Of Dardan tours let Dilettanti tell,
He'll leave topography to classic Cell,

And, *quite content*, no more shall interpose,
To *stun* mankind with *poetry or prose*.”

And yet we have already had, growing out of this “Tour,” four volumes of *poetry*, enriched with copious notes in *prose*, selected from his “*common-place book*.” The whole interspersed every here and there with the most convincing proofs that instead of being “*quite content*,” his Lordship has returned, as he went out, the most discontented and peevish thing that breathes.

But the passage of all others which gives us the most delight is that in which his Lordship attacks his critics, and declares that “Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,
And feel they *too* are penetrable stuff.”
and adds,

“ — I have —
Learn’d to deride the Critic’s stern decree,
And *break him on the wheel he meant for me*.”

We should now, with all humility, ask his Lordship whether *he* yet feels that “*he too* is penetrable stuff;” and we should further wish to know how he likes being “*broken on the wheel he meant for others?*”

When his Lordship shall have sufficiently pondered on those questions, we may perhaps venture to propound one or two more.

(9) From *The Courier* (March 15, 1814).

The republication of some *Satires*, which the humour of the moment now disposes the writer to recall, was strenuously censured, the other day, in a Morning Paper. It was there said, amongst other things, that such a republication “contributes to exasperate and perpetuate the divisions of those whom *nature* and friendship have joined!” This is within six weeks after the deliberate *republication* of “Weep, daughter,” etc., etc.; and thus we are informed of the exact moment at which all retort is to cease; at which misrepresentation towards the public and outrage towards the Personages much more than insulted in those lines, is to be no longer remembered. What privileges does this writer claim for his friends! They are to live in all “the swill’d insolence” of attack upon those on whose character, union, and welfare, the public prosperity mainly depends; they are to instruct the **Daughter** to hold the **Father** disgraced, because he does not surrender the prime Offices of the State to their ambition. And if, after this,

public disgust make the author feel, in the midst of the little circle of flatterers that remains to him, what an insight he has given into the guilt of satire *before* maturity, *before* experience, *before* knowledge; if the original unprovoked intruder upon the peace of others be thus taught a love of privacy and a facility of retraction; if Turnus have found the time, “magno cum optaverit emptum Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista, diemque Oderit;”

if triumphing arrogance be changed into a sentimental humility, O! then *Liberality* is to call out for him in the best of her hacknied tones; the contest is to cease at the instant when his humour changes from mischief to melancholy; *affetuoso* is to be the only word; and he is to be allowed his season of sacred torpidity, till the venom, new formed in the shade, make him glisten again in the sunshine he envies!

II: *The Morning Post*

(1) Verses (*Morning Post*, February 5, 1814).

Suggested by reading some lines of Lord Byron's at the end of his newly published work, entitled “*The Corsair*” which begin: “*Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line.*”

“Far better be the thing that crawls,
Disgustful on a dungeon's walls;
Far better be the worm that creeps,
In icy rings o'er him who sleeps;”

“Far better be the reptile scorn'd,
Unseen, unheeded, unadorn'd,
Than him, to whom indulgent heav'n,
Has talents and has genius giv'n;
If stung by envy, warp'd by pride,
Such gifts, alas! are misapplied;
Not all by nature's bounty blest
In beauty's dazzling hues are drest.”

in beauty & dazzling race are great,
But who shall play the critic's part,
If for the form atones the heart?
But if the gloomiest thoughts prevail,
And Atheist doctrines stain the tale;
If calumny to pow'r address,
Attempts to wound its Sovereign's breast;
If impious it shall try to part,
The Father from the Daughter's heart;
If it shall aim to wield a brand,
To fire our fair and native land;
If hatred for the world and men,
Shall dip in gall the ready pen: "'Oh then far better 'tis to crawl,
Harmless upon a dungeon's wall;
And better far the worm that creeps,
In icy rings o'er him who sleeps.'"

(2) To Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 7, 1814).

"Bard of ungentle wayward mood!
'Tis said of thee, when in the lap,
Thy nurse to tempt thee to thy food,
Would squeeze a *lemon* in thy pap.

At *vinegar* how danc'd thine eyes,
Before thy tongue a want could utter,
And oft the dame to stop thy cries,
Strew'd *wormwood* on thy bread and butter.

And when in childhood's frolic hour,
Thou'dst plait a garland for thy hair;
The *nettle* bloom'd a chosen flow'r,
And native thistles flourish'd there.

For *sugar-plum* thou ne'er did'st pine,
Thy teeth no *sweet-meat* ever hurt —
The *sloe's juice* was thy favourite wine,
And *bitter almonds* thy desert.

Mustard, how strong so e'er the sort is,
Can draw no moisture from thine eye;
Not vinegar nor aqua-fortis
Could ever set thy face awry.

Thus train'd a Satirist — thy mind
Soon caught the bitter, sharp, and sour,
And all their various pow'rs combin'd,
Produc'd *Childe Harold*, and the *Giaour*."

(3) **Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 8, 1814)** We are very much surprised, and we are not the only persons who feel disgust as well as astonishment, at the uncalled for avowal Lord Byron has made of being the Author of some insolent lines, by inserting them at the end of his new Poem, entitled "*The Corsair*." The lines we allude to begin "*Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line*." Nothing can be more repugnant to every good heart, as well as to the moral and religious feelings of a country, which we are proud to say still cherishes every right sentiment, than an attempt to lower a father in the eyes of his child. Lord Byron is a young man, and from the tenor of his writings, has, we fear, adopted principles very contrary to those of Christianity. But as a man of honour and of *feeling*, which latter character he affects *outrageously*, he ought never to have been guilty of so unamiable and so unprovoked an attack. Should so gross an insult to her Royal Father ever meet the eyes of the illustrious young Lady, for whose perusal it was intended, we trust her own good sense and good heart will teach her to consider it with the contempt and abhorrence it so well merits. Will she *weep for the disgrace of a Father* who has saved Europe from bondage, and has accumulated, in the short space of two years, more glory than can be found in any other period of British history? Will she "*weep for a realm's decay*," when that realm is hourly emerging under the Government of her father, from the complicated embarrassments in which he found it involved? But all this is too evident to need being particularised. What seems most surprising is, that Lord Byron should chuse to avow Irish trash at a moment when every thing conspires to give it the lie. It is for the *organ of the Party* alone, or a few insane admirers of Bonaparte and defamers of their own country and its rulers, to applaud him. We know it is now the fashion for our young Gentlemen to become Poets, and a very innocent amusement it is, while they confine themselves to putting their travels into verse, like *Childe Harolde*, and Lord Nugent's

Portugal. Nor is there any harm in Turkish tales, nor wonderful ditties, of ghosts and hobgoblins. We cannot say so much for all Mr. Moore's productions, admired as he is by Lord Byron. In short, the whole galaxy of minor poets, Lords Nugent and Byron, with Messrs. Rogers, Lewis, and Moore, would do well to keep to rhyme, and not presume to meddle with politics, for which they seem mighty little qualified. We must repeat, that it is innocent to write tales and travels in verse, but calumny can never be so, whether written by poets in St. James's-street, Albany, or Grub-street.

(4) Lines (*Morning Post*, February 8, 1814).

Written on reading the insolent verses published by Lord Byron at the end of his new poem, "*The Corsair*" beginning "*Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line.*"

"Unblest by nature in thy mien,
Pity might still have play'd her part,
For oft compassion has been seen,
To soften into love the heart.

But when thy gloomy lines we read,
And see display'd without controul,
Th' ungentle thought, the Atheist creed,
And all the rancour of the soul.

When bold and shameless ev'ry tie,
That **God** has twin'd around the heart,
Thy malice teaches to defy,
And act on earth a Demon's part.

Oh! then from misanthropic pride
We shrink — but pity too the fate
Of youth and talents misapplied,
Which, *if admired*, we still must hate."

(5) Lines (*Morning Post*, February 11, 1814) Suggested by perusing Lord Byron's small Poem, at the end of his "*Corsair*" addressed to a Lady weeping,

beginning: "*Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line.*"

"To **Lord Byron**.

"Were he the man thy verse would paint,
'A Sire's *disgrace, a realm's decay*;
Art thou the meek, the pious saint,
That *prates* of feeling night and day?

Stern as the Pirate's heart is thine,
Without one ray to cheer its gloom;
And shall that Daughter once repine,
Because thy rude, unhallow'd line,
Would on her virtuous cause presume?

Hide, **Byron**! in the shades of night —
Hide in thy own congenial cell
The mind that would a fiend affright,
And shock the dunnest realms of hell!

No; she will never weep the tears
Which thou would'st Virtue's deign to call;
Nor will they, in remoter years,
Molest her Father's heart at all.

Dark-vision'd man! thy moody vein
Tends only to thy mental pain,
And cloud the talents Heav'n had meant
To prove the source of true content;
Much better were it for thy soul,
Both here and in the realms of bliss,
To check the glooms that now controul
Those talents, which might still repay
The wrongs of many a luckless day,
In such a *cheerless* clime as this.

But never strive to lure the heart
From *one* to which 'tis ever nearest,
Lest from its duty it depart,

And shun the Pow'r which should be dearest:
For heav'n may sting thy heart in turn,
And rob thee of thy sweetest treasure
But, **Byron!** thou hast yet to learn,
That Virtue is the source of pleasure!"

Tyrtæus G — n-street, Feb. 9, 1814.

(6) To Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 15, 1814) .

Occasioned by reading his Poem, at the end of *The Corsair*, beginning: "*Weep,
Daughter of a Royal Line.*"

Shame on the verse that dares intrude
On Virtue's uncorrupted way-
That smiles upon Ingratitude,
And charms us only to betray!

For this does **Byron's** muse employ
The calm unbroken hours of night?
And wou'd she basely thus destroy
The source of all that's just-upright?

Traitor to every moral law!
Think what thy own cold heart wou'd feel,
If some insidious mind should draw
Thy daughter from her filial zeal.

"And dost thou bid the offspring shun
Its father's fond, incessant care?
Why, every sister, sire, and son,
Must loathe thee as the poison'd air!

Byron! thy dark, unhallow'd mind,
Stor'd as it is with Atheist writ,
Will surely, never, never find,
One convert to admire its wit!

Thou art a planet boding woe,

Attractive for thy novel mien —
A calm, but yet a deadly foe,
Most baneful when thou'rt most serene!

Tho' fortune on thy course may shine,
Strive not to lead the mind astray,
Nor let one impious verse of thine,
The unsuspecting heart betray!

But rather let thy talents aim
To lead incautious youth aright;
Thus shall thy works acquire that fame,
Which ought to be thy chief delight.

“The verse, however smooth it flow,
Must be abhorr'd, abjur'd, despis'd,
When Virtue feels a secret blow,
And order finds her course surpris'd.”

Horatio Fitzroy-square, Feb. 13.

(7) To Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 16, 1814) .

“Bard of the pallid front, and curling hair,
To London taste, and northern critics dear,
Friend of the dog, companion of the bear,
Apollo drest in trimmest Turkish gear.

“‘Tis thine to eulogize the fell Corsair,
Scorning all laws that God or man can frame;
And yet so form'd to please the gentle fair,
That reading misses wish their Loves the same.

“Thou prov'st that laws are made to aid the strong,
That murderers and thieves alone are brave,
That all religion is an idle song,
Which troubles life, and leaves us at the grave.

“That men and dogs have equal claims on Heav'n,

Though dogs but bark, and men more wisely prate,
That to thyself one friend alone was giv'n,
That Friend a Dog, now snatch'd away by Fate.

“And last can tell how daughters best may shew
Their love and duty to their fathers dear,
By reckoning up what stream of filial woe
Will give to every crime a cleansing tear.

“Long may'st thou please this wonder-seeking age,
By **Murray** purchas'd, and by **Moore** admir'd;
May fashion never quit thy classic page,
Nor e'er be with thy Turkomania tir'd.”

Unus Multorum.

(8) Verses Addressed To Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 16, 1814).

“Lord *Byron*! Lord *Byron*!
Your heart's made of iron,
As hard and unfeeling as cold.
Half human, half bird,
From *Virgil* we've heard,
Were form'd the fam'd harpies of old.

“Like those monsters you chatter,
Friends and foes you bespatter,
And dirty, like them, what you eat:
The *Hollands*, your muse
Does most grossly abuse,
Tho' you feed on their wine and their meat.

“Your friend, little *Moore*,
You have dirtied before,
But you know that in safety you write:
You've declared in your lines,
That revenge he declines,
For the poor little man will not fight.

“At *Carlisle* you sneer,
That worthy old Peer,
Though united by every tie;
But you act as you preach,
And do what you teach,
And your *God* and your duty defy.

“As long as your aim
Was alone to defame,
The nearest relation you own;
At your malice he smil’d,
But he won’t see defil’d,
By your harpy bespatt’rings, the Throne.”

**(9) Patronage Extraordinary (*Morning Post*, February 17, 1814) “Procul
este profani — !”**

“A friendship subsisted, no friendship was closer,
‘Twixt the heir of a Peer and the son of a Grocer;
‘Tis *true*, though so wide was their difference of station,
For, we *always* find *truth* in a *long dedication*.
Atheistical doctrines in verse we are told,
The former sold *wholesale*, was daring and bold;
While the latter (whatever *he* offer’d for sale)
Like papa, he disposed of — of course by *retail*!
First — *scraps* of *indecent*, next *disaffection*,
Disguised by the knave from his fear of detection;
To court *party favour*, then, sonnets he wrote;
Set political squibs to the harpsichord’s note.
One, as *patron* was chosen by his brother Poet,
The Peer, to be sure, from his rank we may know it;
Not the low and indecent composer of jigs —
Yes! yes! ‘twas the son of the seller of Figs!!
Did the Peer then possess *no respectable friend*
To add weight to his name, and his works recommend?!
Atheistical writings we well may believe,
None of *worth* from the Author would deign to receive;

So — to cover the faults of his friend he essays,
By *daubing* him *thickly all over with praise*.
But, *parents*, attend! if your *daughters* you *love*,
The works of *these serpents* take *care* to remove:
Their *infernal attacks* from your *mansions* repel,
Where *filial affection* and *modesty* dwell.”

Verax.

(10) Lord Byron (*Morning Post*, February 18, 1814).

If it was the object of Lord **Byron** to stamp his character, and to bring his name forward by a single act of his life into general notoriety, it must be confessed that he has completely succeeded. We do not recollect any former instance in which a Peer has stood forth as the libeller of his Sovereign. If he disapproves the measures of his Ministers, the House of Parliament, in which he has an hereditary right to sit, is the place where his opinions may with propriety be uttered. If he thinks he can avert any danger to his country by a personal conference with his Sovereign, he has a right to demand it. The Peers are the natural advisers of the Crown, but the Constitution which has granted them such extraordinary privileges, makes it doubly criminal in them to attack the authority from which it is derived, and to insult the power which it is their peculiar province to uphold and protect. What then must we think of the foolish vanity, or the bad taste of a titled Poet, who is the first to proclaim himself the Author of a Libel, because he is fearful it will not be sufficiently read without his avowal. We perfectly remember having read the verses in question a year ago; but we could not then suppose them the offspring of patrician bile, nor should we now believe it without the Author's special authority. It seems by some late quotations from his Lordship's works, which have been rescued from that oblivion to which they were hastening with a rapid step, by one of our co-equals, that this peerless Peer has already gone through a complete course of private ingratitude. The inimitable Hogarth has traced the gradual workings of an unfeeling heart in his progress of cruelty. He has shewn, that malevolence is progressive in its operation, and that a man who begins life by impaling flies, will find a delight in torturing his fellow creatures before he closes it. We have heard that even at school these poetical propensities were strongly manifested in Lord **Byron**, and that he began his satirical career against those persons to whom

the formation of his mind was entrusted. From his schoolmaster he turned the æstrum of his opening genius to his guardian and uncle, the Earl of **Carlisle**. We cannot believe that the Noble Person's conduct has in this instance been a perfect contrast to the general tenor of his life. We have heard, that during his guardianship he tripled the amount of his nephew's fortune. If the Earl of **Carlisle** was satisfied with his own *conscia mens recti*, if he wanted no thanks, he must at least have been much surprised to find such attentions and services rewarded with a libel, in which not only his literary accomplishments, but his bodily infirmities, were made the subject of public ridicule. The Noble Earl was certainly at liberty to treat such personal attacks with the contempt which they deserve, but since his Sovereign is become the object of a vile and unprovoked libel, he will no doubt draw the attention of his Peers to a new case of outrage to good order and government, which has been unfortunately furnished by his own nephew.

III: *The Sun*

(1) *The Sun*, February 4, 1814.

That poetical Peer, Lord **Byron**, knowing full well that anything insulting to his Prince or injurious to his country would be most thankfully received and published by the *Morning Chronicle*, did in March, 1812, send the following loyal and patriotic lines to that loyal and patriotic Paper, in which of course they appeared: "To a **Lady Weeping**.

"Weep, daughter of a Royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay:
Ah! happy! if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's *fault* away!

"Weep — for thy tears are Virtue's tears —
Auspicious to these suffering isles:
And be each drop, in future years,
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles!"

These lines the *Morning Chronicle*, in the following paragraph of yesterday, informs us were aimed at the **Prince Regent**, and addressed to the Princess **Charlotte**: “*The Courier* is indignant at the discovery now made by Lord **Byron**, that he was the author of ‘the Verses to a Young Lady weeping,’ which were inserted about a twelvemonth ago in *the Morning Chronicle*. The Editor thinks it audacious in a hereditary Counsellor of the King to admonish the *Heir Apparent*. It may not be *courtly*, but it is certainly *British*, and we wish the kingdom had more such honest advisers.”

No wonder the *Courier*, and every loyal man, should be indignant at the discovery (made by the republication of these worthless lines, in the Noble Lord’s new Volume) that this gross insult came from the pen of “a hereditary Counsellor of the **King**! “No wonder every good subject should execrate this novel and disagreeable mode of “*admonishing* the Heir Apparent,” which is further from being British than it is from being Courtly; for, from Courtier baseness may be expected, but from a Briton no such infamous dereliction of his duty as is involved in a malignant, *anonymous* attack by a Peer of the Realm upon the person exercising the Sovereign Authority of his Country. But the assertions of Lord **Byron** are as false as they are audacious. What was the “Sire’s Disgrace” to be thus bewept? He preferred the independence of the Crown to the arrogant dictation of a haughty Aristocracy, who desired to hold him in Leading-strings. It was then, amid a “Realm’s (fancied) decay,” because this Faction were not admitted to supreme power, that his Royal Highness’s early friends drunk his health in contemptuous silence, while their more vulgar partizans “at the lower end of the Hall” hissed and hooted the royal name. But mark the reverse since March, 1812, a reverse which it might have been thought would have induced the Noble Lord, from prudent motives, to have withheld this ill-timed publication! How is his Royal Highness’s health toasted *now*? With universal shouts and acclamations. Treason itself dare not interpose a single discordant sound save in its own private orgies! Where is *now* the realm’s decay? oh short-sighted prognosticators of the prophecies! look around, and dread the fate of the speakers of falsehood among the Jews of old, who were stoned to death by the people! The wide world furnishes the answer to your selfish croakings, and tells Lord **Byron** that he is destitute of at least one of the qualities of an inspired Bard.

Perhaps we might add another, *viz.* honesty in acknowledging his plagiarisms, one of which (as we have already said more than his silly verse above quoted

deserves, except from the rank of its author) we shall take the liberty of stating to the Public.

The *Bride of Abydos* begins, something in the stile of an old ballad, thus:
“Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the rage of the vulture — the love of the turtle —
Now melt into sorrow — now madden to crime? —
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine?
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine,
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress’d with perfume,
Wax faint o’er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye.”

The whole of which passage we take to be a paraphrase, and a bad paraphrase too, of a song of the German of Göthe, of which the following translation was published at Berlin in 1798: “Know’st thou the land, where citrons scent the gale,

Where glows the orange in the golden vale,
Where softer breezes fan the azure skies,
Where myrtles spring and prouder laurels rise?
“Know’st them the pile, the colonnade sustains,
Its splendid chambers and its rich domains,
Where breathing statues stand in bright array,
And seem, ‘What ails thee, hapless maid?’ to say?

“Know’st thou the mount, where clouds obscure the day;
Where scarce the mule can trace his misty way;
Where lurks the dragon and her scaly brood;
And broken rocks oppose the headlong flood?”

(2) Epigram (*The Sun*, February 8, 1814) .

On the Detection of Lord **Byron**’s Plagiarism, in *The Sun* of Friday last.

“That **Byron** borrows verses is well known,

But his *misanthropy* is all his own.”

(3) Lord Byron (*The Sun*, February 11, 1814).

We are informed from very good authority, that as soon as the House of Lords meets again, a Peer of very independent principles and character intends to give notice of a motion, occasioned by the late spontaneous avowal of a copy of verses by Lord **Byron**, addressed to the Princess **Charlotte** of **Wales**, in which he has taken the most unwarrantable liberties with her august Father’s character and conduct; this motion being of a personal nature, it will be necessary to give the Noble Satirist some days notice, that he may prepare himself for his defence against a charge of so aggravated a nature, which may perhaps not be a fit subject for a criminal prosecution, as the laws of the country, not foreseeing the probability of such a case ever occurring, under all the present circumstances, have not made a provision against it; but we know that each House of Parliament has a controul over its own members, and that there are instances on the Journals of Parliament, where an individual Peer has been suspended from all the privileges of the high situation to which his birth entitled him, when by any flagrant offence against good order and government, he has rendered himself unworthy of exercising so important a trust.

Morning Post.

(4) Parody (*The Sun*, February 16, 1814) “‘Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line!’

“**Mourn**, dabbler in dull party rhyme,
Thy mind’s disease, thy name’s disgrace.
Ah, lucky! if the hand of Time
Should all thy Muse’s crimes efface!
“**Mourn** — for thy lays are Rancour’s lays —
Disgraceful to a Briton born;
And hence each theme of factious praise
Consigns thee to thy Country’s scorn.”

The Biography



'The Reception of Lord Byron at Missolonghi' by Theodoros Vryzakis, 1861



Missolonghi, Greece, close to where Byron died of fever

THE LIFE OF LORD BYRON by John Galt



John Galt (1779-1839) was a Scottish novelist, entrepreneur and social commentator. His novels dealt primarily with issues of the industrial revolution, leading to him being regarded as the first political novelist.

When his family relocated to Malden in 1789, Galt became an apprentice and junior clerk, writing essays and stories for local journals in his spare time. He moved to London in 1804 to seek his fortune and in 1809 began studying law at Lincoln's Inn. When traveling in Europe, Galt met Lord Byron and they developed a close friendship. On returning to London, Galt wrote an account of his travels, which met with moderate success. Decades later, he published the first full biography on Lord Byron, offering a detailed study of the great poet's life and adventures.



John Galt

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Byron, close to the time of his death



Augusta Leigh, the poet's beloved sister

INTRODUCTION

My present task is one of considerable difficulty; but I have long had a notion that some time or another it would fall to my lot to perform it. I approach it, therefore, without apprehension, entirely in consequence of having determined, to my own satisfaction, the manner in which the biography of so singular and so richly endowed a character as that of the late Lord Byron should be treated, but still with no small degree of diffidence; for there is a wide difference between determining a rule for one's self, and producing, according to that rule, a work which shall please the public.

It has happened, both with regard to the man and the poet, that from the first time his name came before the public, there has been a vehement and continual controversy concerning him; and the chief difficulties of the task arise out of the heat with which the adverse parties have maintained their respective opinions. The circumstances in which he was placed, until his accession to the title and estates of his ancestors, were not such as to prepare a boy that would be father to a prudent or judicious man. Nor, according to the history of his family, was his blood without a taint of sullenness, which disqualified him from conciliating the good opinion of those whom his innate superiority must have often prompted him to desire for friends. He was branded, moreover, with a personal deformity; and the grudge against Nature for inflicting this defect not only deeply disturbed his happiness, but so generally affected his feelings as to embitter them with a vindictive sentiment, so strong as, at times, to exhibit the disagreeable energy of misanthropy. This was not all. He enjoyed high rank, and was conscious of possessing great talents; but his fortune was inadequate to his desires, and his talents were not of an order to redeem the deficiencies of fortune. It likewise so happened that while indulged by his only friend, his mother, to an excess that impaired the manliness of his character, her conduct was such as in no degree to merit the affection which her wayward fondness inspired.

It is impossible to reflect on the boyhood of Byron without regret. There is not one point in it all which could, otherwise than with pain, have affected a young mind of sensibility. His works bear testimony, that, while his memory retained the impressions of early youth, fresh and unfaded, there was a gloom and shadow upon them, which proved how little they had been really joyous.

The riper years of one so truly the nursling of pride, poverty, and pain, could only be inconsistent, wild, and impassioned, even had his temperament been moderate and well disciplined. But when it is considered that in addition to all the awful influences of these fatalities, for they can receive no lighter name, he

possessed an imagination of unbounded capacity — was inflamed with those indescribable feelings which constitute, in the opinion of many, the very elements of genius — fearfully quick in the discernment of the darker qualities of character — and surrounded by temptation — his career ceases to surprise. It would have been more wonderful had he proved an amiable and well-conducted man, than the questionable and extraordinary being who has alike provoked the malice and interested the admiration of the world.

Posterity, while acknowledging the eminence of his endowments, and lamenting the habits which his unhappy circumstances induced, will regard it as a curious phenomenon in the fortunes of the individual, that the progress of his fame as a poet should have been so similar to his history as a man.

His first attempts, though displaying both originality and power, were received with a contemptuous disdain, as cold and repulsive as the penury and neglect which blighted the budding of his youth. The unjust ridicule in the review of his first poems, excited in his spirit a discontent as inveterate as the feeling which sprung from his deformity: it affected, more or less, all his conceptions to such a degree that he may be said to have hated the age which had joined in the derision, as he cherished an antipathy against those persons who looked curiously at his foot. *Childe Harold*, the most triumphant of his works, was produced when the world was kindest disposed to set a just value on his talents; and his latter productions, in which the faults of his taste appear the broadest, were written when his errors as a man were harshest in the public voice.

These allusions to the incidents of a life full of contrarieties, and a character so strange as to be almost mysterious, sufficiently show the difficulties of the task I have undertaken. But the course I intend to pursue will relieve me from the necessity of entering, in any particular manner, upon those debatable points of his personal conduct which have been so much discussed. I shall consider him, if I can, as his character will be estimated when contemporary surmises are forgotten, and when the monument he has raised to himself is contemplated for its beauty and magnificence, without suggesting recollections of the eccentricities of the builder.

JOHN GALT.

CHAPTER I

Ancient Descent — Pedigree — Birth — Troubles of his Mother — Early Education — Accession to the Title

The English branch of the family of Byron came in with William the Conqueror; and from that era they have continued to be reckoned among the eminent families of the kingdom, under the names of Buron and Biron. It was not until the reign of Henry II. that they began to call themselves Byron, or de Byron.

Although for upwards of seven hundred years distinguished for the extent of their possessions, it docs not appear, that, before the time of Charles I., they ranked very highly among the heroic families of the kingdom.

Erneis and Ralph were the companions of the Conqueror; but antiquaries and genealogists have not determined in what relation they stood to each other. Erneis, who appears to have been the more considerable personage of the two, held numerous manors in the counties of York and Lincoln. In the Domesday Book, Ralph, the direct ancestor of the poet, ranks high among the tenants of the Crown, in Notts and Derbyshire; in the latter county he resided at Horestan Castle, from which he took his title. One of the lords of Horestan was a hostage for the payment of the ransom of Richard Cœur de Lion; and in the time of Edward I., the possessions of his descendants were augmented by the addition of the Manor of Rochdale, in Lancashire. On what account this new grant was given has not been ascertained; nor is it of importance that it should be.

In the wars of the three Edwards, the de Byrons appeared with some distinction; and they were also of note in the time of Henry V. Sir John Byron joined Henry VII. on his landing at Milford, and fought gallantly at the battle of Bosworth, against Richard III., for which he was afterwards appointed Constable of Nottingham Castle and Warden of Sherwood Forest. At his death, in 1488, he was succeeded by Sir Nicholas, his brother, who, at the marriage of Arthur, Prince of Wales, in 1501, was made one of the Knights of the Bath.

Sir Nicholas died in 1540, leaving an only son, Sir John Byron, whom Henry VIII. made Steward of Manchester and Rochdale, and Lieutenant of the Forest of Sherwood. It was to him that, on the dissolution of the monasteries, the church and priory of Newstead, in the county of Nottingham, together with the manor and rectory of Papelwick, were granted. The abbey from that period became the family seat, and continued so until it was sold by the poet.

Sir John Byron left Newstead and his other possessions to John Byron, whom Collins and other writers have called his fourth, but who was in fact his

illegitimate son. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1579, and his eldest son, Sir Nicholas, served with distinction in the wars of the Netherlands. When the great rebellion broke out against Charles I., he was one of the earliest who armed in his defence. After the battle of Edgehill, where he courageously distinguished himself, he was made Governor of Chester, and gallantly defended that city against the Parliamentary army. Sir John Byron, the brother and heir of Sir Nicholas, was, at the coronation of James I., made a Knight of the Bath. By his marriage with Anne, the eldest daughter of Sir Richard Molyneux, he had eleven sons and a daughter. The eldest served under his uncle in the Netherlands; and in the year 1641 was appointed by King Charles I., Governor of the Tower of London. In this situation he became obnoxious to the refractory spirits in the Parliament, and was in consequence ordered by the Commons to answer at the bar of their House certain charges which the sectaries alleged against him. But he refused to leave his post without the king's command; and upon' this the Commons applied to the Lords to join them in a petition to the king to remove him. The Peers rejected the proposition.

On the 24th October, 1643, Sir John Byron was created Lord Byron of Rochdale, in the county of Lancaster, with remainder of the title to his brothers, and their male issue, respectively. He was also made Field-Marshal-General of all his Majesty's forces in Worcestershire, Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales: nor were these trusts and honours unwon, for the Byrons, during the Civil War, were eminently distinguished. At the battle of Newbury, seven of the brothers were in the field, and all actively engaged.

Sir Richard, the second brother of the first lord, was knighted by Charles I. for his conduct at the battle of Edgehill, and appointed Governor of Appleby Castle, in Westmorland, and afterwards of Newark, which he defended with great honour. Sir Richard, on the death of his brother, in 1652, succeeded to the peerage, and died in 1679.

His eldest son, William, the third lord, married Elizabeth, the daughter of Viscount Chaworth, of Ireland, by whom he had five sons, four of whom died young. William, the fourth lord, his son, was Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark, and married, for his first wife, a daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, who died eleven weeks after their nuptials. His second wife was the daughter of the Earl of Portland, by whom he had three sons, who all died before their father. His third wife was Frances, daughter of Lord Berkley, of Stratton, from whom the poet was descended. Her eldest son, William, born in 1722, succeeded to the family honours on the death of his father in 1736. He entered the naval service, and became a lieutenant under Admiral Balchen. In the year 1763 he was made Master of the Staghounds; and in 1765, he was sent

to the Tower, and tried before the House of Peers, for killing his relation and neighbour, Mr Chaworth, in a duel fought at the Star and Garter Tavern, in Pall-mall.

This Lord William was naturally boisterous and vindictive. It appeared in evidence that he insisted on fighting with Mr Chaworth in the room where the quarrel commenced. They accordingly fought without seconds by the dim light of a single candle; and, although Mr Chaworth was the more skilful swordsman of the two, he received a mortal wound; but he lived long enough to disclose some particulars of the rencounter, which induced the coroner's jury to return a verdict of wilful murder, and Lord Byron was tried for the crime.

The trial took place in Westminster Hall, and the public curiosity was so great that the Peers' tickets of admission were publicly sold for six guineas each. It lasted two days, and at the conclusion he was unanimously pronounced guilty of manslaughter. On being brought up for judgment he pleaded his privilege and was discharged. It was to this lord that the poet succeeded, for he died without leaving issue.

His brother, the grandfather of the poet, was the celebrated "Hardy Byron"; or, as the sailors called him, "Foulweather Jack," whose adventures and services are too well known to require any notice here. He married the daughter of John Trevannion, Esq., of Carhais, in the county of Cornwall, by whom he had two sons and three daughters. John, the eldest, and the father of the poet, was born in 1751, educated at Westminster School, and afterwards placed in the Guards, where his conduct became so irregular and profligate that his father, the admiral, though a good-natured man, discarded him long before his death. In 1778 he acquired extraordinary *éclat* by the seduction of the Marchioness of Caermarthen, under circumstances which have few parallels in the licentiousness of fashionable life. The meanness with which he obliged his wretched victim to supply him with money would have been disgraceful to the basest adulteries of the cellar or garret. A divorce ensued, the guilty parties married; but, within two years after, such was the brutal and vicious conduct of Captain Byron, that the ill-fated lady died literally of a broken heart, after having given birth to two daughters, one of whom still survives.

Captain Byron then married Miss Catharine Gordon, of Gight, a lady of honourable descent, and of a respectable fortune for a Scottish heiress, the only motive which this Don Juan had for forming the connection. She was the mother of the poet.

Although the Byrons have for so many ages been among the eminent families of the realm, they have no claim to the distinction which the poet has set up for them as warriors in Palestine, even though he says —

Near Ascalon's tow'rs John of Horestan slumbers;

for unless this refers to the Lord of Horestan, who was one of the hostages for the ransom of Richard I., it will not be easy to determine to whom he alludes; and it is possible that the poet has no other authority for this legend than the tradition which he found connected with two groups of heads on the old panels of Newstead. Yet the account of them is vague and conjectural, for it was not until ages after the Crusades that the abbey came into the possession of the family; and it is not probable that the figures referred to any transactions in Palestine, in which the Byrons were engaged, if they were put up by the Byrons at all. They were probably placed in their present situation while the building was in possession of the Churchmen.

One of the groups, consisting of a female and two Saracens, with eyes earnestly fixed upon her, may have been the old favourite ecclesiastical story of Susannah and the elders; the other, which represents a Saracen with a European female between him and a Christian soldier, is, perhaps, an ecclesiastical allegory, descriptive of the Saracen and the Christian warrior contending for the liberation of the Church. These sort of allegorical stories were common among monastic ornaments, and the famous legend of St George and the Dragon is one of them.

Into the domestic circumstances of Captain and Mrs Byron it would be impertinent to institute any particular investigation. They were exactly such as might be expected from the sins and follies of the most profligate libertine of the age.

The fortune of Mrs Byron, consisting of various property, and amounting to about £23,500, was all wasted in the space of two years; at the end of which the unfortunate lady found herself in possession of only £150 per annum.

Their means being thus exhausted she accompanied her husband in the summer of 1786 to France, whence she returned to England at the close of the year 1787, and on the 22nd of January, 1788, gave birth, in Holles Street, London, to her first and only child, the poet. The name of Gordon was added to that of his family in compliance with a condition imposed by will on whomever should become the husband of the heiress of Gight. The late Duke of Gordon and Colonel Duff, of Fetteresso, were godfathers to the child.

In the year 1790 Mrs Byron took up her residence in Aberdeen, where she was soon after joined by Captain Byron, with whom she lived in lodgings in Queen Street; but their reunion was comfortless, and a separation soon took place. Still their rupture was not final, for they occasionally visited and drank tea with each other. The Captain also paid some attention to the boy, and had him, on one occasion, to stay with him for a night, when he proved so

troublesome that he was sent home next day.

Byron himself has said that he passed his boyhood at Marlodge, near Aberdeen; but the statement is not correct; he visited, with his mother, occasionally among their friends, and among other places passed some time at Fetteresso, the seat of his godfather, Colonel Duff. In 1796, after an attack of the scarlet fever, he passed some time at Ballater, a summer resort for health and gaiety, about forty miles up the Dee from Aberdeen. Although the circumstances of Mrs Byron were at this period exceedingly straitened, she received a visit from her husband, the object of which was to extort more money; and he was so far successful, that she contrived to borrow a sum, which enabled him to proceed to Valenciennes, where in the following year he died, greatly to her relief and the gratification of all who were connected with him.

By her advances to Captain Byron, and the expenses she incurred in furnishing the flat of the house she occupied after his death, Mrs Byron fell into debt to the amount of £300, the interest on which reduced her income to £135; but, much to her credit, she contrived to live without increasing her embarrassments until the death of her grandmother, when she received £1122, a sum which had been set apart for the old gentlewoman's jointure, and which enabled her to discharge her pecuniary obligations.

Notwithstanding the manner in which this unfortunate lady was treated by her husband, she always entertained for him a strong affection insomuch that, when the intelligence of his death arrived, her grief was loud and vehement. She was indeed a woman of quick feelings and strong passions; and probably it was by the strength and sincerity of her sensibility that she retained so long the affection of her son, towards whom it cannot be doubted that her love was unaffected. In the midst of the neglect and penury to which she was herself subjected, she bestowed upon him all the care, the love and watchfulness of the tenderest mother.

In his fifth year, on the 19th of November, 1792, she sent him to a day-school, where she paid about five shillings a quarter, the common rate of the respectable day-schools at that time in Scotland. It was kept by a Mr Bowers, whom Byron has described as a dapper, spruce person, with whom he made no progress. How long he remained with Mr Bowers is not mentioned, but by the day-book of the school it was at least twelve months; for on the 19th of November of the following year there is an entry of a guinea having been paid for him.

From this school he was removed and placed with a Mr Ross, one of the ministers of the city churches, and to whom he formed some attachment, as he speaks of him with kindness, and describes him as a devout, clever little man of

mild manners, good-natured, and painstaking. His third instructor was a serious, saturnine, kind young man, named Paterson, the son of a shoemaker, but a good scholar and a rigid Presbyterian. It is somewhat curious in the record which Byron has made of his early years to observe the constant endeavour with which he, the descendant of such a limitless pedigree and great ancestors, attempts to magnify the condition of his mother's circumstances.

Paterson attended him until he went to the grammar-school, where his character first began to be developed; and his schoolfellows, many of whom are alive, still recollect him as a lively, warm-hearted, and high-spirited boy, passionate and resentful, but withal affectionate and companionable; this, however, is an opinion given of him after he had become celebrated; for a very different impression has unquestionably remained among some who carry their recollections back to his childhood. By them he has been described as a malignant imp: was often spoken of for his pranks by the worthy housewives of the neighbourhood, as "Mrs Byron's crookit deevil," and generally disliked for the deep vindictive anger he retained against those with whom he happened to quarrel.

By the death of William, the fifth lord, he succeeded to the estates and titles in the year 1798; and in the autumn of that year, Mrs Byron, with her son and a faithful servant of the name of Mary Gray, left Aberdeen for Newstead. Previously to their departure, Mrs Byron sold the furniture of her humble lodging, with the exception of her little plate and scanty linen, which she took with her, and the whole amount of the sale did not yield SEVENTY-FIVE POUNDS.

CHAPTER II

Moral Effects of local Scenery; a Peculiarity in Taste — Early Love — Impressions and Traditions

Before I proceed to the regular narrative of the character and adventures of Lord Byron, it seems necessary to consider the probable effects of his residence, during his boyhood, in Scotland. It is generally agreed, that while a schoolboy in Aberdeen, he evinced a lively spirit, and sharpness enough to have equalled any of his schoolfellows, had he given sufficient application. In the few reminiscences preserved of his childhood, it is remarkable that he appears in this period, commonly of innocence and playfulness, rarely to have evinced any symptom of generous feeling. Silent rages, moody sullenness, and revenge are the general characteristics of his conduct as a boy.

He was, undoubtedly, delicately susceptible of impressions from the beauties of nature, for he retained recollections of the scenes which interested his childish wonder, fresh and glowing, to his latest days; nor have there been wanting plausible theories to ascribe the formation of his poetical character to the contemplation of those romantic scenes. But, whoever has attended to the influential causes of character will reject such theories as shallow, and betraying great ignorance of human nature. Genius of every kind belongs to some innate temperament; it does not necessarily imply a particular bent, because that may possibly be the effect of circumstances: but, without question, the peculiar quality is inborn, and particular to the individual. All hear and see much alike; but there is an undefinable though wide difference between the ear of the musician, or the eye of the painter, compared with the hearing and seeing organs of ordinary men; and it is in something like that difference in which genius consists. Genius is, however, an ingredient of mind more easily described by its effects than by its qualities. It is as the fragrance, independent of the freshness and complexion of the rose; as the light on the cloud; as the bloom on the cheek of beauty, of which the possessor is unconscious until the charm has been seen by its influence on others; it is the internal golden flame of the opal; a something which may be abstracted from the thing in which it appears, without changing the quality of its substance, its form, or its affinities. I am not, therefore, disposed to consider the idle and reckless childhood of Byron as unfavourable to the development of his genius; but, on the contrary, inclined to think, that the indulgence of his mother, leaving him so much to the accidents of undisciplined impression, was calculated to cherish associations which rendered them, in the maturity of his powers, ingredients of spell that ruled his memory.

It is singular, and I am not aware it has been before noticed, that with all his tender and impassioned apostrophes to beauty and love, Byron has in no instance, not even in the freest passages of *Don Juan*, associated either the one or the other with sensual images. The extravagance of Shakespeare's Juliet, when she speaks of Romeo being cut after his death into stars, that all the world may be in love with night, is flame and ecstasy compared to the icy metaphysical glitter of Byron's amorous allusions. The verses beginning with

She walks in beauty like the light
Of eastern climes and starry skies,

are a perfect example of what I have conceived of his bodiless admiration of beauty, and objectless enthusiasm of love. The sentiment itself is unquestionably in the highest mood of the intellectual sense of beauty; the simile is, however, anything but such an image as the beauty of woman would suggest. It is only the remembrance of some impression or imagination of the loveliness of a twilight applied to an object that awakened the same abstract general idea of beauty. The fancy which could conceive in its passion the charms of a female to be like the glow of the evening, or the general effect of the midnight stars, must have been enamoured of some beautiful abstraction, rather than aught of flesh and blood. Poets and lovers have compared the complexion of their mistresses to the hues of the morning or of the evening, and their eyes to the dewdrops and the stars; but it has no place in the feelings of man to think of female charms in the sense of admiration which the beauties of the morning or the evening awaken. It is to make the simile the principal. Perhaps, however, it may be as well to defer the criticism to which this peculiar characteristic of Byron's amatory effusions gives rise, until we shall come to estimate his general powers as a poet. There is upon the subject of love, no doubt, much beautiful composition. throughout his works; but not one line in all the thousands which shows a sexual feeling of female attraction — all is vague and passionless, save in the delicious rhythm of the verse.

But these remarks, though premature as criticisms, are not uncalled for here, even while we are speaking of a child not more than ten years old. Before Byron had attained that age, he describes himself as having felt the passion. Dante is said as early as nine years old to have fallen in love with Beatrice; Alfieri, who was himself precocious in the passion, considered such early sensibility to be an unerring sign of a soul formed for the fine arts; and Canova used to say that he was in love when but five years old. But these instances, however, prove nothing. Calf-love, as it is called in the country, is common; and in Italy it may

arise earlier than in the bleak and barren regions of Lochynagar. This movement of juvenile sentiment is not, however, love — that strong masculine avidity, which, in its highest excitement, is unrestrained, by the laws alike of God and man. In truth, the feeling of this kind of love is the very reverse of the irrepressible passion it is a mean shrinking, stealthy awe, and in no one of its symptoms, at least in none of those which Byron describes, has it the slightest resemblance to that bold energy which has prompted men to undertake the most improbable adventures.

He was not quite eight years old, when, according to his own account, he formed an impassioned attachment to Mary Duff; and he gives the following account of his recollection of her, nineteen years afterwards.

“I have been thinking lately a good deal of Mary Duff. How very odd that I should have been so devotedly fond of that girl, at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word and the effect! My mother used always to rally me about this childish amour, and at last, many years after, when I was sixteen, she told me one day, ‘O Byron, I have had a letter from Edinburgh, and your old sweetheart, Mary Duff, is married to Mr C***.’ And what was my answer? I really cannot explain or account for my feelings at that moment, but they nearly threw me into convulsions, and alarmed my mother so much, that after I grew better she generally avoided the subject — to *me* — and contented herself with telling it to all her acquaintance.” But was this agitation the effect of natural feeling, or of something in the manner in which his mother may have told the news? He proceeds to inquire. “Now what could this be? I had never seen her since her mother’s *faux pas* at Aberdeen had been the cause of her removal to her grandmother’s at Banff. We were both the merest children. I had, and have been, attached fifty times since that period; yet I recollect all we said to each other, all our caresses, her features, my restlessness, sleeplessness, my tormenting my mother’s maid to write for me to her, which she at last did to quiet me. Poor Nancy thought I was wild, and, as I could not write for myself, became my secretary. I remember too our walks, and the happiness of sitting by Mary, in the children’s apartment, at their house, not far from the Plainstones, at Aberdeen, while her lesser sister, Helen, played with the doll, and we sat gravely making love in our own way.

“How the deuce did all this occur so early? Where could it originate? I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterward, and yet my misery, my love for that girl, were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever been really attached since. Be that as it may, hearing of her marriage, several years afterward, was as a thunderstroke. It nearly choked me, to the horror of my mother, and the astonishment and almost incredulity of everybody; and it is a

phenomenon in my existence, for I was not eight years old, which has puzzled and will puzzle me to the latest hour of it. And, lately, I know not why, the *recollection* (not the attachment) has recurred as forcibly as ever: I wonder if she can have the least remembrance of it or me, or remember pitying her sister Helen, for not having an admirer too. How very pretty is the perfect image of her in my memory. Her dark brown hair and hazel eyes, her very dress — I should be quite grieved to see her now. The reality, however beautiful, would destroy, or at least confuse, the features of the lovely Peri, which then existed in her, and still lives in my imagination, at the distance of more than sixteen years.”

Such precocious and sympathetic affections are, as I have already mentioned, common among children, and is something very different from the love of riper years; but the extract is curious, and shows how truly little and vague Byron’s experience of the passion must have been. In his recollection of the girl, be it observed, there is no circumstance noticed which shows, however strong the mutual sympathy, the slightest influence of particular attraction. He recollects the colour of her hair, the hue of her eyes, her very dress, and he remembers her as a Peri, a spirit; nor does it appear that his sleepless restlessness, in which the thought of her was ever uppermost, was produced by jealousy, or doubt, or fear, or any other concomitant of the passion.

There is another most important circumstance in what may be called the Aberdonian epoch of Lord Byron’s life.

That Byron, in his boyhood, was possessed of lively sensibilities, is sufficiently clear; that he enjoyed the advantage of indulging his humour and temper without restraint, is not disputable; and that his natural temperament made him sensible, in no ordinary degree, to the beauties of nature, is also abundantly manifest in all his productions; but it is surprising that this admiration of the beauties of Nature is but an ingredient in Byron’s poetry, and not its most remarkable characteristic. Deep feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment are far more obvious; they constitute, indeed, the very spirit of his works, and a spirit of such qualities is the least of all likely to have arisen from the contemplation of magnificent Nature, or to have been inspired by studying her storms or serenity; for dissatisfaction and disappointment are the offspring of moral experience, and have no natural association with the forms of external things. The habit of associating morose sentiments with any particular kind of scenery only shows that the sources of the sullenness arose in similar visible circumstances. It is from these premises I would infer, that the seeds of Byron’s misanthropic tendencies were implanted during the “silent rages” of his childhood, and that the effect of mountain scenery, which continued so strong upon him after he left Scotland, producing the sentiments with which he has

imbued his heroes in the wild circumstances in which he places them, was mere reminiscence and association. For although the sullen tone of his mind was not fully brought out until he wrote *Childe Harold*, it is yet evident from his *Hours of Idleness* that he was tuned to that key before he went abroad. The dark colouring of his mind was plainly imbibed in a mountainous region, from sombre heaths, and in the midst of rudeness and grandeur. He had no taste for more cheerful images, and there are neither rural objects nor villagery in the scenes he describes, but only loneliness and the solemnity of mountains.

To those who are acquainted with the Scottish character, it is unnecessary to suggest how very probable it is that Mrs Byron and her associates were addicted to the oral legends of the district and of her ancestors, and that the early fancy of the poet was nourished with the shadowy descriptions in the tales o' the olden time; — at last this is manifest, that although Byron shows little of the melancholy and mourning of Ossian, he was yet evidently influenced by some strong bias and congeniality of taste to brood and cogitate on topics of the same character as those of that bard. Moreover, besides the probability of his imagination having been early tinged with the sullen hue of the local traditions, it is remarkable, that the longest of his juvenile poems is an imitation of the manner of the Homer of Morven.

In addition to a natural temperament, kept in a state of continual excitement, by unhappy domestic incidents, and the lurid legends of the past, there were other causes in operation around the young poet that could not but greatly affect the formation of his character.

Descended of a distinguished family, counting among its ancestors the fated line of the Scottish kings, and reduced almost to extreme poverty, it is highly probable, both from the violence of her temper, and the pride of blood, that Mrs Byron would complain of the almost mendicant condition to which she was reduced, especially so long as there was reason to fear that her son was not likely to succeed to the family estates and dignity. Of his father's lineage few traditions were perhaps preserved, compared with those of his mother's family; but still enough was known to impress the imagination. Mr Moore, struck with this circumstance, has remarked, that "in reviewing the ancestors, both near and remote, of Lord Byron, it cannot fail to be remarked how strikingly he combined in his own nature some of the best, and perhaps worst qualities that lie scattered through the various characters of his predecessors." But still it is to his mother's traditions of her ancestors that I would ascribe the conception of the dark and guilty beings which he delighted to describe. And though it may be contended that there was little in her conduct to exalt poetical sentiment, still there was a great deal in her condition calculated to affect and impel an impassioned

disposition. I can imagine few situations more likely to produce lasting recollections of interest and affection, than that in which Mrs Byron, with her only child, was placed in Aberdeen. Whatever might have been the violence of her temper, or the improprieties of her after-life, the fond and mournful caresses with which she used to hang over her lame and helpless orphan, must have greatly contributed to the formation of that morbid sensibility which became the chief characteristic of his life. At the same time, if it did contribute to fill his days with anguish and anxieties, it also undoubtedly assisted the development of his powers; and I am therefore disposed to conclude, that although, with respect to the character of the man, the time he spent in Aberdeen can only be contemplated with pity, mingled with sorrow, still it must have been richly fraught with incidents of inconceivable value to the genius of the poet.

CHAPTER III

Arrival at Newstead — Find it in Ruins — The old Lord and his Beetles — The Earl of Carlisle becomes the Guardian of Byron — The Poet's acute Sense of his own deformed Foot — His Mother consults a Fortune-teller

Mrs Byron, on her arrival at Newstead Abbey with her son, found it almost in a state of ruin. After the equivocal affair of the duel, the old lord lived in absolute seclusion, detested by his tenantry, at war with his neighbours, and deserted by all his family. He not only suffered the abbey to fall into decay, but, as far as lay in his power, alienated the land which should have kept it in repair, and denuded the estate of the timber. Byron has described the conduct of the morose peer in very strong terms: — "After his trial he shut himself up at Newstead, and was in the habit of feeding crickets, which were his only companions. He made them so tame that they used to crawl over him, and, when they were too familiar, he whipped them with a wisp of straw: at his death, it is said, they left the house in a body."

However this may have been, it is certain that Byron came to an embarrassed inheritance, both as respected his property and the character of his race; and, perhaps, though his genius suffered nothing by the circumstance, it is to be regretted that he was still left under the charge of his mother: a woman without judgment or self-command; alternately spoiling her child by indulgence, irritating him by her self-willed obstinacy, and, what was still worse, amusing him by her violence, and disgusting him by fits of inebriety. Sympathy for her misfortunes would be no sufficient apology for concealing her defects; they undoubtedly had a material influence on her son, and her appearance was often the subject of his childish ridicule. She was a short and corpulent person. She rolled in her gait, and would, in her rage, sometimes endeavour to catch him for the purpose of inflicting punishment, while he would run round the room, mocking her menaces and mimicking her motion.

The greatest weakness in Lord Byron's character was a morbid sensibility to his lameness. He felt it with as much vexation as if it had been inflicted ignominy. One of the most striking passages in some memoranda which he has left of his early days, is where, in speaking of his own sensitiveness on the subject of his deformed foot, he described the feeling of horror and humiliation that came over him when his mother, in one of her fits of passion, called him a "lame brat."

The sense which Byron always retained of the innocent fault in his foot was unmanly and excessive; for it was not greatly conspicuous, and he had a mode of

walking across a room by which it was scarcely at all perceptible. I was several days on board the same ship with him before I happened to discover the defect; it was indeed so well concealed, that I was in doubt whether his lameness was the effect of a temporary accident, or a malformation, until I asked Mr Hobhouse.

On their arrival from Scotland, Byron was placed by his mother under the care of an empirical pretender of the name of Lavender, at Nottingham, who professed the cure of such cases; and that he might not lose ground in his education, he was attended by a respectable schoolmaster, Mr Rodgers, who read parts of Virgil and Cicero with him. Of this gentleman he always entertained a kind remembrance. Nor was his regard in this instance peculiar; for it may be said to have been a distinguishing trait in his character, to recollect with affection all who had been about him in his youth. The quack, however, was an exception; whom (from having caused him to suffer much pain, and whose pretensions, even young as he then was, he detected) he delighted to expose. On one occasion, he scribbled down on a sheet of paper, the letters of the alphabet at random, but in the form of words and sentences, and placing them before Lavender, asked him gravely, what language it was. "Italian," was the reply, to the infinite amusement of the little satirist, who burst into a triumphant laugh at the success of his stratagem.

It is said that about this time the first symptom of his predilection for rhyming showed itself. An elderly lady, a visitor to his mother, had been indiscreet enough to give him some offence, and slights he generally resented with more energy than they often deserved. This venerable personage entertained a singular notion respecting the soul, which she believed took its flight at death to the moon. One day, after a repetition of her original contumely, he appeared before his nurse in a violent rage, and complained vehemently of the old lady, declaring that he could not bear the sight of her, and then he broke out into the following doggerel, which he repeated over and over, crowing with delight.

In Nottingham county, there lives at Swan-green,
As curs'd an old lady as ever was seen;
And when she does die, which I hope will be soon,
She firmly believes she will go to the moon.

Mrs Byron, by the accession of her son to the family honours and estate, received no addition to her small income; and he, being a minor, was unable to make any settlement upon her. A representation of her case was made to Government, and in consequence she was placed on the pension-list for £300 a-

year.

Byron not having received any benefit from the Nottingham quack, was removed to London, put under the care of Dr Bailey, and placed in the school of Dr Glennie, at Dulwich; Mrs Byron herself took a house on Sloan Terrace. Moderation in all athletic exercises was prescribed to the boy, but Dr Glennie had some difficulty in restraining his activity. He was quiet enough while in the house with the Doctor, but no sooner was he released to play, than he showed as much ambition to excel in violent exercises as the most robust youth of the school; an ambition common to young persons who have the misfortune to labour under bodily defects.

While under the charge of Dr Glennie, he was playful, good-humoured, and beloved by his companions; and addicted to reading history and poetry far beyond the usual scope of his age. In these studies he showed a predilection for the Scriptures; and certainly there are many traces in his works which show that, whatever the laxity of his religious principles may have been in after-life, he was not unacquainted with the records and history of our religion.

During this period, Mrs Byron often indiscreetly interfered with the course of his education; and if his classical studies were in consequence not so effectually conducted as they might have been, his mind derived some of its best nutriment from the loose desultory course of his reading.

Among the books to which the boys at Dr Glennie's school had access was a pamphlet containing the narrative of a shipwreck on the coast of Arracan, filled with impressive descriptions. It had not attracted much public attention, but it was a favourite with the pupils, particularly with Byron, and furnished him afterwards with the leading circumstances in the striking description of the shipwreck in *Don Juan*.

Although the rhymes upon the lunar lady of Notts are supposed to have been the first twitter of his muse, he has said himself, "My first dash into poetry was as early as 1800. It was the ebullition of a passion for my first cousin, Margaret Parker. I was then about twelve, she rather older, perhaps a year." And it is curious to remark, that in his description of this beautiful girl there is the same lack of animal admiration which we have noticed in all his loves; he says of her:

"I do not recollect scarcely anything equal to the transparent beauty of my cousin, or to the sweetness of her temper, during the short period of our intimacy: she looked as if she had been made out of a rainbow, all beauty and peace." This is certainly poetically expressed; but there was more true love in Pygmalion's passion for his statue, and in the Parisian maiden's adoration of the Apollo.

When he had been nearly two years under the tuition of Dr Glennie, he was removed to Harrow, chiefly in consequence of his mother's interference with his studies, and especially by withdrawing him often from school.

During the time he was under the care of Dr Glennie, he was more amiable than at any other period of his life, a circumstance which justifies the supposition, that, had he been left more to the discipline of that respectable person, he would have proved a better man; for, however much his heart afterwards became incrustated with the leprosy of selfishness, at this period his feelings were warm and kind. Towards his nurse he evinced uncommon affection, which he cherished as long as she lived. He presented her with his watch, the first he possessed, and also a full-length miniature of himself, when he was only between seven and eight years old, representing him with a profusion of curling locks, and in his hands a bow and arrow. The sister of this woman had been his first nurse, and after he had left Scotland he wrote to her, in a spirit which betokened a gentle and sincere heart, informing her with much joy of a circumstance highly important to himself. It was to tell her that at last he had got his foot so far restored as to be able to put on a common boot, an event which he was sure would give her great pleasure; to himself it is difficult to imagine any incident which could have been more gratifying.

I dwell with satisfaction on these descriptions of his early dispositions; for, although there are not wanting instances of similar warm-heartedness in his later years, still he never formed any attachments so pure and amiable after he went to Harrow. The change of life came over him, and when the vegetable period of boyhood was past, the animal passions mastered all the softer affections of his character.

In the summer of 1801 he accompanied his mother to Cheltenham, and while he resided there the views of the Malvern hills recalled to his memory his enjoyments amid the wilder scenery of Aberdeenshire. The recollections were reimpressed on his heart and interwoven with his strengthened feelings. But a boy gazing with emotion on the hills at sunset, because they remind him of the mountains where he passed his childhood, is no proof that he is already in heart and imagination a poet. To suppose so is to mistake the materials for the building.

The delight of Byron in contemplating the Malvern hills, was not because they resembled the scenery of Lochynagar, but because they awoke trains of thought and fancy, associated with recollections of that scenery. The poesy of the feeling lay not in the beauty of the objects, but in the moral effect of the traditions, to which these objects served as talismans of the memory. The scene at sunset reminded him of the Highlands, but it was those reminiscences which

similar scenes recalled, that constituted the impulse which gave life and elevation to his reflections. There is not more poesy in the sight of mountains than of plains; it is the local associations that throw enchantment over all scenes, and resemblance that awakens them, binding them to new connections: nor does this admit of much controversy; for mountainous regions, however favourable to musical feeling, are but little to poetical.

The Welsh have no eminent bard; the Swiss have no renown as poets; nor are the mountainous regions of Greece, nor of the Apennines, celebrated for poetry. The Highlands of Scotland, save the equivocal bastardy of Ossian, have produced no poet of any fame, and yet mountainous countries abound in local legends, which would seem to be at variance with this opinion, were it not certain, though I cannot explain the cause, that local poetry, like local language or local melody, is in proportion to the interest it awakens among the local inhabitants, weak and ineffectual in its influence on the sentiments of the general world. The “Rans de Vaches,” the most celebrated of all local airs, is tame and commonplace, — unmelodious, to all ears but those of the Swiss “forlorn in a foreign land.”

While in Cheltenham, Mrs Byron consulted a fortune-teller respecting the destinies of her son, and according to her feminine notions, she was very cunning and guarded with the sybil, never suspecting that she might have been previously known, and, unconscious to herself, an object of interest to the spaewife. She endeavoured to pass herself off as a maiden lady, and regarded it as no small testimony of the wisdom of the oracle, that she declared her to be not only a married woman, but the mother of a son who was lame. After such a marvellous proof of second-sightedness, it may easily be conceived with what awe and faith she listened to the prediction, that his life should be in danger from poison before he was of age, and that he should be twice married; the second time to a foreign lady. Whether it was this same fortune-teller who foretold that he would, in his twenty-seventh year, incur some great misfortune, is not certain; but, considering his unhappy English marriage, and his subsequent Italian *liaison* with the Countess Guiccioli, the marital prediction was not far from receiving its accomplishment. The fact of his marriage taking place in his twenty-seventh year, is at least a curious circumstance, and has been noticed by himself with a sentiment of superstition.

CHAPTER IV

Placed at Harrow — Progress there — Love for Miss Chaworth — His Reading — Oratorical Powers

In passing from the quiet academy of Dulwich Grove to the public school of Harrow, the change must have been great to any boy — to Byron it was punishment; and for the first year and a half he hated the place. In the end, however, he rose to be a leader in all the sports and mischiefs of his schoolfellows; but it never could be said that he was a popular boy, however much he was distinguished for spirit and bravery; for if he was not quarrelsome, he was sometimes vindictive. Still it could not have been to any inveterate degree; for, undoubtedly, in his younger years, he was susceptible of warm impressions from gentle treatment, and his obstinacy and arbitrary humour were perhaps more the effects of unrepressed habit than of natural bias; they were the prickles which surrounded his genius in the bud.

At Harrow he acquired no distinction as a student; indeed, at no period was he remarkable for steady application. Under Dr Glennie he had made but little progress; and it was chiefly in consequence of his backwardness that he was removed from his academy. When placed with Dr Drury, it was with an intimation that he had a cleverness about him, but that his education had been neglected.

The early dislike which Byron felt towards the Earl of Carlisle is abundantly well known, and he had the magnanimity to acknowledge that it was in some respects unjust. But the antipathy was not all on one side; nor will it be easy to parallel the conduct of the Earl with that of any guardian. It is but justice, therefore, to Byron, to make the public aware that the dislike began on the part of Lord Carlisle, and originated in some distaste which he took to Mrs Byron's manners, and at the trouble she sometimes gave him on account of her son.

Dr Drury, in his communication to Mr Moore respecting the early history of Byron, mentions a singular circumstance as to this subject, which we record with the more pleasure, because Byron has been blamed, and has blamed himself, for his irreverence towards Lord Carlisle, while it appears that the fault lay with the Earl.

“After some continuance at Harrow,” says Dr Drury, “and when the powers of his mind had begun to expand, the late Lord Carlisle, his relation, desired to see me in town. I waited on his Lordship. His object was to inform me of Lord Byron's expectations of property when he came of age, which he represented as contracted, and to inquire respecting his abilities. On the former circumstance I

made no remark; as to the latter, I replied, 'He has talents, my Lord, which will add lustre to his rank.' 'Indeed,' said his Lordship, with a degree of surprise, that, according to my feelings, did not express in it all the satisfaction I expected."

Lord Carlisle had, indeed, much of the Byron humour in him. His mother was a sister of the homicidal lord, and possessed some of the family peculiarity: she was endowed with great talent, and in her latter days she exhibited great singularity. She wrote beautiful verses and piquant epigrams among others, there is a poetical effusion of her pen addressed to Mrs Greville, on her *Ode to Indifference*, which, at the time, was much admired, and has been, with other poems of her Ladyship's, published in Peach's collection. After moving, for a long time, as one of the most brilliant orbs in the sphere of fashion, she suddenly retired, and like her morose brother, shut herself up from the world. While she lived in this seclusion, she became an object of the sportive satire of the late Mr Fox, who characterized her as

Carlisle, recluse in pride and rags.

I have heard a still coarser apostrophe by the same gentleman. It seems they had quarrelled, and on his leaving her in the drawing-room, she called after him, that he might go about his business, for she did not care two skips of a louse for him. On coming to the hall, finding paper and ink on the table, he wrote two lines in answer, and sent it up to her Ladyship, to the effect that she always spoke of what was running in her head.

Byron has borne testimony to the merits of his guardian, her son, as a tragic poet, by characterizing his publications as paper books. It is, however, said that they nevertheless showed some talent, and that *The Father's Revenge*, one of the tragedies, was submitted to the judgment of Dr Johnson, who did not despise it.

But to return to the progress of Byron at Harrow; it is certain that notwithstanding the affectionate solicitude of Dr Drury to encourage him, he never became an eminent scholar; at least, we have his own testimony to that effect, in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*; the lines, however, in which that testimony stands recorded, are among the weakest he ever penned.

May he who will his recollections rake
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latin echoes: I abhor'd
Too much to conquer, for the poet's sake,
The drill'd, dull lesson forced down word by word,
In my repugnant youth with pleasure to record.

And, as an apology for the defect, he makes the following remarks in a note subjoined: —

“I wish to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions, which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish or to reason upon. For the same reason, we never can be aware of the fulness of some of the finest passages of Shakspeare (‘To be, or not to be,’ for instance), from the habit of having them hammered into us at eight years old, as an exercise not of mind but of memory; so that when we are old enough to enjoy them, the taste is gone, and the appetite palled. In some parts of the Continent, young persons are taught from mere common authors, and do not read the best classics until their maturity. I certainly do not speak on this point from any pique or aversion towards the place of my education. I was not a slow or an idle boy; and I believe no one could be more attached to Harrow than I have always been, and with reason: a part of the time passed there was the happiest of my life; and my preceptor, the Rev. Dr Joseph Drury, was the best and worthiest friend I ever possessed; whose warnings I have remembered but too well, though too late, when I have erred; and whose counsels I have but followed when I have done well and wisely. If ever this imperfect record of my feelings towards him should reach his eyes, let it remind him of one who never thinks of him but with gratitude and veneration; of one who would more gladly boast of having been his pupil if, by more closely following his injunctions, he could reflect any honour upon his instructor.”

Lord Byron, however, is not singular in his opinion of the inutility of premature classical studies; and notwithstanding the able manner in which the late Dean Vincent defended public education, we have some notion that his reasoning upon this point will not be deemed conclusive. Milton, says Dr Vincent, complained of the years that were wasted in teaching the dead languages. Cowley also complained that classical education taught words only and not things; and Addison deemed it an inexpressible error, that boys with genius or without were all to be bred poets indiscriminately. As far, then, as respects the education of a poet, we should think that the names of Milton, Cowley, Addison, and Byron would go well to settle the question; especially when it is recollected how little Shakspeare was indebted to the study of the classics, and that Burns knew nothing of them at all. I do not, however, adopt the opinion as correct; neither do I think that Dean Vincent took a right view of the subject; for, as discipline, the study of the classics may be highly useful, at the same time, the

mere hammering of Greek and Latin into English cannot be very conducive to the refinement of taste or the exaltation of sentiment. Nor is there either common sense or correct logic in the following observations made on the passage and note, quoted by the anonymous author of *Childe Harold's Monitor*.

“This doctrine of antipathies, contracted by the impatience of youth against the noblest authors of antiquity, from the circumstance of having been made the vehicle of early instruction, is a most dangerous doctrine indeed; since it strikes at the root, not only of all pure taste, but of all praiseworthy industry. It would, if acted upon (as Harold by the mention of the Continental practice of using inferior writers in the business of tuition would seem to recommend), destroy the great source of the intellectual vigour of our countrymen.”

This is, undoubtedly, assuming too much; for those who have objected to the years “wasted” in teaching the dead languages, do not admit that the labour of acquiring them either improves the taste or adds to the vigour of the understanding; and, therefore, before the soundness of the opinion of Milton, of Cowley, of Addison, and of many other great men can be rejected, it falls on those who are of Dean Vincent’s opinion, and that of *Childe Harold's Monitor*, to prove that the study of the learned languages is of so much primary importance as they claim for it.

But it appears that Byron’s mind, during the early period of his residence at Harrow, was occupied with another object than his studies, and which may partly account for his inattention to them. He fell in love with Mary Chaworth. “She was,” he is represented to have said, “several years older than myself, but at my age boys like something older than themselves, as they do younger later in life. Our estates adjoined, but owing to the unhappy circumstances of the feud (the affair of the fatal duel), our families, as is generally the case with neighbours, who happen to be near relations, were never on terms of more than common civility, scarcely those. She was the beau ideal of all that my youthful fancy could paint of the beautiful! and I have taken all my fables about the celestial nature of women from the perfection my imagination created in her. I say created, for I found her, like the rest of the sex, anything but angelic. I returned to Harrow, after my trip to Cheltenham, more deeply enamoured than ever, and passed the next holidays at Newstead. I now began to fancy myself a man, and to make love in earnest. Our meetings were stolen ones, and my letters passed through the medium of a confidant. A gate leading from Mr Chaworth’s grounds to those of my mother, was the place of our interviews, but the ardour was all on my side; I was serious, she was volatile. She liked me as a younger brother, and treated and laughed at me as a boy; she, however, gave me her picture, and that was something to make verses upon. Had I married Miss

Chaworth, perhaps the whole tenor of my life would have been different; she jilted me, however, but her marriage proved anything but a happy one.” It is to this attachment that we are indebted for the beautiful poem of *The Dream*, and the stanzas beginning

Oh, had my fate been joined to thine!

Although this love affair a little interfered with his Greek and Latin, his time was not passed without some attention to reading. Until he was eighteen years old, he had never seen a review; but his general information was so extensive on modern topics, as to induce a suspicion that he could only have collected so much information from reviews, as he was never seen reading, but always idle, and in mischief, or at play. He was, however, a devourer of books; he read eating, read in bed, read when no one else read, and had perused all sorts of books from the time he first could spell, but had never read a review, and knew not what the name implied.

It should be here noticed, that while he was at Harrow, his qualities were rather oratorical than poetical; and if an opinion had then been formed of the likely result of his character, the prognostication would have led to the expectation of an orator. Altogether, his conduct at Harrow indicated a clever, but not an extraordinary boy. He formed a few friendships there, in which his attachment appears to have been, in some instances, remarkable. The late Duke of Dorset was his fag, and he was not considered a very hard taskmaster. He certainly did not carry with him from Harrow any anticipation of that splendid career he was destined to run as a poet.

CHAPTER V

Character at Harrow — Poetical Predilections — Byron at Cambridge — His "Hours of Idleness"

In reconsidering the four years which Byron spent at Harrow, while we can clearly trace the development of the sensibilities of his character, and an increased tension of his susceptibility, by which impressions became more acute and delicate, it seems impossible not to perceive by the records which he has himself left of his feelings, that something morbid was induced upon them. Had he not afterwards so magnificently distinguished himself as a poet, it is not probable that he would have been recollected by his schoolfellows as having been in any respect different from the common herd. His activity and spirit, in their controversies and quarrels, were but the outbreakings of that temperament which the discipline of riper years, and the natural awe of the world, afterward reduced into his hereditary cast of character, in which so much of sullenness and misanthropy was exhibited. I cannot, however, think that there was anything either in the nature of his pastimes, or his studies, unfavourable to the formation of the poetical character. His amusements were active; his reading, though without method, was yet congenial to his impassioned imagination; and the phantom of an enthusiastic attachment, of which Miss Chaworth was not the only object (for it was altogether intellectual, and shared with others), were circumstances calculated to open various sources of reflection, and to concentrate the elements of an energetic and original mind.

But it is no easy matter to sketch what may have been the outline of a young poet's education. The supposition that poets must be dreamers, because there is often much dreaminess in poesy, is a mere hypothesis. Of all the professors of metaphysical discernment, poets require the finest tact; and contemplation is with them a sign of inward abstract reflection, more than of any process of mind by which resemblance is traced, and associations awakened. There is no account of any great poet, whose genius was of that dreamy cartilaginous kind, which hath its being in haze, and draws its nourishment from lights and shadows; which ponders over the mysteries of trees, and interprets the oracles of babbling waters. They have all been men — worldly men, different only from others in reasoning more by feeling than induction. Directed by impulse, in a greater degree than other men, poets are apt to be betrayed into actions which make them singular, as compared by those who are less imaginative; but the effects of earnestness should never be confounded with the qualities of talent.

No greater misconception has ever been obtruded upon the world as

philosophic criticism, than the theory of poets being the offspring of “capering lambkins and cooing doves”; for they differ in no respect from other men of high endowment, but in the single circumstance of the objects to which their taste is attracted. The most vigorous poets, those who have influenced longest and are most quoted, have indeed been all men of great shrewdness of remark, and anything but your chin-on-hand contemplators. To adduce many instances is unnecessary. Are there any symptoms of the gelatinous character of the effusions of the Lakers in the compositions of Homer? The *London Gazette* does not tell us things more like facts than the narratives of Homer, and it often states facts that are much more like fictions than his most poetical inventions. So much is this the case with the works of all the higher poets, that as they recede from that worldly standard which is found in the Epics of Homer, they sink in the scale of poets. In what does the inferiority of Virgil, for example, consist, but in his having hatched fancies in his contemplations which the calm mind rejects as absurdities. Then Tasso, with his enchanted forests and his other improbabilities; are they more than childish tales? tales, too, not in fancy to be compared with those of that venerable dry-nurse, Mother Bunch. Compare the poets that babble of green fields with those who deal in the actions and passions of men, such as Shakspeare, and it must be confessed that it is not those who have looked at external nature who are the true poets, but those who have seen and considered most about the business and bosom of man. It may be an advantage that a poet should have the benefit of landscapes and storms, as children are the better for country air and cow’s milk; but the true scene of their manly work and business is in the populous city. Inasmuch as Byron was a lover of solitude, he was deficient as an observer of men.

The barrenest portion, as to materials for biography, in the life of this interesting man, is the period he spent at the University of Cambridge. Like that of most young men, it is probable the major part of his time was passed between the metropolis and the university. Still it was in that period he composed the different poems which make up the little volume of *The Hours of Idleness*; a work which will ever be regarded, more by its consequences than its importance, as of great influence on the character and career of the poet.

It has been supposed, I see not how justly, that there was affectation in the title. It is probable that Byron intended no more by it than to imply that its contents were sketches of leisure. This is the less doubtful, as he was at that period particularly sensitive concerning the opinion that might be entertained of his works. Before he made the collection, many of the pieces had been circulated, and he had gathered opinions as to their merits with a degree of solicitude that can only be conceived by those who were acquainted with the

constantly excited sensibility of his mind. When he did publish the collection, nothing appeared in the style and form of the publication that indicated any arrogance of merit. On the contrary, it was brought forward with a degree of diffidence, which, if it did not deserve the epithet of modesty, could incur nothing harsher than that of bashfulness. It was printed at the obscure market-town press of Newark, was altogether a very homely, rustic work, and no attempt was made to bespeak for it a good name from the critics. It was truly an innocent affair and an unpretending performance. But notwithstanding these, at least seeming, qualities of young doubtfulness and timidity, they did not soften the austere nature of the bleak and blighting criticism which was then characteristic of Edinburgh.

A copy was somehow communicated to one of the critics in that city, and was reviewed by him in the *Edinburgh Review* in an article replete with satire and insinuations calculated to prey upon the author's feelings, while the injustice of the estimate which was made of his talent and originality, could not but be as iron in his heart. Owing to the deep and severe impression which it left, it ought to be preserved in every memoir which treats of the development of his genius and character; and for this reason I insert it entire, as one of the most influential documents perhaps in the whole extent of biography.

CHAPTER VI

Criticism of the "Edinburgh Review"

"The poesy of this young lord belongs to the class which neither God nor man are said to permit. Indeed we do not recollect to have seen a quantity of verse with so few deviations in either direction from that exact standard. His effusions are spread over a dead flat, and can no more get above or below the level than if they were so much stagnant water. As an extenuation of this offence, the noble author is peculiarly forward in pleading minority. We have it in the title-page, and on the very back of the volume; it follows his name like a favourite part of his style. Much stress is laid upon it in the preface; and the poems are connected with this general statement of his case by particular dates, substantiating the age at which each was written. Now, the law upon the point of minority we hold to be perfectly clear. It is a plea available only to the defendant; no plaintiff can offer it as a supplementary ground of action. Thus, if any suit could be brought against Lord Byron, for the purpose of compelling him to put into court a certain quantity of poetry, and if judgment were given against him, it is highly probable that an exception would be taken, were he to deliver *for poetry* the contents of this volume. To this he might plead *minority*; but as he now makes voluntary tender of the article, he hath no right to sue on that ground for the price in good current praise, should the goods be unmarketable. This is our view of the law on the point; and we dare to say, so will it be ruled. Perhaps, however, in reality, all that he tells us about his youth is rather with a view to increase our wonder, than to soften our censures. He possibly means to say, 'See how a minor can write! This poem was actually composed by a young man of eighteen! and this by one of only sixteen!' But, alas, we all remember the poetry of Cowley at ten, and Pope at twelve; and, so far from hearing with any degree of surprise that very poor verses were written by a youth from his leaving school to his leaving college inclusive, we really believe this to be the most common of all occurrences; — that it happens in the life of nine men in ten who are educated in England, and that the tenth man writes better verse than Lord Byron.

"His other plea of privilege our author brings forward to waive it. He certainly, however, does allude frequently to his family and ancestors, sometimes in poetry, sometimes in notes; and while giving up his claim on the score of rank, he takes care to remind us of Dr Johnson's saying, that when a nobleman appears as an author, his merit should be handsomely acknowledged. In truth, it is this consideration only that induces us to give Lord Byron's poems

a place in our Review, besides our desire to counsel him, that he do forthwith abandon poetry, and turn his talents, which are considerable, and his opportunities, which are great, to better account.

“With this view we must beg leave seriously to assure him, that the mere rhyming of the final syllable, even when accompanied by the presence of a certain number of feet; nay, although (which does not always happen) these feet should scan regularly, and have been all counted upon the fingers, is not the whole art of poetry. We would entreat him to believe that a certain portion of liveliness, somewhat of fancy, is necessary to constitute a poem; and that a poem in the present day, to be read, must contain at least one thought, even in a little degree different from the ideas of former writers, or differently expressed. We put it to his candour, whether there is anything so deserving the name of poetry, in verses like the following, written in 1806, and whether, if a youth of eighteen could say anything so uninteresting to his ancestors, a youth of nineteen should publish it:

Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu;
Abroad or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he'll think upon glory and you.

Though a tear dim his eye at this sad separation,
'Tis nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes with the same emulation,
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

That fame and that memory still will he cherish,
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown;
Like you will he live, or like you will he perish,
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own.

“Now, we positively do assert, that there is nothing better than these stanzas in the whole compass of the noble minor's volume.

“Lord Byron should also have a care of attempting what the greatest poets have done before him, for comparisons (as he must have had occasion to see at his writing-master's) are odious. Gray's *Ode to Eton College* should really have kept out the ten hobbling stanzas on a distant view of the village and school at Harrow.

Where fancy yet joys to trace the resemblance
Of comrades in friendship or mischief allied,
How welcome to me your ne'er-fading remembrance,
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied.

“In like manner, the exquisite lines of Mr Rogers, *On a Tear*, might have warned the noble author of these premises, and spared us a whole dozen such stanzas as the following:

Mild charity's glow,
To us mortals below,
Shows the soul from barbarity clear;
Compassion will melt
Where the virtue is felt.
And its dew is diffused in a tear.

The man doom'd to sail
With the blast of the gale,
Through billows Atlantic to steer,
As he bends o'er the wave,
Which may soon be his grave,
The green sparkles bright with a tear.

“And so of instances in which former poets had failed. Thus, we do not think Lord Byron was made for translating, during his nonage, Adrian's *Address to his Soul*, when Pope succeeded indifferently in the attempt. If our readers, however, are of another opinion, they may look at it.

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay,
To what unknown region borne
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.

“However, be this as it may, we fear his translations and imitations are great favourites with Lord Byron. We have them of all kinds, from Anacreon to Ossian; and, viewing them as school-exercises, they may pass. Only, why print them after they have had their day and served their turn? And why call the thing

in p. 79 a translation, where *two* words (θελο λεγειν) of the original are expanded into four lines, and the other thing in p. 81, where μεσονυκτικis ποθ' οραις is rendered by means of six hobbling verses. As to his Ossian poesy, we are not very good judges; being, in truth, so moderately skilled in that species of composition, that we should, in all probability, be criticising some bit of genuine Macpherson itself, were we to express our opinion of Lord Byron's rhapsodies. If, then, the following beginning of a Song of Bards is by his Lordship, we venture to object to it, as far as we can comprehend it; 'What form rises on the roar of clouds, whose dark ghost gleams on the red stream of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder; 'tis Oila, the brown chief of Otchona. He was,' etc. After detaining this 'brown chief' some time, the bards conclude by giving him their advice to 'raise his fair locks'; then to 'spread them on the arch of the rainbow'; and to 'smile through the tears of the storm.' Of this kind of thing there are no less than nine pages: and we can so far venture an opinion in their favour, that they look very like Macpherson; and we are positive they are pretty nearly as stupid and tiresome.

"It is some sort of privilege of poets to be egotists; but they should 'use it as not abusing it'; and particularly one who piques himself (though, indeed, at the ripe age of nineteen) on being an infant bard —

The artless Helicon I boast is youth —

should either not know, or should seem not to know, so much about his own ancestry. Besides a poem, above cited, on the family-seat of the Byrons, we have another of eleven pages on the selfsame subject, introduced with an apology, 'he certainly had no intention of inserting it,' but really 'the particular request of some friends,' etc. etc. It concludes with five stanzas on himself, 'the last and youngest of the noble line.' There is also a good deal about his maternal ancestors, in a poem on Lachion-y-Gair, a mountain, where he spent part of his youth, and might have learned that *pibroach* is not a bagpipe, any more than a duet means a fiddle.

"As the author has dedicated so large a part of his volume to immortalize his employments at school and college, we cannot possibly dismiss it without presenting the reader with a specimen of these ingenious effusions.

"In an ode, with a Greek motto, called *Granta*, we have the following magnificent stanzas: —

There, in apartments small and damp,
The candidate for college prizes
Sits poring by the midnight lamp,
Goes late to bed, yet early rises:

Who reads false quantities in Seale,
Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle,
Depriv'd of many a wholesome meal,
In barbarous Latin doomed to wrangle.

Renouncing every pleasing page
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage
The square of the hypotenuse.
Still harmless are these occupations,
That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compared with other recreations
Which bring together the imprudent.

“We are sorry to hear so bad an account of the college-psalmody, as is contained in the following attic stanzas

Our choir could scarcely be excused,
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne'er descended —
In furious mood he would have tore 'em.

“But whatever judgment may be passed on the poems of this noble minor, it seems we must take them as we find them, and be content for they are the last we shall ever have from him. He is at best, he says, but an intruder into the groves of Parnassus; he never lived in a garret, like thoroughbred poets, and though he once roved a careless mountaineer in the Highlands of Scotland, he has not of late enjoyed this advantage. Moreover, he expects no profit from his publication; and whether it succeeds or not, it is highly improbable, from his situation and pursuits, that he should again condescend to become an author. Therefore, let us take what we get and be thankful. What right have we poor devils to be nice? We are well off to have got so much from a man of this lord's station, who does not live in a garret, but has got the sway of Newstead Abbey. Again we say, let us be thankful; and, with honest Sancho, bid God bless the

giver, nor look the gift-horse in the mouth.”

The criticism is ascribed to Mr Francis Jeffrey, an eloquent member of the Scottish bar, and who was at that time supposed to be the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. That it was neither just nor fair is sufficiently evident, by the degree of care and artificial point with which it has been drawn up. Had the poetry been as insignificant as the critic affected to consider it, it would have argued little for the judgment of Mr Jeffrey, to take so much pains on a work which he considered worthless. But the world has no cause to repine at the severity of his strictures, for they unquestionably had the effect of kindling the indignation of Byron, and of instigating him to that retaliation which he so spiritedly inflicted in his satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

It is amusing to compare the respective literary reputation of the poet and the critic, as they are estimated by the public, now that the one is dead, and the other dormant. The voice of all the age acknowledges Byron to have been the greatest poetical genius of his time. Mr Jeffrey, though still enjoying the renown of being a shrewd and intelligent critic of the productions of others, has established no right to the honour of being an original or eminent author.

At the time when Byron published the satire alluded to, he had obtained no other distinction than the college reputation of being a clever, careless, dissipated student. But his dissipation was not intense, nor did it ever become habitual. He affected to be much more so than he was: his pretensions were moderated by constitutional incapacity. His health was not vigorous; and his delicacy defeated his endeavours to show that he inherited the recklessness of his father. He affected extravagance and eccentricity of conduct, without yielding much to the one, or practising a great deal of the other. He was seeking notoriety; and his attempts to obtain it gave more method to his pranks and follies than belonged to the results of natural impulse and passion. He evinced occasional instances of the generous spirit of youth; but there was in them more of ostentation than of that discrimination which dignifies kindness, and makes prodigality munificence. Nor were his attachments towards those with whom he preferred to associate, characterised by any nobler sentiment than self-indulgence; he was attached, more from the pleasure he himself received in their society, than from any reciprocal enjoyment they had with him. As he became a man of the world, his early friends dropped from him; although it is evident, by all the contemporary records of his feelings, that he cherished for them a kind, and even brotherly, affection. This secession, the common effect of the new cares, hopes, interests, and wishes, which young men feel on entering the world, Byron regarded as something analogous to desertion; and the notion tainted his mind, and irritated that hereditary sullenness of humour, which constituted an

ingredient so remarkable in the composition of his more mature character.

An anecdote of this period, characteristic of his eccentricity, and the means which he scrupled not to employ in indulging it, deserves to be mentioned.

In repairing Newstead Abbey, a skull was found in a secret niche of the walls. It might have been that of the monk who haunted the house, or of one of his own ancestors, or of some victim of the morose race. It was converted into a goblet, and used at Odin-like orgies. Though the affair was but a whim of youth, more odious than poetical, it caused some talk, and raised around the extravagant host the haze of a mystery, suggesting fantasies of irreligion and horror. The inscription on the cup is not remarkable either for point or poetry.

Start not, nor deem my spot fled;

 In me behold the only skull
From which, unlike a living head,
 Whatever flows is never dull.

I liv'd, I lov'd, I quaff'd like thee;

 I died, but earth my bones resign:
Fill up — thou canst not injure me,
 The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape

 Than nurse the earth-worm's slimy brood,
And circle in the goblet's shape
 The drink of gods than reptile's food.

Where once my wit perchance hath shone,

 In aid of others let me shine;
And when, alas, our brains are gone,
 What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst — another race,

 When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
 And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not? since through life's little day,

 Our heads such sad effects produce;
Redeem'd from worms and wasting clay,

This chance is theirs, to be use.

CHAPTER VII *Effect of the Criticism in the "Edinburgh Review" — "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" — His Satiety — Intention to Travel — Publishes his Satire — Takes his Seat in the House of Lords — Departs for Lisbon; thence to Gibraltar* The impression which the criticism of the *Edinburgh Review* produced upon the juvenile poet was deep and envenomed. It stung his heart, and prompted him to excess. But the paroxysms did not endure long; strong volitions of revenge succeeded, and the grasps of his mind were filled, as it were, with writhing adders. All the world knows, that this unquenchable indignation found relief in the composition of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*; a satire which, in many passages, equals, in fervour and force, the most vigorous in the language.

It was during the summer of 1808, while the poet was residing at Newstead, that *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was principally written. He bestowed more pains upon it than perhaps on any other of his works; and, though different from them all, it still exhibits strong indications of the misanthropy with which, after quitting Cambridge, he became more and more possessed. It is painful to reflect, in considering the splendid energy displayed in the poem, that the unprovoked malice which directed him to make the satire so general, was, perhaps, the main cause of that disposition to wither his reputation, which was afterwards so fervently roused. He could not but expect, that, in stigmatising with contempt and ridicule so many persons by name, some of them would retaliate. Nor could he complain of injustice if they did; for his attack was so wilful, that the rage of it can only be explained by supposing he was instigated to "the one fell swoop," by a resentful conviction, that his impillory in the *Edinburgh Review* had amused them all.

I do not conceive, that the generality of the satire can be well extenuated; but I am not inclined to regard it as having been a very heinous offence. The ability displayed in it is a sufficient compensation. The beauty of the serpent's skin appeases the aversion to its nature. Moreover, a toothless satire is verse without poetry — the most odious of all respectable things.

But, without regard to the merits or delinquency of the poem, to the acumen of its animadversions, or to the polish of the lines, it possesses, in the biography of the author, a value of the most interesting kind. It was the first burst of that dark, diseased ichor, which afterwards coloured his effusions; the overflowing suppuration of that satiety and loathing, which rendered *Childe Harold*, in particular, so original, incomprehensible, and antisocial; and bears testimony to the state of his feelings at that important epoch, while he was yet upon the threshold of the world, and was entering it with a sense of failure and

humiliation, and premature disgust. For, notwithstanding his unnecessary expositions concerning his dissipation, it is beyond controversy, that at no time could it be said he was a dissipated young man. That he indulged in occasional excesses is true; but his habits were never libertine, nor did his health or stamina permit him to be distinguished in licentiousness. The declaration in which he first discloses his sobriety, contains more truth than all his pretensions to his father's qualities. "I took my gradations in the vices," says he, in that remarkable confession, "with great promptitude, but they were not to my taste; for my early passions, though violent in the extreme, were concentrated, and hated division or spreading abroad. I could have left or lost the whole world with or for that which I loved; but, though my temperament was naturally burning, I could not share in the common libertinism of the place and time without disgust; and yet this very disgust, and my heart thrown back upon itself, threw me into excesses perhaps more fatal than those from which I shrunk, as fixing upon one at a time the passions, which, spread among many, would have hurt only myself." This is vague and metaphysical enough; but it bears corroborative intimations, that the impression which he early made upon me was not incorrect. He was vain of his experiments in profligacy, but they never grew to habitude.

While he was engaged in the composition of his satire, he formed a plan of travelling; but there was a great shortcoming between the intention and the performance. He first thought of Persia; he afterwards resolved to sail for India; and had so far matured this project, as to write for information to the Arabic professor at Cambridge; and to his mother, who was not then with him at Newstead, to inquire of a friend, who had resided in India, what things would be necessary for the voyage. He formed his plan of travelling upon different reasons from those which he afterward gave out, and which have been imputed to him. He then thought that all men should in some period of their lives travel; he had at that time no tie to prevent him; he conceived that when he returned home he might be induced to enter into political life, to which his having travelled would be an advantage; and he wished to know the world by sight, and to judge of men by experience.

When his satire was ready for the press, he carried it with him to London. He was then just come of age, or about to be so; and one of his objects in this visit to the metropolis was, to take his seat in the House of Lords before going abroad; but, in advancing to this proud distinction, so soothing to the self-importance of youth, he was destined to suffer a mortification which probably wounded him as deeply as the sarcasms of the *Edinburgh Review*. Before the meeting of Parliament, he wrote to his relation and guardian, the Earl of Carlisle, to remind

him that he should be of age at the commencement of the Session, in the natural hope that his Lordship would make an offer to introduce him to the House: but he was disappointed. He only received a formal reply, acquainting him with the technical mode of proceeding, and the etiquette to be observed on such occasions. It is therefore not wonderful that he should have resented such treatment; and he avenged it by those lines in his satire, for which he afterwards expressed his regret in the third canto of *Childe Harold*.

Deserted by his guardian at a crisis so interesting, he was prevented for some time from taking his seat in Parliament; being obliged to procure affidavits in proof of his grandfather's marriage with Miss Trevannion, which having taken place in a private chapel at Carhais, no regular certificate of the ceremony could be produced. At length, all the necessary evidence having been obtained, on the 13th of March, 1809, he presented himself in the House of Lords alone — a proceeding consonant to his character, for he was not so friendless nor unknown, but that he might have procured some peer to have gone with him. It, however, served to make his introduction remarkable.

On entering the House, he is described to have appeared abashed and pale: he passed the woolsack without looking round, and advanced to the table where the proper officer was attending to administer the oaths. When he had gone through them, the chancellor quitted his seat, and went towards him with a smile, putting out his hand in a friendly manner to welcome him, but he made a stiff bow, and only touched with the tip of his fingers the chancellor's hand, who immediately returned to his seat. Such is the account given of this important incident by Mr Dallas, who went with him to the bar; but a characteristic circumstance is wanting. When Lord Eldon advanced with the cordiality described, he expressed with becoming courtesy his regret that the rules of the House had obliged him to call for the evidence of his grandfather's marriage. — "Your Lordship has done your duty, and no more," was the cold reply, in the words of Tom Thumb, and which probably was the cause of the marked manner of the chancellor's cool return to his seat.

The satire was published anonymously, and immediately attracted attention; the sale was rapid, and a new edition being called for, Byron revised it. The preparations for his travels being completed, he then embarked in July of the same year, with Mr Hobhouse, for Lisbon, and thence proceeded by the southern provinces of Spain to Gibraltar.

In the account of his adventures during this journey, he seems to have felt, to an exaggerated degree, the hazards to which he was exposed. But many of his descriptions are given with a bright pen. That of Lisbon has always been admired for its justness, and the mixture of force and familiarity.

What beauties doth Lisboa's port unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did ride,
Of mighty strength since Albion was allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford.
A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,
Who lick, yet loathe, the hand that waves the sword
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

But whoso entereth within this town,
That sheening for celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
'Mid many things unsightly strange to see,
For hut and palace show like filthily;
The dingy denizens are reared in dirt;
No personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout and shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwash'd, unhurt.

Considering the interest which he afterwards took in the affairs of Greece, it is remarkable that he should have passed through Spain, at the period he has described, without feeling any sympathy with the spirit which then animated that nation. Intent, however, on his travels, pressing onward to an unknown goal, he paused not to inquire as to the earnestness of the patriotic zeal of the Spaniards, nor once dreamed, even for adventure, of taking a part in their heroic cause.

CHAPTER VIII

First Acquaintance with Byron — Embark together — The Voyage

It was at Gibraltar that I first fell in with Lord Byron. I had arrived there in the packet from England, in indifferent health, on my way to Sicily. I had then no intention of travelling. I only went a trip, intending to return home after spending a few weeks in Malta, Sicily, and Sardinia; having, before my departure, entered into the Society of Lincoln's Inn, with the design of studying the law.

At this time, my friend, the late Colonel Wright, of the artillery, was secretary to the Governor; and during the short stay of the packet at the Rock, he invited me to the hospitalities of his house, and among other civilities gave me admission to the garrison library.

The day, I well remember, was exceedingly sultry. The air was sickly; and if the wind was not a sirocco, it was a withering levanter — oppressive to the functions of life, and to an invalid denying all exercise. Instead of rambling over the fortifications, I was, in consequence, constrained to spend the hottest part of the day in the library; and, while sitting there, a young man came in and seated himself opposite to me at the table where I was reading. Something in his appearance attracted my attention. His dress indicated a Londoner of some fashion, partly by its neatness and simplicity, with just so much of a peculiarity of style as served to show, that although he belonged to the order of metropolitan beaux, he was not altogether a common one.

I thought his face not unknown to me; I began to conjecture where I could have seen him; and, after an unobserved scrutiny, to speculate both as to his character and vocation. His physiognomy was prepossessing and intelligent, but ever and anon his brows lowered and gathered; a habit, as I then thought, with a degree of affectation in it, probably first assumed for picturesque effect and energetic expression; but which I afterwards discovered was undoubtedly the occasional scowl of some unpleasant reminiscence: it was certainly disagreeable — forbidding — but still the general cast of his features was impressed with elegance and character.

At dinner, a large party assembled at Colonel Wright's; among others the Countess of Westmorland, with Tom Sheridan and his beautiful wife; and it happened that Sheridan, in relating the local news of the morning, mentioned that Lord Byron and Mr Hobhouse had come in from Spain, and were to proceed up the Mediterranean in the packet. He was not acquainted with either.

Hobhouse had, a short time before I left London,, published certain translations and poems rather respectable in their way, and I had seen the work, so that his name was not altogether strange to me. Byron's was familiar — the *Edinburgh Review* had made it so, and still more the satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but I was not conscious of having seen the persons of either.

On the following evening I embarked early, and soon after the two travellers came on board; in one of whom I recognised the visitor to the library, and he proved to be Lord Byron. In the little bustle and process of embarking their luggage, his Lordship affected, as it seemed to me, more aristocracy than befitted his years, or the occasion; and I then thought of his singular scowl, and suspected him of pride and irascibility. The impression that evening was not agreeable, but it was interesting; and that forehead mark, the frown, was calculated to awaken curiosity, and beget conjectures.

Hobhouse, with more of the commoner, made himself one of the passengers at once; but Byron held himself aloof, and sat on the rail, leaning on the mizzen shrouds, inhaling, as it were, poetical sympathy, from the gloomy Rock, then dark and stern in the twilight. There was in all about him that evening much waywardness; he spoke petulantly to Fletcher, his valet; and was evidently ill at ease with himself, and fretful towards others. I thought he would turn out an unsatisfactory shipmate; yet there was something redeeming in the tones of his voice, when, some time after he had indulged his sullen meditation, he again addressed Fletcher; so that, instead of finding him ill-natured, I was soon convinced he was only capricious.

Our passage to Sardinia was tardy, owing to calms; but, in other respects, pleasant. About the third day Byron relented from his rapt mood, as if he felt it was out of place, and became playful, and disposed to contribute his fair proportion to the general endeavour to wile away the tediousness of the dull voyage. Among other expedients for that purpose, we had recourse to shooting at bottles. Byron, I think, supplied the pistols, and was the best shot, but not very pre-eminently so. In the calms, the jolly-boat was several times lowered; and, on one of those occasions, his Lordship, with the captain, caught a turtle — I rather think two — we likewise hooked a shark, part of which was dressed for breakfast, and tasted, without relish; your shark is but a cannibal dainty.

As we approached the gulf, or bay, of Cagliari, in Sardinia, a strong north wind came from the shore, and we had a whole disagreeable day of tacking, but next morning, it was Sunday, we found ourselves at anchor near the mole, where we landed. Byron, with the captain, rode out some distance into the country, while I walked with Mr Hobhouse about the town: we left our cards for the consul, and Mr Hill, the ambassador, who invited us to dinner. In the evening

we landed again, to avail ourselves of the invitation; and, on this occasion, Byron and his Pylades dressed themselves as aides-de-camp — a circumstance which, at the time, did not tend to improve my estimation of the solidity of the character of either. But such is the force of habit: it appeared a less exceptionable affectation in the young peer than in the commoner.

Had we parted at Cagliari, it is probable that I should have retained a much more favourable recollection of Mr Hobhouse than of Lord Byron; for he was a cheerful companion, full of odd and droll stories, which he told extremely well; he was also good-humoured and intelligent — altogether an advantageous specimen of a well-educated English gentleman. Moreover, I was at the time afflicted with a nervous dejection, which the occasional exhilaration produced by his anecdotes and college tales often materially dissipated, though, for the most part, they were more after the manner and matter of Swift than of Addison.

Byron was, during the passage, in delicate health, and upon an abstemious regimen. He rarely tasted wine, nor more than half a glass, mingled with water, when he did. He ate little; no animal food, but only bread and vegetables. He reminded me of the ghoul that picked rice with a needle; for it was manifest, that he had not acquired his knowledge of the world by always dining so sparsely. If my remembrance is not treacherous, he only spent one evening in the cabin with us — the evening before we came to anchor at Cagliari; for, when the lights were placed, he made himself a man forbid, took his station on the railing between the pegs on which the sheets are belayed and the shrouds, and there, for hours, sat in silence, enamoured, it may be, of the moon. All these peculiarities, with his caprices, and something inexplicable in the cast of his metaphysics, while they served to awaken interest, contributed little to conciliate esteem. He was often strangely rapt — it may have been from his genius; and, had its grandeur and darkness been then divulged, susceptible of explanation; but, at the time, it threw, as it were, around him the sackcloth of penitence. Sitting amid the shrouds and rattlins, in the tranquillity of the moonlight, churning an inarticulate melody, he seemed almost apparitional, suggesting dim reminiscences of him who shot the albatross. He was as a mystery in a winding-sheet, crowned with a halo.

The influence of the incomprehensible phantasma which hovered about Lord Byron has been more or less felt by all who ever approached him. That he sometimes came out of the cloud, and was familiar and earthly, is true; but his dwelling was amid the murk and the mist, and the home of his spirit in the abyss of the storm, and the hiding-places of guilt. He was, at the time of which I am speaking, scarcely two-and-twenty, and could claim no higher praise than having written a clever worldly-minded satire; and yet it was impossible, even

then, to reflect on the bias of his mind, as it was revealed by the casualties of conversation, without experiencing a presentiment, that he was destined to execute some singular and ominous purpose. The description he has given of Manfred in his youth was of himself.

My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine;
The aim of their existence was not mine.
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger. Though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh.
My joy was in the wilderness — to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top.
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new-breaking wave
Of river, stream, or ocean, in their flow —
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars, and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look listening on the scatter'd leaves,
While autumn winds were at their evening song; —
These were my pastimes — and to be alone.
For if the beings, of whom I was one —
Hating to be so — cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again.

CHAPTER IX

Dinner at the Ambassador's — Opera — Disaster of Byron at Malta — Mrs Spencer Smith

I shall always remember Cagliari with particular pleasure; for it so happened that I formed there three of the most agreeable acquaintances of my life, and one of them was with Lord Byron; for although we had been eight days together, I yet could not previously have accounted myself acquainted with his Lordship.

After dinner, we all went to the theatre, which was that evening, on account of some Court festival, brilliantly illuminated. The Royal Family were present, and the opera was performed with more taste and execution than I had expected to meet with in so remote a place, and under the restrictions which rendered the intercourse with the Continent then so difficult. Among other remarkable characters pointed out to us was a nobleman in the pit, actually under the ban of outlawry for murder. I have often wondered if the incident had any effect on the creation of *Lara*; for we know not in what small germs the conceptions of genius originate.

But the most important occurrence of that evening arose from a delicate observance of etiquette on the part of the ambassador. After carrying us to his box, which was close to that of the Royal Family, in order that we might see the members of it properly, he retired with Lord Byron to another box, an inflection of manners to propriety in the best possible taste — for the ambassador was doubtless aware that his Lordship's rank would be known to the audience, and I conceive that this little arrangement was adopted to make his person also known, by showing him with distinction apart from the other strangers.

When the performance was over, Mr Hill came down with Lord Byron to the gate of the upper town, where his Lordship, as we were taking leave, thanked him with more elocution than was precisely requisite. The style and formality of the speech amused Mr Hobhouse, as well as others; and, when the minister retired, he began to rally his Lordship on the subject. But Byron really fancied that he had acquitted himself with grace and dignity, and took the jocularities of his friend amiss — a little banter ensued — the poet became petulant, and Mr Hobhouse walked on; while Byron, on account of his lameness, and the roughness of the pavement, took hold of my arm, appealing to me, if he could have said less, after the kind and hospitable treatment we had all received. Of course, though I thought pretty much as Mr Hobhouse did, I could not do otherwise than civilly assent, especially as his Lordship's comfort, at the moment, seemed in some degree dependent on being confirmed in the good

opinion he was desirous to entertain of his own courtesy. From that night I evidently rose in his good graces; and, as he was always most agreeable and interesting when familiar, it was worth my while to advance, but by cautious circumvallations, into his intimacy; for his uncertain temper made his favour precarious.

The next morning, either owing to the relaxation of his abstinence, which he could not probably well avoid amid the good things of the ambassadorial table; or, what was, perhaps, less questionable, some regret for his petulance towards his friend, he was indisposed, and did not make his appearance till late in the evening. I rather suspect, though there was no evidence of the fact, that Hobhouse received any concession which he may have made with indulgence; for he remarked to me, in a tone that implied both forbearance and generosity of regard, that it was necessary to humour him like a child. But, in whatever manner the reconciliation was accomplished, the passengers partook of the blessings of the peace. Byron, during the following day, as we were sailing along the picturesque shores of Sicily, was in the highest spirits overflowing with glee, and sparkling with quaint sentences. The champagne was uncorked and in the finest condition.

Having landed the mail at Girgenti, we stretched over to Malta, where we arrived about noon next day — all the passengers, except Orestes and Pylades, being eager to land, went on shore with the captain. They remained behind for a reason — which an accidental expression of Byron let out — much to my secret amusement; for I was aware they would be disappointed, and the anticipation was relishing. They expected — at least he did — a salute from the batteries, and sent ashore notice to Sir Alexander Ball, the Governor, of his arrival; but the guns were sulky, and evinced no respect of persons; so that late in the afternoon, about the heel of the evening, the two magnates were obliged to come on shore, and slip into the city unnoticed and unknown.

At this time Malta was in great prosperity. Her commerce was flourishing; and the goodly clusters of its profits hung ripe and rich at every door. The merchants were truly hospitable, and few more so than Mr Chabot. As I had letters to him, he invited me to dinner, along with several other friends previously engaged. In the cool of the evening, as we were sitting at our wine, Lord Byron and Mr Hobhouse were announced. His Lordship was in better spirits than I had ever seen him. His appearance showed, as he entered the room, that they had met with some adventure, and he chuckled with an inward sense of enjoyment, not altogether without spleen — a kind of malicious satisfaction — as his companion recounted with all becoming gravity their woes and sufferings, as an apology for begging a bed and morsel for the night. God forgive me! but I

partook of Byron's levity at the idea of personages so consequential wandering destitute in the streets, seeking for lodgings, as it were, from door to door, and rejected at all.

Next day, however, they were accommodated by the Governor with an agreeable house in the upper part of Valetta; and his Lordship, as soon as they were domiciled, began to take lessons in Arabic from a monk — I believe one of the librarians of the public library. His whole time was not, however, devoted to study; for he formed an acquaintance with Mrs Spencer Smith, the lady of the gentleman of that name, who had been our resident minister at Constantinople: he affected a passion for her; but it was only Platonic. She, however, beguiled him of his valuable yellow diamond ring. She is the Florence of *Childe Harold*, and merited the poetical embalmment, or rather the amber immortalisation, she possesses there — being herself a heroine. There was no exaggeration in saying that many incidents of her life would appear improbable in fiction. Her adventures with the Marquis de Salvo form one of the prettiest romances in the Italian language; everything in her destiny was touched with adventure: nor was it the least of her claims to sympathy that she had incurred the special enmity of Napoleon.

After remaining about three weeks at Malta, Byron embarked with his friend in a brig of war, appointed to convoy a fleet of small merchantmen to Prevesa. I had, about a fortnight before, passed over with the packet on her return from Messina to Girgenti, and did not fall in with them again till the following spring, when we met at Athens. In the meantime, besides his Platonic dalliance with Mrs Spencer Smith, Byron had involved himself in a quarrel with an officer; but it was satisfactorily settled.

His residence at Malta did not greatly interest him. The story of its chivalrous masters made no impression on his imagination — none that appears in his works — but it is not the less probable that the remembrance of the place itself occupied a deep niche in his bosom: for I have remarked, that he had a voluntary power of forgetfulness, which, on more than one occasion, struck me as singular: and I am led in consequence to think, that something unpleasant, connected with this quarrel, may have been the cause of his suppression of all direct allusion to the island. It was impossible that his imagination could avoid the impulses of the spirit which haunts the walls and ramparts of Malta; and the silence of his muse on a topic so rich in romance, and so well calculated to awaken associations concerning the knights, in unison with the ruminations of *Childe Harold*, persuades me that there must have been some specific cause for the omission. If it were nothing in the duel, I should be inclined to say, notwithstanding the seeming improbability of the notion, that it was owing to

some curious modification of vindictive spite. It might not be that Malta should receive no celebrity from his pen; but assuredly he had met with something there which made him resolute to forget the place. The question as to what it was, he never answered the result would throw light into the labyrinths of his character.

CHAPTER X

Sails from Malta to Prevesa — Lands at Patras — Sails again — Passes Ithaca — Arrival at Prevesa

It was on the 19th of September, 1809, that Byron sailed in the *Spider* brig from Malta for Prevesa, and on the morning of the fourth day after, he first saw the mountains of Greece; next day he landed at Patras, and walked for some time among the currant grounds between the town and the shore. Around him lay one of the noblest landscapes in the world, and afar in the north-east rose the purple summits of the Grecian mountains.

Having re-embarked, the *Spider* proceeded towards her destination; the poet not receiving much augmentation to his ideas of the grandeur of the ancients, from the magnitude of their realms and states. Ithaca, which he doubtless regarded with wonder and disappointment, as he passed its cliffy shores, was then in the possession of the French. In the course of a month after, the kingdom of Ulysses surrendered to a British serjeant and seven men.

Childe Harold sail'd, and pass'd the barren spot,
Where sad Penelope o'erlook'd the wave;
And onward view'd the mount, not yet forgot.
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hail'd the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deem'd he felt, no common glow;
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watch'd the billows' melancholy flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont —
More placid seem'd his eye, and smooth his pallid front.

At seven in the evening, of the same day on which he passed Leucadia, the vessel came to anchor off Prevesa. The day was wet and gloomy, and the appearance of the town was little calculated to bespeak cheerfulness. But the novelty in the costume and appearance of the inhabitants and their dwellings, produced an immediate effect on the imagination of Byron, and we can trace the vivid impression animating and adorning his descriptions.

The wild Albanian, kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroider'd garments, fair to see;
The crimson-scarfed men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive; the lively, supple Greek,
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek.

Having partaken of a consecutive dinner, dish after dish, with the brother of the English consul, the travellers proceeded to visit the Governor of the town: he resided within the enclosure of a fort, and they were conducted towards him by a long gallery, open on one side, and through several large unfurnished rooms. In the last of this series, the Governor received them with the wonted solemn civility of the Turks, and entertained them with pipes and coffee. Neither his appearance, nor the style of the entertainment, were distinguished by any display of Ottoman grandeur; he was seated on a sofa in the midst of a group of shabby Albanian guards, who had but little reverence for the greatness of the guests, as they sat down beside them, and stared and laughed at their conversation with the Governor.

But if the circumstances and aspect of the place derived no importance from visible splendour, every object around was enriched with stories and classical recollections. The battle of Actium was fought within the gulf.

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for woman — lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring.
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose!
Now, like the lands that rear'd them, withering;
Imperial monarchs doubling human woes!
God! was Thy globe ordained for such to win and lose?

Having inspected the ruins of Nicopolis, which are more remarkable for their desultory extent and scattered remnants, than for any remains of magnificence or of beauty,

Childe Harold pass'd o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales.
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

In this journey he was still accompanied by Mr Hobhouse. They had provided themselves with a Greek to serve as a dragoman. With this person they soon became dissatisfied, in consequence of their general suspicion of Greek integrity, and because of the necessary influence which such an appendage acquires in the exercise of his office. He is the tongue and purse-bearer of his master; he procures him lodging, food, horses, and all conveniences; must support his dignity with the Turks — a difficult task in those days for a Greek — and his manifold trusts demand that he should be not only active and ingenious, but prompt and resolute. In the qualifications of this essential servant, the travellers were not fortunate — he never lost an opportunity of pilfering; — he was, however, zealous, bustling, and talkative, and withal good-humoured; and, having his mind intent on one object — making money — was never lazy nor drunken, negligent nor unprepared.

On the 1st of October they embarked, and sailed up the Gulf of Salona, where they were shown into an empty barrack for lodgings. In this habitation twelve Albanian soldiers and an officer were quartered, who behaved towards them with civility. On their entrance, the officer gave them pipes and coffee, and after they had dined in their own apartment, he invited them to spend the evening with him, and they condescended to partake of his hospitality.

Such instances as these in ordinary biography would be without interest; but when it is considered how firmly the impression of them was retained in the mind of the poet, and how intimately they entered into the substance of his reminiscences of Greece, they acquire dignity, and become epochal in the history of the development of his intellectual powers.

“All the Albanians,” says Mr Hobhouse, “strut very much when they walk, projecting their chests, throwing back their heads, and moving very slowly from side to side. Elmas (as the officer was called) had this strut more than any man perhaps we saw afterwards; and as the sight was then quite new to us, we could not help staring at the magisterial and superlatively dignified air of a man with great holes in his elbows, and looking altogether, as to his garment, like what we call a bull-beggar.” Mr Hobhouse describes him as a captain, but by the number

of men under him, he could have been of no higher rank than serjeant. Captains are centurions.

After supper, the officer washed his hands with soap, inviting the travellers to do the same, for they had eaten a little with him; he did not, however, give the soap, but put it on the floor with an air so remarkable, as to induce Mr Hobhouse to inquire the meaning of it, and he was informed that there is a superstition in Turkey against giving soap: it is thought it will wash away love.

Next day it rained, and the travellers were obliged to remain under shelter. The evening was again spent with the soldiers, who did their utmost to amuse them with Greek and Albanian songs and freaks of jocularity.

In the morning of the 3rd of October they set out for Arta, with ten horses; four for themselves and servants, four for their luggage, and two for two soldiers whom they were induced to take with them as guards. Byron takes no notice of his visit to Arta in *Childe Harold*; but Mr Hobhouse has given a minute account of the town. They met there with nothing remarkable.

The remainder of the journey to Joannina, the capital then of the famous Ali Pasha, was rendered unpleasant by the wetness of the weather; still it was impossible to pass through a country so picturesque in its features, and rendered romantic by the traditions of robberies and conflicts, without receiving impressions of that kind of imagery which constitutes the embroidery on the vestment of poetry.

The first view of Joannina seen in the morning light, or glittering in the setting sun, is lively and alluring. The houses, domes, and minarets, shining through gardens of orange and lemon trees and groves of cypresses; the lake, spreading its broad mirror at the foot of the town, and the mountains rising abrupt around, all combined to present a landscape new and beautiful. Indeed, where may be its parallel? the lake was the Acherusian, Mount Pindus was in sight, and the Elysian fields of mythology spread in the lovely plains over which they passed in approaching the town.

On entering Joannina, they were appalled by a spectacle characteristic of the country. Opposite a butcher's shop, they beheld hanging from the boughs of a tree a man's arm, with part of the side torn from the body. How long is it since Temple Bar, in the very heart of London, was adorned with the skulls of the Scottish noblemen who were beheaded for their loyalty to the son and representative of their ancient kings!

The object of the visit to Joannina was to see Ali Pasha, in those days the most celebrated Vizier in all the western provinces of the Ottoman empire; but he was then at Tepellené. The luxury of resting, however, in a capital, was not to be resisted, and they accordingly suspended their journey until they had

satisfied their curiosity with an inspection of every object which merited attention. Of Joannina, it may be said, they were almost the discoverers, so little was known of it in England — I may say in Western Europe — previous to their visit.

The palace and establishment of Ali Pasha were of regal splendour, combining with Oriental pomp the elegance of the Occident, and the travellers were treated by the Vizier's officers with all the courtesy due to the rank of Lord Byron, and every facility was afforded them to prosecute their journey. The weather, however — the season being far advanced — was wet and unsettled, and they suffered more fatigue and annoyance than travellers for information or pleasure should have had to encounter.

The journey from Joannina to Zitza is among the happiest sketches in the *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold*.

He pass'd bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his farther journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield unless to gold.

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favour'd spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze, above, around, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found;
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound;
And bluest skies that harmonize the whole.
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks that shock yet please the soul.

In the course of this journey the poet happened to be alone with his guides, when they lost their way during a tremendous thunderstorm, and he has commemorated the circumstance in the spirited stanzas beginning —

Chill and mink is the nightly blast.

CHAPTER XI

Halt at Zitza — The River Acheron — Greek Wine — A Greek Chariot — Arrival at Tepellené — The Vizier's Palace

The travellers, on their arrival at Zitza, went to the monastery to solicit accommodation; and after some parley with one of the monks, through a small grating in a door plated with iron, on which marks of violence were visible, and which, before the country had been tranquillised under the vigorous dominion of Ali Pasha, had been frequently battered in vain by the robbers who then infested the neighbourhood. The prior, a meek and lowly man, entertained them in a warm chamber with grapes and a pleasant white wine, not trodden out by the feet, as he informed them, but expressed by the hand. To this gentle and kind host Byron alludes in his description of "Monastic Zitza."

Amid the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deem'd of dignity;
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer-by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

Having halted a night at Zitza, the travellers proceeded on their journey next morning, by a road which led through the vineyards around the villages, and the view from a barren hill, which they were obliged to cross, is described with some of the most forcible touches of the poet's pencil.

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
Chimera's Alps, extend from left to right;
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir.
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain fir
Nodding above; behold Black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates; my shade shall seek for none!

The Acheron, which they crossed in this route, is now called the Kalamas, a considerable stream, as large as the Avon at Bath but towards the evening they had some cause to think the Acheron had not lost all its original horror; for a dreadful thunderstorm came on, accompanied with deluges of rain, which more than once nearly carried away their luggage and horses. Byron himself does not notice this incident in *Childe Harold*, nor even the adventure more terrific which he met with alone in similar circumstances on the night before their arrival at Zitza, when his guides lost their way in the defiles of the mountains — adventures sufficiently disagreeable in the advent, but full of poesy in the remembrance.

The first halt, after leaving Zitza, was at the little village of Mosure, where they were lodged in a miserable cabin, the residence of a poor priest, who treated them with all the kindness his humble means afforded. From this place they proceeded next morning through a wild and savage country, interspersed with vineyards, to Delvinaki, where it would seem they first met with genuine Greek wine, that is, wine mixed with resin and lime — a more odious draught at the first taste than any drug the apothecary mixes. Considering how much of allegory entered into the composition of the Greek mythology, it is probable that in representing the infant Bacchus holding a pine, the ancient sculptors intended an impersonation of the circumstance of resin being employed to preserve new wine.

The travellers were now in Albania, the native region of Ali Pasha, whom they expected to find at Libokavo; but on entering the town, they were informed that he was further up the country at Tepellené, or Tepalen, his native place. In their route from Libokavo to Tepalen they met with no adventure, nor did they visit Argyro-castro, which they saw some nine or ten miles off — a large city, supposed to contain about twenty thousand inhabitants, chiefly Turks. When they reached Cezarades, a distance of not more than nine miles, which had taken them five hours to travel, they were agreeably accommodated for the night in a neat cottage; and the Albanian landlord, in whose demeanour they could discern none of that cringing, downcast, sinister look which marked the degraded Greek, received them with a hearty welcome.

Next morning they resumed their journey, and halted one night more before they reached Tepellené, in approaching which they met a carriage, not inelegantly constructed after the German fashion, with a man on the box driving four-in-hand, and two Albanian soldiers standing on the footboard behind. They were floundering on at a trot through mud and mire, boldly regardless of danger; but it seemed to the English eyes of the travellers impossible that such a vehicle should ever be able to reach Libokavo, to which it was bound. In due time they

crossed the river Laos, or Voioutza, which was then full, and appeared both to Byron and his friend as broad as the Thames at Westminster; after crossing it on a stone bridge, they came in sight of Tepellené, when

The sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
And Laos, wide and fierce, came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When down the steep banks, winding warily,
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sigh'd along the lengthening glen.

On their arrival, they proceeded at once to the residence of Ali Pasha, an extensive rude pile, where they witnessed a scene, not dissimilar to that which they might, perhaps, have beheld some hundred years ago, in the castle-yard of a great feudal baron. Soldiers, with their arms piled against the wall, were assembled in different parts of the court, several horses, completely caparisoned, were led about, others were neighing under the hands of the grooms; and for the feast of the night, armed cooks were busy dressing kids and sheep. The scene is described with the poet's liveliest pencil.

Richly caparison'd a ready row
Of armed horse, and many a warlike store,
Circled the wide extending court below;
Above, strange groups adorn'd the corridor,
And oft-times through the area's echoing door,
Some high-capp'd Tartar spurr'd his steed away.
The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Moor
Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day.

Some recline in groups,
Scanning the motley scene that varies round.
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops,
And some that smoke, and some that play, are found.
Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground
Half-whispering, there the Greek is heard to prate.

Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound;
The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret.
"There is no god but God! — to prayer — lo, God is great!"

The peculiar quietness and ease with which the Mahommedans say their prayers, struck the travellers as one of the most peculiar characteristics which they had yet witnessed of that people. Some of the graver sort began their devotions in the places where they were sitting, undisturbed and unnoticed by those around them who were otherwise engaged. The prayers last about ten minutes they are not uttered aloud, but generally in a low voice, sometimes with only a motion of the lips; and, whether performed in the public street or in a room, attract no attention from the bystanders. Of more than a hundred of the guards in the gallery of the Vizier's mansion at Tepellené, not more than five or six were seen at prayers. The Albanians are not reckoned strict Mahommedans; but no Turk, however irreligious himself, ever disturbs the devotion of others.

It was then the fast of Ramazan, and the travellers, during the night, were annoyed with the perpetual noise of the carousal kept up in the gallery, and by the drum, and the occasional voice of the Muezzin.

Just at this season, Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain:
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assumed the rule again.
Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepared and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant gallery now seem'd made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
And page and slave, anon, were passing out and in.

CHAPTER XII

Audience appointed with Ali Pasha — Description of the Vizier's Person — An Audience of the Vizier of the Morea

The progress of no other poet's mind can be so clearly traced to personal experience as that of Byron's. The minute details in the *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold* are the observations of an actual traveller. Had they been given in prose, they could not have been less imbued with fiction. From this fidelity they possess a value equal to the excellence of the poetry, and ensure for themselves an interest as lasting as it is intense. When the manners and customs of the inhabitants shall have been changed by time and the vicissitudes of society, the scenery and the mountains will bear testimony to the accuracy of Lord Byron's descriptions.

The day after the travellers' arrival at Tepellené was fixed by the Vizier for their first audience; and about noon, the time appointed, an officer of the palace with a white wand announced to them that his highness was ready to receive them, and accordingly they proceeded from their own apartment, accompanied by the secretary of the Vizier, and attended by their own dragoman. The usher of the white rod led the way, and conducted them through a suite of meanly-furnished apartments to the presence chamber. Ali when they entered was standing, a courtesy of marked distinction from a Turk. As they advanced towards him, he seated himself, and requested them to sit near him. The room was spacious and handsomely fitted up, surrounded by that species of continued sofa which the upholsterers call a divan, covered with richly-embroidered velvet; in the middle of the floor was a large marble basin, in which a fountain was playing.

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
ALI reclined; a man of war and woes.
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged, venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath and stain him with disgrace.

It is not that yon hoary, lengthening beard,

Ill suits the passions that belong to youth;
Love conquers age — so Hafiz hath averr'd:
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth —
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of Ruth,
Beseeming all men ill, but most the man
In years, have mark'd him with a tiger's tooth;
Blood follows blood, and through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

When this was written Ali Pasha was still living; but the prediction which it implies was soon after verified, and he closed his stern and energetic life with a catastrophe worthy of its guilt and bravery. He voluntarily perished by firing a powder-magazine, when surrounded, beyond all chance of escape, by the troops of the Sultan his master, whose authority he had long contemned.

Mr Hobhouse describes him at this audience as a short fat man, about five feet five inches in height; with a very pleasing face, fair and round; and blue fair eyes, not settled into a Turkish gravity. His beard was long and hoary, and such a one as any other Turk would have been proud of; nevertheless, he, who was more occupied in attending to his guests than himself, neither gazed at it, smelt it, nor stroked it, according to the custom of his countrymen, when they seek to fill up the pauses in conversation. He was not dressed with the usual magnificence of dignitaries of his degree, except that his high turban, composed of many small rolls, was of golden muslin, and his yataghan studded with diamonds.

He was civil and urbane in the entertainment of his guests, and requested them to consider themselves as his children. It was on this occasion he told Lord Byron, that he discovered his noble blood by the smallness of his hands and ears: a remark which has become proverbial, and is acknowledged not to be without truth in the evidence of pedigree.

The ceremonies on such visits are similar all over Turkey, among personages of the same rank; and as Lord Byron has not described in verse the details of what took place with him, it will not be altogether obtrusive here to recapitulate what happened to myself during a visit to Velhi Pasha, the son of Ali: he was then Vizier of the Morea, and residing at Tripolizza.

In the afternoon, about four o'clock, I set out for the seraglio with Dr Teriano, the Vizier's physician, and the Vizier's Italian secretary. The gate of the palace was not unlike the entrance to some of the closes in Edinburgh, and the court within reminded me of Smithfield, in London; but it was not surrounded by such lofty buildings, nor in any degree of comparison so well constructed. We

ascended a ruinous staircase, which led to an open gallery, where three or four hundred of the Vizier's Albanian guards were lounging. In an antechamber, which opened from the gallery, a number of officers were smoking, and in the middle, on the floor, two old Turks were seriously engaged at chess.

My name being sent in to the Vizier, a guard of ceremony was called, and after they had arranged themselves in the presence chamber, I was admitted. The doctor and the secretary having, in the meantime, taken off their shoes, accompanied me in to act as interpreters.

The presence chamber was about forty feet square, showy and handsome: round the walls were placed sofas, which, from being covered with scarlet, reminded me of the woolsacks in the House of Lords. In the farthest corner of the room, elevated on a crimson velvet cushion, sat the Vizier, wrapped in a superb pelisse: on his head was a vast turban, in his belt a dagger, incrustated with jewels, and on the little finger of his right hand he wore a solitaire as large as the knob on the stopper of a vinegar-cruet, and which was said to have cost two thousand five hundred pounds sterling. In his left hand he held a string of small coral beads, a comboloio which he twisted backwards and forwards during the greater part of the visit. On the sofa beside him lay a pair of richly-ornamented London-made pistols. At some distance, on the same sofa, but not on a cushion, sat Memet, the Pasha of Napoli Romania, whose son was contracted in marriage to the Vizier's daughter. On the floor, at the foot of this pasha, and opposite to the Vizier, a secretary was writing despatches. These were the only persons in the room who had the honour of being seated; for, according to the etiquette of this viceregal court, those who received the Vizier's pay were not allowed to sit down in his presence.

On my entrance, his highness motioned to me to sit beside him, and through the medium of the interpreters began with some commonplace courtly insignificancies, as a prelude to more interesting conversation. In his manners I found him free and affable, with a considerable tincture of humour and drollery. Among other questions, he inquired if I had a wife: and being answered in the negative, he replied to me himself in Italian, that I was a happy man, for he found his very troublesome: considering their probable number, this was not unlikely. Pipes and coffee were in the meantime served. The pipe presented to the Vizier was at least twelve feet long; the mouth-piece was formed of a single block of amber, about the size of an ordinary cucumber, and fastened to the shaft by a broad hoop of gold, decorated with jewels. While the pipes and coffee were distributing, a musical clock, which stood in a niche, began to play, and continued doing so until this ceremony was over. The coffee was literally a drop of dregs in a very small china cup, placed in a golden socket. His highness was

served with his coffee by Pasha Bey, his generalissimo, a giant, with the tall crown of a dun-coloured beaver-hat on his head. In returning the cup to him, the Vizier elegantly eructed in his face. After the regale of the pipes and coffee, the attendants withdrew, and his highness began a kind of political discussion, in which, though making use of an interpreter, he managed to convey his questions with delicacy and address.

On my rising to retire, his highness informed me, with more polite condescension than a Christian of a thousandth part of his authority would have done, that during my stay at Tripolizza horses were at my command, and guards who would accompany me to any part of the country I might choose to visit.

Next morning, he sent a complimentary message, importing, that he had ordered dinner to be prepared at the doctor's for me and two of his officers. The two officers were lively fellows; one of them in particular seemed to have acquired, by instinct, a large share of the ease and politeness of Christendom. The dinner surpassed all count and reckoning, dish followed dish, till I began to fancy that the cook either expected I would honour his highness's entertainment as Cæsar did the supper of Cicero, or supposed that the party were not finite beings. During the course of this amazing service, the principal singers and musicians of the seraglio arrived, and sung and played several pieces of very sweet Turkish music. Among others was a song composed by the late unfortunate Sultan Selim, the air of which was pleasingly simple and pathetic. I had heard of the Sultan's poetry before, a small collection of which has been printed. It is said to be interesting and tender, consisting chiefly of little sonnets, written after he was deposed; in which he contrasts the tranquillity of his retirement with the perils and anxieties of his former grandeur. After the songs, the servants of the officers, who were Albanians, danced a Macedonian reel, in which they exhibited several furious specimens of Highland agility. The officers then took their leave, and I went to bed, equally gratified by the hospitality of the Vizier and the incidents of the entertainment.

CHAPTER XIII

The Effect of Ali Pasha's Character on Lord Byron — Sketch of the Career of Ali, and the Perseverance with which he pursued the Objects of his Ambition

Although many traits and lineaments of Lord Byron's own character may be traced in the portraits of his heroes, I have yet often thought that Ali Pasha was the model from which he drew several of their most remarkable features; and on this account it may be expedient to give a sketch of that bold and stern personage — if I am correct in my conjecture — and the reader can judge for himself when the picture is before him — it would be a great defect, according to the plan of this work, not to do so.

Ali Pasha was born at Tepellené, about the year 1750. His father was a pasha of two tails, but possessed of little influence. At his death Ali succeeded to no inheritance but the house in which he was born; and it was his boast, in the plenitude of his power, that he began his fortune with sixty paras, about eighteen pence sterling, and a musket. At that time the country was much infested with cattle-stealers, and the flocks and herds of the neighbouring villages were often plundered.

Ali collected a few followers from among the retainers of his father, made himself master, first of one village, then of another, amassed money, increased his power, and at last found himself at the head of a considerable body of Albanians, whom he paid by plunder; for he was then only a great robber — the Rob Roy of Albania: in a word, one of those independent freebooters who divide among themselves so much of the riches and revenues of the Ottoman dominions.

In following up this career, he met with many adventures and reverses, but his course was still onwards, and uniformly distinguished by enterprise and cruelty. His enemies expected no mercy when vanquished in the field; and when accidentally seized in private, they were treated with equal rigour. It is reported that he even roasted alive on spits some of his most distinguished adversaries.

When he had collected money enough, he bought a pashalic; and being invested with that dignity, he became still more eager to enlarge his possessions. He continued in constant war with the neighbouring pashas; and cultivating, by adroit agents, the most influential interest at Constantinople, he finally obtained possession of Joannina, and was confirmed pasha of the territory attached to it, by an imperial firman. He then went to war with the pashas of Arta, of Delvino, and of Ocrida, whom he subdued, together with that of Triccala, and established

a predominant influence over the agas of Thessaly. The pasha of Vallona he poisoned in a bath at Sophia; and strengthened his power by marrying his two sons, Mouctar and Velhi, to the daughters of the successor and brother of the man whom he had murdered. In *The Bride of Abydos*, Lord Byron describes the assassination, but applies it to another party.

Reclined and feverish in the bath,
He, when the hunter's sport was up,
But little deem'd a brother's wrath
To quench his thirst had such a cup:
The bowl a bribed attendant bore —
He drank one draught, nor needed more.

During this progression of his fortunes, he had been more than once called upon to furnish his quota of troops to the imperial armies, and had served at their head with distinction against the Russians. He knew his countrymen, however, too well ever to trust himself at Constantinople. It was reported that he had frequently been offered some of the highest offices in the empire, but he always declined them and sought for power only among the fastnesses of his native region. Stories of the skill and courage with which he counteracted several machinations to procure his head were current and popular throughout the country, and among the Greeks in general he was certainly regarded as inferior only to the Grand Vizier himself. But though distrusting and distrusted, he always in the field fought for the Sultan with great bravery, particularly against the famous rebel Paswan Oglou. On his return from that war in 1798, he was, in consequence, made a pasha of three tails, or vizier, and was more than once offered the ultimate dignity of Grand Vizier, but he still declined all the honours of the metropolis. The object of his ambition was not temporary power, but to found a kingdom.

He procured, however, pashalics for his two sons, the younger of whom, Velhi, saved sufficient money in his first government to buy the pashalic of the Morea, with the dignity of vizier, for which he paid seventy-five thousand pounds sterling. His eldest son, Mouctar, was of a more warlike turn, with less ambition than his brother. At the epoch of which I am speaking, he supplied his father's place at the head of the Albanians in the armies of the Sultan, in which he greatly distinguished himself in the campaign of 1809 against the Russians.

The difficulties which Ali Pasha had to encounter in establishing his ascendancy, did not arise so much from the opposition he met with from the neighbouring pashas as from the nature of the people, and of the country of

which he was determined to make himself master. Many of the plains and valleys which composed his dominions were occupied by inhabitants who had been always in rebellion, and were never entirely conquered by the Turks, such as the Chimeriotes, the Sulliot, and the nations living among the mountains adjacent to the coast of the Ionian Sea. Besides this, the woods and hills of every part of his dominions were in a great degree possessed by formidable bands of robbers, who, recruited and protected by the villages, and commanded by chiefs as brave and as enterprising as himself, laid extensive tracts under contribution, burning and plundering regardless of his jurisdiction. Against these he proceeded with the most iron severity; they were burned, hanged, beheaded, and impaled, in all parts of the country, until they were either exterminated or expelled.

A short time before the arrival of Lord Byron at Joannina, a large body of insurgents who infested the mountains between that city and Triccala, were defeated and dispersed by Mouctar Pasha, who cut to pieces a hundred of them on the spot. These robbers had been headed by a Greek priest, who, after the defeat, went to Constantinople and procured a firman of protection, with which he ventured to return to Joannina, where the Vizier invited him to a conference, and made him a prisoner. In deference to the firman, Ali confined him in prison, but used him well until a messenger could bring from Constantinople a permission from the Porte to authorise him to do what he pleased with the rebel. It was the arm of this man which Byron beheld suspended from the bough on entering Joannina.

By these vigorous measures, Ali Pasha rendered the greater part of Albania and the contiguous districts safely accessible, which were before overrun by bandits and freebooters; and consequently, by opening the country to merchants, and securing their persons and goods, not only increased his own revenues, but improved the condition of his subjects. He built bridges over the rivers, raised causeways over the marshes, opened roads, adorned the country and the towns with new buildings, and by many salutary regulations, acted the part of a just, though a merciless, prince.

In private life he was no less distinguished for the same unmitigated cruelty, but he afforded many examples of strong affection. The wife of his son Mouctar was a great favourite with the old man. Upon paying her a visit one morning, he found her in tears. He questioned her several times as to the cause of her grief; she at last reluctantly acknowledged that it arose from the diminution of her husband's regard. He inquired if she thought he paid attention to other women; the reply was in the affirmative; and she related that a lady of the name of Phrosynè, the wife of a rich Jew, had beguiled her of her husband's love; for she

had seen at the bath, upon the finger of Phrosynè, a rich ring, which had belonged to Mouctar, and which she had often in vain entreated him to give to her. Ali immediately ordered the lady to be seized, and to be tied up in a sack, and cast into the lake. Various versions of this tragical tale are met with in all parts of the country, and the fate of Phrosynè is embodied in a ballad of touching pathos and melody.

That the character of this intrepid and ruthless warrior made a deep impression on the mind of Byron cannot be questioned. The scenes in which he acted were, as the poet traversed the country, everywhere around him; and his achievements, bloody, dark, and brave, had become themes of song and admiration.

CHAPTER XIV

Leave Joannina for Prevesa — Land at Fanari — Albania — Byron's Character of the Inhabitants

Having gratified their curiosity with an inspection of every object of interest at Tepellené, the travellers returned Joannina, where they again resided several days, partaking of the hospitality of the principal inhabitants. On the 3rd of November they bade it adieu, and returned to Salona, on the Gulf of Arta; where, in consequence of hearing that the inhabitants of Carnia were up in arms, that numerous bands of robbers had descended from the mountains of Ziccola and Agrapha, and had made their appearance on the other side of the gulf, they resolved to proceed by water to Prevesa, and having presented an order which they had received from Ali Pasha, for the use of his galliot, she was immediately fitted out to convey them. In the course of the voyage they suffered a great deal of alarm, ran some risk, and were obliged to land on the mainland of Albania, in a bay called Fanari, contiguous to the mountainous district of Sulli. There they procured horses, and rode to Volondorako, a town belonging to the Vizier, by the primate of which and his highness's garrison they were received with all imaginable civility. Having passed the night there, they departed in the morning, which, proving bright and beautiful, afforded them interesting views of the steep romantic environs of Sulli.

Land of Albania, where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his namesake whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise;
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The Cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

Of the inhabitants of Albania — the Arnaouts or Albanese — Lord Byron says they reminded him strongly of the Highlanders of Scotland, whom they undoubtedly resemble in dress, figure, and manner of living. “The very mountains seemed Caledonian with a kinder climate. The kilt, though white, the spare active form, their dialect, Celtic in its sound, and their hardy habits, all carried me back to Morven. No nation are so detested and dreaded by their

neighbours as the Albanese; the Greeks hardly regard them as Christians, or the Turks as Moslems, and in fact they are a mixture of both, and sometimes neither. Their habits are predatory: all are armed, and the red-shawled Arnaouts, the Montenegrins, Chimeriotes, and Gedges, are treacherous; the others differ somewhat in garb, and essentially in character. As far as my own experience goes, I can speak favourably. I was attended by two, an infidel and a Mussulman, to Constantinople and every other part of Turkey which came within my observations, and men more faithful in peril and indefatigable in service are nowhere to be found. The infidel was named Basilius, the Moslem Dervish Tahiri; the former a man of middle age, and the latter about my own. Basili was strictly charged by Ali Pasha in person to attend us, and Dervish was one of fifty who accompanied us through the forests of Acarnania, to the banks of the Achelous, and onward to Missolonghi. There I took him into my own service, and never had occasion to repent it until the moment of my departure.

“When in 1810, after my friend, Mr Hobhouse, left me for England, I was seized with a severe fever in the Morea, these men saved my life by frightening away my physician, whose throat they threatened to cut if I was not cured within a given time. To this consolatory assurance of posthumous retribution, and a resolute refusal of Dr Romanelli’s prescriptions, I attributed my recovery. I had left my last remaining English servant at Athens; my dragoman was as ill as myself; and my poor Arnaouts nursed me with an attention which would have done honour to civilization.

“They had a variety of adventures, for the Moslem, Dervish, being a remarkably handsome man, was always squabbling with the husbands of Athens; insomuch that four of the principal Turks paid me a visit of remonstrance at the convent, on the subject of his having taken a woman to the bath — whom he had lawfully bought, however — a thing quite contrary to etiquette.

“Basili also was extremely gallant among his own persuasion, and had the greatest veneration for the Church, mixed with the highest contempt of Churchmen, whom he cuffed upon occasion in a most heterodox manner. Yet he never passed a church without crossing himself; and I remember the risk he ran on entering St Sophia, in Stamboul, because it had once been a place of his worship. On remonstrating with him on his inconsistent proceedings, he invariably answered, ‘Our church is holy, our priests are thieves’; and then he crossed himself as usual, and boxed the ears of the first papas who refused to assist in any required operation, as was always found to be necessary where a priest had any influence with the Cogia Bashi of his village. Indeed, a more abandoned race of miscreants cannot exist than the lower orders of the Greek clergy.

“When preparations were made for my return, my Albanians were summoned to receive their pay. Basili took his with an awkward show of regret at my intended departure, and marched away to his quarters with his bag of piastres. I sent for Dervish, but for some time he was not to be found; at last he entered just as Signor Logotheti, father to the *ci-devant* Anglo-consul of Athens, and some other of my Greek acquaintances, paid me a visit. Dervish took the money, but on a sudden dashed it on the ground; and clasping his hands, which he raised to his forehead, rushed out of the room weeping bitterly. From that moment to the hour of my embarkation, he continued his lamentations, and all our efforts to console him only produced this answer, ‘He leaves me.’ Signor Logotheti, who never wept before for anything less than the loss of a paras, melted; the padre of the convent, my attendants, my visitors, and I verily believe that even Sterne’s foolish fat scullion would have left her fish-kettle to sympathise with the unaffected and unexpected sorrow of this barbarian.

“For my part, when I remembered that a short time before my departure from England, a noble and most intimate associate had excused himself from taking leave of me, because he had to attend a relation ‘to a milliner’s,’ I felt no less surprised than humiliated by the present occurrence and the past recollection.

“The Albanians in general (I do not mean the cultivators of the earth in the provinces, who have also that appellation, but the mountaineers) have a fine cast of countenance; and the most beautiful women I have ever beheld, in stature and in features, we saw levelling the road broken down by the torrents between Delvinaki and Libokavo. Their manner of walking is truly theatrical, but this strut is probably the effect of the capote or cloak depending from one shoulder. Their long hair reminds you of the Spartans, and their courage in desultory warfare is unquestionable. Though they have some cavalry among the Gedges, I never saw a good Arnaout horseman, but on foot they are never to be subdued.”

The travellers having left Volondorako proceeded southward until they came near to the seaside, and passing along the shore, under a castle belonging to Ali Pasha, on the lofty summit of a steep rock, they at last reached Nicopolis again, the ruins of which they revisited.

On their arrival at Prevesa, they had no choice left but that of crossing Carnia, and the country being, as already mentioned, overrun with robbers, they provided themselves with a guard of thirty-seven soldiers, and procured another galliot to take them down the Gulf of Arta, to the place whence they were to commence their land journey.

Having embarked, they continued sailing with very little wind until they reached the fortress of Vonitza, where they waited all night for the freshening of the morning breeze, with which they again set sail, and about four o’clock in the

afternoon arrived at Utraikee.

At this place there was only a custom house and a barrack for troops close to each other, and surrounded, except towards the water, by a high wall. In the evening the gates were secured, and preparations made for feeding their Albanian guards; a goat was killed and roasted whole, and four fires were kindled in the yard, around which the soldiers seated themselves in parties. After eating and drinking, the greater part of them assembled at the largest of the fires, and, while the travellers were themselves with the elders of the party seated on the ground, danced round the blaze to their own songs, with astonishing Highland energy.

Childe Harold at a little distance stood,
And view'd, but not displeased, the revelry,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude;
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent glee;
And as the flames along their faces gleam'd,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half scream'd.

"I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the vizier;
Since the days of our prophet, the crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pashaw.

CHAPTER XV

Leave Utraikée — Dangerous Pass in the Woods — Catoona — Quarrel between the Guard and Primate of the Village — Makala — Gouri — Missolonghi — Parnassus

Having spent the night at Utraikée, Byron and his friend continued their journey southward. The reports of the state of the country induced them to take ten additional soldiers with them, as their road for the first two hours lay through dangerous passes in the forest. On approaching these places fifteen or twenty of the party walked briskly on before, and when they had gone through the pass halted until the travellers came up. In the woods two or three green spots were discovered on the road-side, and on them Turkish tombstones, generally under a clump of trees, and near a well or fountain.

When they had passed the forest they reached an open country, whence they sent back the ten men whom they had brought from Utraikée. They then passed on to a village called Catoona, where they arrived by noon. It was their intention to have proceeded farther that day, but their progress was interrupted by an affair between their Albanian guard and the primate of the village. As they were looking about, while horses were collecting to carry their luggage, one of the soldiers drew his sword at the primate, the Greek head magistrate; guns were cocked, and in an instant, before either Lord Byron or Mr Hobhouse could stop the affray, the primate, throwing off his shoes and cloak, fled so precipitately that he rolled down the hill and dislocated his shoulder. It was a long time before they could persuade him to return to his house, where they lodged, and when he did return he remarked that he cared comparatively little about his shoulder to the loss of a purse with fifteen sequins, which had dropped out of his pocket during the tumble. The hint was understood.

Catoona is inhabited by Greeks only, and is a rural, well-built village. The primate's house was neatly fitted up with sofas. Upon a knoll, in the middle of the village, stood a schoolhouse, and from that spot the view was very extensive. To the west are lofty mountains, ranging from north to south, near the coast; to the east a grand romantic prospect in the distance, and in the foreground a green valley, with a considerable river winding through a long line of country.

They had some difficulty in procuring horses at Catoona, and in consequence were detained until past eleven o'clock the next morning, and only travelled four hours that day to Makala, a well-built stone village, containing about forty houses distinct from each other, and inhabited by Greeks, who were a little above the condition of peasants, being engaged in pasturage and a small wool-

trade.

The travellers were now in Carnia, where they found the inhabitants much better lodged than in the Albanian villages. The house in which they slept at this place resembled those old mansions which are to be met with in the bottoms of the Wiltshire Downs. Two green courts, one before and the other behind, were attached to it, and the whole was surrounded by a high and thick wall, which shut out the prospect, but was necessary in a country so frequently overrun by strong bands of freebooters.

From Makala they proceeded through the woods, and in the course of their journey passed three new-made graves, which the Albanians pointing at as they rode by, said they were “robbers.” In the course of the journey they had a distant view of the large town of Vraikore, on the left bank of the Aspro, but they did not approach it, crossing the river by a ferry to the village of Gouria, where they passed the night.

Leaving that place in the morning, they took an easterly direction, and continued to ride across a plain of cornfields, near the banks of the river, in a rich country; sometimes over stone causeways, and between the hedges of gardens and olive-groves, until they were stopped by the sea. This was that fruitful region formerly called Paracheloitis, which, according to classic allegory, was drained or torn from the river Achelous, by the perseverance of Hercules and presented by him for a nuptial present to the daughter of Oëneus.

The water at which they had now arrived was rather a salt marsh than the sea, a shallow bay stretching from the mouth of the Gulf of Lepanto into the land for several miles. Having dismissed their horses, they passed over in boats to Natolico, a town which stood in the water. Here they fell in with a hospitable Jew, who made himself remembered by saying that he was honoured in their having partaken of his little misery.

Natolico, where they stayed for the night, was a well-built town; the houses of timber, chiefly of two stories, and about six hundred in number. Having sent on their baggage in boats, they themselves proceeded to the town of Missolonghi, so celebrated since as having suffered greatly during the recent rebellion of the Greeks, but more particularly as the place where Lord Byron died.

Missolonghi is situated on the south side of the salt marsh or shallow, along the north coast of the Gulf of Corinth, nearly opposite to Patras. It is a dull, and I should think an unwholesome place. The marsh, for miles on each side, has only from a foot to two feet of water on it, but there is a channel for boats marked out by perches. When I was there the weather was extremely wet, and I had no other opportunity of seeing the character of the adjacent country than during the intervals of the showers. It was green and pastoral, with a short skirt

of cultivation along the bottom of the hills.

Abrupt and rapid as the foregoing sketch of the journey through Albania has been, it is evident from the novelty of its circumstances that it could not be performed without leaving deep impressions on the susceptible mind of the poet. It is impossible, I think, not to allow that far more of the wildness and romantic gloom of his imagination was derived from the incidents of this tour, than from all the previous experience of his life. The scenes he visited, the characters with whom he became familiar, and above all, the chartered feelings, passions, and principles of the inhabitants, were greatly calculated to supply his mind with rare and valuable poetical materials. It is only in this respect that the details of his travels are interesting. — Considered as constituting a portion of the education of his genius, they are highly curious, and serve to show how little, after all, of great invention is requisite to make interesting and magnificent poetry.

From Missolonghi the travellers passed over the Gulf of Corinth to Patras, then a rude, half-ruined, open town with a fortress on the top of a hill; and on the 4th of December, in the afternoon, they proceeded towards Corinth, but halted at Vostizza, the ancient Ægium, where they obtained their first view of Parnassus, on the opposite side of the gulf; rising high above the other peaks of that hilly region, and capped with snow. It probably was during this first visit to Vostizza that the Address to Parnassus was suggested.

Oh, thou Parnassus! whom I now survey
Not in the frensy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty!
What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
Would gladly woo thine echoes with his string,
Though from thy heights no more one muse will wave her wing.

Oft have I dream'd of thee! whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore;
And now I view thee, 'tis, alas! with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.
When I recount thy worshippers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,

But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy, to think at last I look on thee.

CHAPTER XVI

Vostizza — Battle of Lepanto — Parnassus — Livadia — Cave at Trophonius — The Fountains of Oblivion and Memory — Chæronéa — Thebes — Athens

Vostizza was then a considerable town, containing between three and four thousand inhabitants, chiefly Greeks. It stands on a rising ground on the Peloponnesian side of the Gulf of Corinth. I say stands, but I know not if it has survived the war. The scenery around it will always make it delightful, while the associations connected with the Achaian League, and the important events which have happened in the vicinity, will ever render the site interesting. The battle of Lepanto, in which Cervantes lost his hand, was fought within sight of it.

What a strange thing is glory! Three hundred years ago all Christendom rang with the battle of Lepanto, and yet it is already probable that it will only be interesting to posterity as an incident in the life of one of the private soldiers engaged in it. This is certainly no very mournful reflection to one who is of opinion that there is no permanent fame, but that which is obtained by adding to the comforts and pleasures of mankind. Military transactions, after their immediate effects cease to be felt, are little productive of such a result. Not that I value military virtues the less by being of this opinion; on the contrary, I am the more convinced of their excellence. Burke has unguardedly said, ‘that vice loses half its malignity by losing its grossness’; but public virtue ceases to be useful when it sickens at the calamities of necessary war. The moment that nations become confident of security, they give way to corruption. The evils and dangers of war seem as requisite for the preservation of public morals as the laws themselves; at least it is the melancholy moral of history, that when nations resolve to be peaceful with respect to their neighbours, they begin to be vicious with respect to themselves. But to return to the travellers.

On the 14th of December they hired a boat with fourteen men and ten oars, and sailed to Salona; thence they proceeded to Crisso, and rode on to Delphi, ascending the mountain on horseback, by a steep, craggy path towards the north-east. After scaling the side of Parnassus for about an hour, they saw vast masses of rock, and fragments of stone, piled in a perilous manner above them, with niches and sepulchres, and relics, and remains on all sides.

They visited and drank of Castalia, and the prophetic font, Cassotis; but still, like every other traveller, they were disappointed. Parnassus is an emblem of the fortune that attends the votaries of the Muses, harsh, rugged, and barren. The woods that once waved on Delphi’s steep have all passed away, and may now be

sought in vain.

A few traces of terraces may yet be discovered — here and there the stump of a column, while niches for receiving votive offerings are numerous among the cliffs, but it is a lone and dismal place; Desolation sits with Silence, and Ruin there is so decayed as to be almost Oblivion.

Parnassus is not so much a single mountain as the loftiest of a range; the cloven summit appears most conspicuous when seen from the south. The northern view is, however, more remarkable, for the cleft is less distinguishable, and seven lower peaks suggest, in contemplation with the summits, the fancy of so many seats of the Muses. These peaks, nine in all, are the first of the hills which receive the rising sun, and the last that in the evening part with his light.

From Delphi the travellers proceeded towards Livadia, passing in the course of the journey the confluence of the three roads where Œdipus slew his father, an event with its hideous train of fatalities which could not be recollected by Byron on the spot, even after the tales of guilt he had gathered in his Albanian journeys, without agitating associations.

At Livadia they remained the greater part of three days, during which they examined with more than ordinary minuteness the cave of Trophonius, and the streams of the Hercyna, composed of the mingled waters of the two fountains of Oblivion and Memory.

From Livadia, after visiting the battlefield of Chæronéa (the birthplace of Plutarch), and also many of the almost innumerable storied and consecrated spots in the neighbourhood, the travellers proceeded to Thebes — a poor town, containing about five hundred wooden houses, with two shabby mosques and four humble churches. The only thing worthy of notice in it is a public clock, to which the inhabitants direct the attention of strangers as proudly as if it were indeed one of the wonders of the world. There they still affect to show the fountain of Dirce and the ruins of the house of Pindar. But it is unnecessary to describe the numberless relics of the famous things of Greece, which every hour, as they approached towards Athens, lay more and more in their way. Not that many remarkable objects met their view; yet fragments of antiquity were often seen, though many of them were probably brought far from the edifices to which they had originally belonged; not for their beauty, or on account of the veneration which the sight of them inspired, but because they would burn into better lime than the coarser rock of the lulls. Nevertheless, abased and returned into rudeness as all things were, the presence of Greece was felt, and Byron could not resist the inspirations of her genius.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!

Immortal! though no more; though fallen, great;
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth
And long-accustom'd bondage uncreate?
Not such thy Sons who whilom did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral strait:
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb!

In the course of the afternoon of the day after they had left Thebes, in attaining the summit of a mountain over which their road lay, the travellers beheld Athens at a distance, rising loftily, crowned with the Acropolis in the midst of the plain, the sea beyond, and the misty hills of Egina blue in the distance.

On a rugged rock rising abruptly on the right, near to the spot where this interesting vista first opened, they beheld the remains of the ancient walls of Phyle, a fortress which commanded one of the passes from Bæotia into Attica, and famous as the retreat of the chief patriots concerned in destroying the thirty tyrants of Athens.

Spirit of freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Couldst thou forebode the dismal hour which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed unmann'd.

Such was the condition in which the poet found the country as he approached Athens; and although the spirit he invoked has reanimated the dejected race he then beheld around him, the traveller who even now revisits the country will still look in vain for that lofty mien which characterises the children of liberty. The fetters of the Greeks have been struck off, but the blains and excoriated marks of slavery are still conspicuous upon them; the sinister eye, the fawning voice, the skulking, crouching, base demeanour, time and many conflicts only can efface.

The first view of the city was fleeting and unsatisfactory; as the travellers descended from the mountains the windings of the road among the hills shut it

out. Having passed the village of Casha, they at last entered upon the slope, and thence into the plain of Attica but the intervening heights and the trees kept the town concealed, till a turn of the path brought it full again before them; the Acropolis crowned with the ruins of the Parthenon — the Museum hill — and the Monument of Philopappus —

Ancient of Days — august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone — glimmering through the dreams of things that were:
First in the race that led to glory's goal,
They won, and pass'd away: — is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon, and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the shade of power.

CHAPTER XVII

Athens — Byron's Character of the modern Athenians — Visit to Eleusis — Visit to the Caverns at Vary and Keratéa — Lost in the Labyrinths of the latter

It has been justly remarked, that were there no other vestiges of the ancient world in existence than those to be seen at Athens, they are still sufficient of themselves to justify the admiration entertained for the genius of Greece. It is not, however, so much on account of their magnificence as of their exquisite beauty, that the fragments obtain such idolatrous homage from the pilgrims to the shattered shrines of antiquity. But Lord Byron had no feeling for art, perhaps it would be more correct to say he affected none: still, Athens was to him a text, a theme; and when the first rush of curiosity has been satisfied, where else can the palled fancy find such a topic.

To the mere antiquary, this celebrated city cannot but long continue interesting, and to the classic enthusiast, just liberated from the cloisters of his college, the scenery and the ruins may for a season inspire delight. Philosophy may there point her moral apophthegms with stronger emphasis, virtue receive new incitements to perseverance, by reflecting on the honour which still attends the memory of the ancient great, and patriotism there more pathetically deplore the inevitable effects of individual corruption on public glory; but to the man who seeks a solace from misfortune, or is “a-weary of the sun”; how wretched, how solitary, how empty is Athens!

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied throng;
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
Long shall thy annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore!

Of the existing race of Athenians Byron has observed, that they are remarkable for their cunning: “Among the various foreigners resident in Athens there was never a difference of opinion in their estimate of the Greek character, though on all other topics they disputed with great acrimony. M. Fauvel, the French consul, who has passed thirty years at Athens, frequently declared in my

hearing, that the Greeks do not deserve to be emancipated, reasoning on the ground of their national and individual depravity — while he forgot that such depravity is to be attributed to causes which can only be removed by the measures he reprobates.

“M. Roque, a French merchant of respectability long settled in Athens, asserted with the most amusing gravity, ‘Sir, they are the same canaille that existed in the days of Themistocles.’ The ancients banished Themistocles; the moderns cheat Monsieur Roque: thus great men have ever been treated.

“In short, all the Franks who are fixtures, and most of the Englishmen, Germans, Danes, etc., of passage, came over by degrees to their opinion, on much the same grounds that a Turk in England would condemn the nation by wholesale, because he was wronged by his lackey and overcharged by his washerwoman. Certainly, it was not a little staggering when the Sieurs Fauvel and Lusieri, the two greatest demagogues of the day, who divide between them the power of Pericles and the popularity of Cleon, and puzzle the poor Waywode with perpetual differences, agreed in the utter condemnation of the Greeks in general, and of the Athenians in particular.”

I have quoted his Lordship thus particularly because after his arrival at Athens he laid down his pen. *Childe Harold* there disappears. Whether he had written the pilgrimage up to that point at Athens I have not been able to ascertain; while I am inclined to think it was so, as I recollect he told me there that he had then described or was describing the reception he had met with at Tepellené from Ali Pasha.

After having halted some time at Athens, where they established their headquarters, the travellers, when they had inspected the principal antiquities of the city (those things which all travellers must visit), made several excursions into the environs, and among other places went to Eleusis.

On the 13th of January they mounted earlier than usual, and set out on that road which has the site of the Academy and the Colonos, the retreat of Ædipus during his banishment, a little to the right; they then entered the Olive Groves, crossed the Cephessus, and came to an open, well-cultivated plain, extending on the left to the Piræus and the sea. Having ascended by a gentle acclivity through a pass, at the distance of eight or ten miles from Athens, the ancient Corydallus, now called Daphnérouni, they came, at the bottom of a piney mountain, to the little monastery of Daphné, the appearance and situation of which are in agreeable unison. The monastery was then fast verging into that state of the uninhabitable picturesque so much admired by young damsels and artists of a romantic vein. The pines on the adjacent mountains hiss as they ever wave their boughs, and somehow, such is the lonely aspect of the place, that their hissing

may be imagined to breathe satire against the pretensions of human vanity.

After passing through the hollow valley in which this monastic habitation is situated, the road sharply turns round an elbow of the mountain, and the Eleusinian plain opens immediately in front. It is, however, for a plain, but of small dimensions. On the left is the Island of Salamis, and the straits where the battle was fought; but neither of it nor of the mysteries for which the Temple of Ceres was for so many ages celebrated, has the poet given us description or suggestion; and yet few topics among all his wild and wonderful subjects were so likely to have furnished such “ample room, and verge enough” to his fancy.

The next excursion in any degree interesting, it a qualification of that kind can be applied to excursions, in Attica, was to Cape Colonna. Crossing the bed of the Ilissus and keeping nearer to Mount Hymettus, the travellers arrived at Vary, a farm belonging to the monastery of Agios Asomatos, and under the charge of a caloyer. Here they stopped for the night, and being furnished with lights, and attended by the caloyer’s servant as a guide, they proceeded to inspect the Paneum, or sculptured cavern in that neighbourhood, into which they descended. Having satisfied their curiosity there, they proceeded, in the morning, to Keratéa, a small town containing about two hundred and fifty houses, chiefly inhabited by rural Albanians.

The wetness of the weather obliged them to remain several days at Keratéa, during which they took the opportunity of a few hours of sunshine to ascend the mountain of Parné in quest of a cave of which many wonderful things were reported in the country. Having found the entrance, kindled their pine torches, and taken a supply of strips of the same wood, they let themselves down through a narrow aperture; creeping still farther down, they came into what seemed a large subterranean hall, arched as it were with high cupolas of crystal, and divided into long aisles by columns of glittering spar, in some parts spread into wide horizontal chambers, in others terminated by the dark mouths of deep and steep abysses receding into the interior of the mountain.

The travellers wandered from one grotto to another until they came to a fountain of pure water, by the side of which they lingered some time, till, observing that their torches were wasting, they resolved to return; but after exploring the labyrinth for a few minutes, they found themselves again close beside this mysterious spring. It was not without reason they then became alarmed, for the guide confessed with trepidation that he had forgotten the intricacies of the cave, and knew not how to recover the outlet.

Byron often described this adventure with spirit and humour, magnifying both his own and his friend’s terrors; and though, of course, there was caricature in both, yet the distinction was characteristic. Mr Hobhouse, being of a more solid

disposition naturally, could discern nothing but a grave cause for dread in being thus lost in the bowels of the earth; Byron, however, described his own anxiety as a species of excitement and titillation which moved him to laughter. Their escape from starvation and being buried alive was truly providential.

While roaming in a state of despair from cave to cell; climbing up narrow apertures; their last pine-torch fast consuming; totally ignorant of their position, and all around darkness, they discovered, as it were by accident, a ray of light gleaming towards them; they hastened towards it, and arrived at the mouth of the cave.

Although the poet has not made any use of this incident in description, the actual experience which it gave him of what despair is, could not but enrich his metaphysical store, and increase his knowledge of terrible feelings; of the workings of the darkest and dreadest anticipations — slow famishing death — cannibalism and the rage of self-devouring hunger.

CHAPTER XVIII

Proceed from Keratéa to Cape Colonna — Associations connected with the Spot — Second-hearing of the Albanians — Journey to Marathon — Effect of his Adventures on the Mind of the Poet — Return to Athens — I join the Travellers there — Maid of Athens

From Keratéa the travellers proceeded to Cape Colonna, by the way of Katapheke. The road was wild and rude, but the distant view of the ruins of the temple of Minerva, standing on the loneliness of the promontory, would have repaid them for the trouble, had the road been even rougher.

This once elegant edifice was of the Doric order, a hexastyle, the columns twenty-seven feet in height. It was built entirely of white marble, and esteemed one of the finest specimens of architecture. The rocks on which the remains stand are celebrated alike by the English and the Grecian muses; for it was amid them that Falconer laid the scene of his *Shipwreck*; and the unequalled description of the climate of Greece, in *The Giaour*, was probably inspired there, although the poem was written in London. It was also here, but not on this occasion, that the poet first became acquainted with the Albanian belief in second-hearing, to which he alludes in the same poem:

Deep in whose darkly-boding ear
The death-shot peal'd of murder near.

“This superstition of a second-hearing,” says Lord Byron, “fell once under my own observation. On my third journey to Cape Colonna, as we passed through the defile that leads from the hamlet between Keratéa and Colonna, I observed Dervish Tahiri (one of his Albanian servants) riding rather out of the path, and leaning his head upon his hand as if in pain. I rode up and inquired. ‘We are in peril!’ he answered. ‘What peril? we are not now in Albania, nor in the passes to Ephesus, Missolonghi, or Lepanto; there are plenty of us well armed, and the Choriotes have not courage to be thieves.’ — ‘True, Affendi; but, nevertheless, the shot is ringing in my ears.’ — ‘The shot! not a tophaike has been fired this morning.’ — ‘I hear it, notwithstanding — bom — bom — as plainly as I hear your voice.’ — ‘Bah.’ — ‘As you please, Affendi; if it is written, so will it be.’

“I left this quick-eared predestinarian, and rode up to Basili, his Christian compatriot, whose ears, though not at all prophetic, by no means relished the intelligence. We all arrived at Colonna, remained some hours, and returned leisurely, saying a variety of brilliant things, in more languages than spoiled the

building of Babel, upon the mistaken seer; Romaic, Arnaout, Turkish, Italian, and English were all exercised, in various conceits, upon the unfortunate Mussulman. While we were contemplating the beautiful prospect, Dervish was occupied about the columns. I thought he was deranged into an antiquarian, and asked him if he had become a palaocastro man. 'No,' said he, 'but these pillars will be useful in making a stand' and added some remarks, which at least evinced his own belief in his troublesome faculty of fore-hearing.

"On our return to Athens we heard from Leoné (a prisoner set on shore some days after) of the intended attack of the Mainotes, with the cause of its not taking place. I was at some pains to question the man, and he described the dresses, arms, and marks of the horses of our party so accurately, that, with other circumstances, we could not doubt of his having been in 'villainous company,' and ourselves in a bad neighbourhood. Dervish became a soothsayer for life, and I dare say is now hearing more musketry than ever will be fired, to the great refreshment of the Arnaouts of Berat and his native mountains.

"In all Attica, if we except Athens itself, and Marathon," Byron remarks, "there is no scene more interesting than Cape Colonna. To the antiquary and artist, sixteen columns are an inexhaustible source of observation and design; to the philosopher the supposed scene of some of Plato's conversations will not be unwelcome; and the traveller will be struck with the prospect over 'Isles that crown the Ægean deep.' But, for an Englishman, Colonna has yet an additional interest in being the actual spot of Falconer's *Shipwreck*. Pallas and Plato are forgotten in the recollection of Falconer and Campbell.

"There, in the dead of night, by Donna's steep,
The seamen's cry was heard along the deep."

From the ruins of the temple the travellers returned to Keratéa, by the eastern coast of Attica, passing through that district of country where the silver mines are situated; which, according to Sir George Wheler, were worked with some success about a hundred and fifty years ago. They then set out for Marathon, taking Rapthi in their way; where, in the lesser port, on a steep rocky island, they beheld, from a distance, the remains of a colossal statue. They did not, however, actually inspect it, but it has been visited by other travellers, who have described it to be of white marble, sedent on a pedestal. The head and arms are broken off; but when entire, it is conjectured to have been twelve feet in height. As they were passing round the shore they heard the barking of dogs, and a shout from a shepherd, and on looking round saw a large dun-coloured wolf, galloping slowly through the bushes.

Such incidents and circumstances, in the midst of the most romantic scenery of the world, with wild and lawless companions, and a constant sense of danger, were full of poetry, and undoubtedly contributed to the formation of the peculiar taste of Byron's genius. As it has been said of Salvator Rosa, the painter, that he derived the characteristic savage force of his pencil from his youthful adventures with banditti; it may be added of Byron, that much of his most distinguished power was the result of his adventures as a traveller in Greece. His mind and memory were filled with stores of the fittest imagery, to supply becoming backgrounds and appendages, to the characters and enterprises which he afterward depicted with such truth of nature and poetical effect.

After leaving Raphi, keeping Mount Pentilicus on the left, the travellers came in sight of the ever-celebrated Plain of Marathon. The evening being advanced, they passed the barrow of the Athenian slain unnoticed, but next morning they examined minutely the field of battle, and fancied they had made antiquarian discoveries. In their return to Athens they inspected the different objects of research and fragments of antiquity, which still attract travellers, and with the help of Chandler and Pausanias, endeavoured to determine the local habitation and the name of many things, of which the traditions have perished and the forms have relapsed into rock.

Soon after their arrival at Athens, Mr Hobhouse left Lord Byron to visit the Negropont, where he was absent some few days. I think he had only been back three or four when I arrived from Zante. My visit to Athens at that period was accidental. I had left Malta with the intention of proceeding to Candia, by Specia, and Idra; but a dreadful storm drove us up the Adriatic, as far as Valona; and in returning, being becalmed off the Island of Zante, I landed there, and allowed the ship, with my luggage, to proceed to her destination, having been advised to go on by the Gulf of Corinth to Athens; from which place, I was informed, there would be no difficulty in recovering my trunks.

In carrying this arrangement into effect, I was induced to go aside from the direct route, and to visit Velhi Pasha, at Tripolizza, to whom I had letters. Returning by Argos and Corinth, I crossed the isthmus, and taking the road by Megara, reached Athens on the 20th of February. In the course of this journey, I heard of two English travellers being in the city; and on reaching the convent of the Propaganda, where I had been advised to take up my lodgings, the friar in charge of the house informed me of their names. Next morning, Mr Hobhouse, having heard of my arrival, kindly called on me, and I accompanied him to Lord Byron, who then lodged with the widow of a Greek, who had been British Consul. She was, I believe, a respectable person, with several daughters; one of whom has been rendered more famous by his Lordship's verses than her degree

of beauty deserved. She was a pale and pensive-looking girl, with regular Grecian features. Whether he really cherished any sincere attachment to her I much doubt. I believe his passion was equally innocent and poetical, though he spoke of buying her from her mother. It was to this damsel that he addressed the stanzas beginning,

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh! give me back my heart.

CHAPTER XIX

Occupation at Athens — Mount Pentilicus — We descend into the Caverns — Return to Athens — A Greek Contract of Marriage — Various Athenian and Albanian Superstitions — Effect of their Impression on the Genius of the Poet

During his residence at Athens, Lord Byron made almost daily excursions on horseback, chiefly for exercise and to see the localities of celebrated spots. He affected to have no taste for the arts, and he certainly took but little pleasure in the examination of the ruins.

The marble quarry of Mount Pentilicus, from which the materials for the temples and principal edifices of Athens are supposed to have been brought, was, in those days, one of the regular staple curiosities of Greece. This quarry is a vast excavation in the side of the hill; a drapery of woodbine hangs like the festoons of a curtain over the entrance; the effect of which, seen from the outside, is really worth looking at, but not worth the trouble of riding three hours over a road of rude and rough fragments to see: the interior is like that of any other cavern. To this place I one day was induced to accompany the two travellers.

We halted at a monastery close by the foot of the mountain, where we procured a guide, and ate a repast of olives and fried eggs. Dr Chandler says that the monks, or caloyers, of this convent are summoned to prayers by a tune which is played on a piece of an iron hoop; and, on the outside of the church, we certainly saw a piece of crooked iron suspended. When struck, it uttered a bell-like sound, by which the hour of prayer was announced. What sort of tune could be played on such an instrument the doctor has judiciously left his readers to imagine.

When we reached the mouth of the grotto, by that “very bad track” which the learned personage above mentioned clambered up, we saw the ruins of the building which the doctor at first thought had been possibly a hermit’s cell; but which, upon more deliberate reflection, he became of opinion “was designed, perhaps, for a sentinel to look out, and regulate, by signals, the approach of the men and teams employed in carrying marble to the city.” This, we agreed, was a very sagacious conjecture. It was, indeed, highly probable that sentinels were appointed to regulate, by signals, the manoeuvres of carts coming to fetch away stones.

Having looked at the outside of the quarry, and the guide having lighted candles, we entered into the interior, and beheld on all sides what Dr Chandler saw, “chippings of marble.” We then descended, consecutively, into a hole, just

wide enough to let a man pass; and when we had descended far enough, we found ourselves in a cell, or cave; it might be some ten or twelve feet square. Here we stopped, and, like many others who had been there before us, attempted to engrave our names. Mine was without success; Lord Byron's was not much better; but Mr Hobhouse was making some progress to immortality, when the blade of his knife snapped, or shutting suddenly, cut his finger. These attempts having failed, we inscribed our initials on the ceiling with the smoke of our candles. After accomplishing this notable feat, we got as well out of the scrape as we could, and returned to Athens by the village of Callandris. In the evening, after dinner, as there happened to be a contract of marriage performing in the neighbourhood, we went to see the ceremony.

Between the contract and espousal two years are generally permitted to elapse among the Greeks in the course of which the bride, according to the circumstances of her relations, prepares domestic chattels for her future family. The affections are rarely consulted on either side, for the mother of the bridegroom commonly arranges the match for her son. In this case, the choice had been evidently made according to the principle on which Mrs Primrose chose her wedding gown; viz. for the qualities that would wear well. For the bride was a stout household quean; her face painted with vermilion, and her person arrayed in uncouth embroidered garments. Unfortunately, we were disappointed of seeing the ceremony, as it was over before we arrived.

This incident led me to inquire particularly into the existing usages and customs of the Athenians; and I find in the notes of my journal of the evening of that day's adventures, a memorandum of a curious practice among the Athenian maidens when they become anxious to get husbands. On the first evening of the new moon, they put a little honey, a little salt, and a piece of bread on a plate, which they leave at a particular spot on the east bank of the Ilissus, near the Stadium, and muttering some ancient words, to the effect that Fate may send them a handsome young man, return home, and long for the fulfilment of the charm. On mentioning this circumstance to the travellers, one of them informed me, that above the spot where these offerings are made, a statue of Venus, according to Pausanias, formerly stood. It is, therefore, highly probable that what is now a superstitious, was anciently a religious rite.

At this period my fellow-passengers were full of their adventures in Albania. The country was new, and the inhabitants had appeared to them a bold and singular race. In addition to the characteristic descriptions which I have extracted from Lord Byron's notes, as well as Mr Hobhouse's travels, I am indebted to them, as well as to others, for a number of memoranda obtained in conversation, which they have themselves neglected to record, but which

probably became unconsciously mingled with the recollections of both; at least, I can discern traces of them in different parts of the poet's works.

The Albanians are a race of mountaineers, and it has been often remarked that mountaineers, more than any other people, are attached to their native land, while no other have so strong a thirst of adventure. The affection which they cherish for the scenes of their youth tends, perhaps, to excite their migratory spirit. For the motive of their adventures is to procure the means of subsisting in ease at home.

This migratory humour is not, however, universal to the Albanians, but applies only to those who go in quest of rural employment, and who are found in a state of servitude among even the Greeks. It deserves, however, to be noticed, that with the Greeks they rarely ever mix or intermarry, and that they retain both their own national dress and manners unchanged among them. Several of their customs are singular. It is, for example, in vain to ask a light or any fire from the houses of the Albanians after sunset, if the husband or head of the family be still afield; a custom in which there is more of police regulation than of superstition, as it interdicts a plausible pretext for entering the cottages in the obscurity of twilight, when the women are defenceless by the absence of the men.

Some of their usages, with respect to births, baptisms, and burials, are also curious. When the mother feels the fulness of time at hand, the priestess of Lucina, the midwife, is duly summoned, and she comes bearing in her hand a tripod, better known as a three-legged stool, the uses of which are only revealed to the initiated. She is received by the matronly friends of the mother, and begins the mysteries by opening every lock and lid in the house. During this ceremony the maiden females are excluded.

The rites which succeed the baptism of a child are still more recondite. Four or five days after the christening, the midwife prepares, with her own mystical hands, certain savoury messes, spreads a table, and places them on it. She then departs, and all the family, leaving the door open, in silence retire to sleep. This table is covered for the *Miri* of the child, an occult being, that is supposed to have the care of its destiny. In the course of the night, if the child is to be fortunate, the *Miri* comes and partakes of the feast, generally in the shape of a cat; but if the *Miri* do not come, nor taste of the food, the child is considered to have been doomed to misfortune and misery; and no doubt the treatment it afterwards receives is consonant to its evil predestination.

The Albanians have, like the vulgar of all countries, a species of hearth or household superstitions, distinct from their wild and imperfect religion. They imagine that mankind, after death, become *voorthoolakases*, and often pay visits

to their friends and foes for the same reasons, and in the same way, that our own country ghosts walk abroad; and their visiting hour is, also, midnight. But the collyvillory is another sort of personage. He delights in mischief and pranks, and is, besides, a lewd and foul spirit; and, therefore, very properly detested. He is let loose on the night of the nativity, with licence for twelve nights to plague men's wives; at which time some one of the family must keep wakeful vigil all the livelong night, beside a clear and cheerful fire, otherwise this naughty imp would pour such an aqueous stream on the hearth, that fire could never be kindled there again.

The Albanians are also pestered with another species of malignant creatures; men and women whose gifts are followed by misfortunes, whose eyes glimpse evil, and by whose touch the most prosperous affairs are blasted. They work their malicious sorceries in the dark, collect herbs of baleful influence; by the help of which, they strike their enemies with palsy, and cattle with distemper. The males are called *maissi*, and the females *maissa* — witches and warlocks.

Besides these curious superstitious peculiarities, they have among them persons who pretend to know the character of approaching events by hearing sounds which resemble those that shall accompany the actual occurrence. Having, however, given Lord Byron's account of the adventure of his servant Dervish, at Cape Colonna, it is unnecessary to be more particular with the subject here. Indeed, but for the great impression which everything about the Albanians made on the mind of the poet, the insertion of these memoranda would be irrelevant. They will, however, serve to elucidate several allusions, not otherwise very clear, in those poems of which the scenes are laid in Greece; and tend, in some measure, to confirm the correctness of the opinion, that his genius is much more indebted to facts and actual adventures, than to the force of his imagination. Many things regarded in his most original productions, as fancies and invention, may be traced to transactions in which he was himself a spectator or an actor. The impress of experience is vivid upon them all.

CHAPTER XX

Local Pleasures — Byron's Grecian Poems — His Departure from Athens — Description of Evening in "The Corsair" — The Opening of "The Giaour" — State of Patriotic Feeling then in Greece — Smyrna — Change in Lord Byron's Manners The genii that preside over famous places have less influence on the imagination than on the memory. The pleasures enjoyed on the spot spring from the reminiscences of reading; and the subsequent enjoyment derived from having visited celebrated scenes, comes again from the remembrance of objects seen there, and the associations connected with them.

A residence at Athens, day after day, is but little more interesting than in a common country town: but afterwards, in reading either of the ancient or of the modern inhabitants, it is surprising to find how much local knowledge the memory had unconsciously acquired on the spot, arising from the variety of objects to which the attention had been directed.

The best of all Byron's works, the most racy and original, are undoubtedly those which relate to Greece; but it is only travellers who have visited the scenes that can appreciate them properly. In them his peculiar style and faculty are most eminent; in all his other productions, imitation, even mere translation may be often traced, and though, without question, everything he touched became transmuted into something more beautiful and precious, yet he was never so masterly as in describing the scenery of Greece, and Albanian manners. In a general estimate of his works, it may be found that he has produced as fine or finer passages than any in his Grecian poems; but their excellence, either as respects his own, or the productions of others, is comparative. In the Grecian poems he is only truly original; in them the excellence is all his own, and they possess the rare and distinguished quality of being as true to fact and nature, as they are brilliant in poetical expression. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is the most faithful descriptive poem which has been written since the *Odyssey*; and the occasional scenes introduced into the other poems, when the action is laid in Greece, are equally vivid and glowing.

When I saw him at Athens, the spring was still shrinking in the bud. It was not until he returned from Constantinople in the following autumn, that he saw the climate and country with those delightful aspects which he has delineated with so much felicity in *The Giaour* and *The Corsair*. It may, however, be mentioned, that the fine description of a calm sunset, with which the third canto of *The Corsair* opens, has always reminded me of the evening before his departure from Athens, owing to the circumstance of my having, in the course of

the day, visited the spot which probably suggested the scene described.

It was the 4th of March, 1810; the *Pylades* sloop of war came that morning into the Piræus, and landed Dr Darwin, a son of the poet, with his friend, Mr Galton, who had come out in her for a cruise. Captain Ferguson, her commander, was so kind as to offer the English then in Athens, viz., Lord Byron, Mr Hobhouse, and myself, a passage to Smyrna. As I had not received my luggage from Specia, I could not avail myself of the offer, but the other two did: I accompanied Captain Ferguson, however, and Dr Darwin, in a walk to the Straits of Salamis; the ship, in the meantime, after landing them, having been moored there.

It was one of those serene and cloudless days of the early spring, when the first indications of leaf and blossom may just be discerned. The islands slept, as it were, on their glassy couch, and a slight dun haze hung upon the mountains, as if they too were drowsy. After an easy walk of about two hours, passing through the olive groves, and along the bottom of the hill on which Xerxes sat to view the battle, we came opposite to a little cove near the ferry, and made a signal to the ship for a boat. Having gone on board and partaken of some refreshment, the boat then carried us back to the Piræus, where we landed, about an hour before sundown — all the wide landscape presenting at the time the calm and genial tranquillity which is almost experienced anew in reading these delicious lines:

Slow sinks more lovely e'er his race be run,
Along Morea's hills, the setting sun
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light.
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave that trembles as it flows.
On old Egina's rock, and Idra's isle,
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine; —
Descending fast, the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis!

Their azure arches, through the long expanse,
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of heaven;
Till darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

The opening of *The Giaour* is a more general description, but the locality is distinctly marked by reference to the tomb above the rocks of the promontory, commonly said to be that of Themistocles; and yet the scene included in it certainly is rather the view from Cape Colonna, than from the heights of Munychia.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb, which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain —
When shall such hero live again!

The environs of the Piræus were indeed, at that time, well calculated to inspire those mournful reflections with which the poet introduces the Infidel's impassioned tale. The solitude, the relics, the decay, and sad uses to which the pirate and the slave-dealer had put the shores and waters so honoured by freedom, rendered a visit to the Piræus something near in feeling to a pilgrimage.

Such is the aspect of this shore,
'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded halo hov'ring round decay,
The farewell beam of feeling past away.
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherish'd earth.

At that time Lord Byron, if he did pity the condition of the Greeks, evinced very little confidence in the resurrection of the nation, even although symptoms of change and reanimation were here and there perceptible, and could not have escaped his observation. Greece had indeed been so long ruined, that even her desolation was then in a state of decay. The new cycle in her fortunes had certainly not commenced, but it was manifest, by many a sign, that the course of

the old was concluding, and that the whole country felt the assuring auguries of undivulged renovation. The influence of that period did not, however, penetrate the bosom of the poet; and when he first quitted Athens, assuredly he cared as little about the destinies of the Greeks, as he did for those of the Portuguese and Spaniards, when he arrived at Gibraltar.

About three weeks or a month after he had left Athens, I went by a circuitous route to Smyrna, where I found him waiting with Mr Hobhouse, to proceed with the *Salsette* frigate, then ordered to Constantinople, to bring away Mr Adair, the ambassador. He had, in the meantime, visited Ephesus, and acquired some knowledge of the environs of Smyrna; but he appeared to have been less interested by what he had seen there than by the adventures of his Albanian tour. Perhaps I did him injustice, but I thought he was also, in that short space, something changed, and not with improvement. Towards Mr Hobhouse, he seemed less cordial, and was altogether, I should say, having no better phrase to express what I would describe, more of a Captain Grand than improved in his manners, and more disposed to hold his own opinion than I had ever before observed in him. I was particularly struck with this at dinner, on the day after my arrival. We dined together with a large party at the consul's, and he seemed inclined to exact a deference to his dogmas, that was more lordly than philosophical. One of the naval officers present, I think the captain of the *Salsette*, felt, as well as others, this overweening, and announced a contrary opinion on some question connected with the politics of the late Mr Pitt with so much firm good sense, that Lord Byron was perceptibly rebuked by it, and became reserved, as if he deemed that sullenness enhanced dignity. I never in the whole course of my acquaintance saw him kith so unfavourably as he did on that occasion. In the course of the evening, however, he condescended to thaw, and before the party broke up, his austerity began to leaf, and hide its thorns under the influence of a relenting temperament. It was, however, too evident — at least it was so to me — that without intending wrong, or any offence, the unchecked humour of his temper was, by its caprices, calculated to prevent him from ever gaining that regard to which his talents and freer moods, independently of his rank, ought to have entitled him. Such men become objects of solicitude, but never of esteem.

I was also on this occasion struck with another new phase in his character; he seemed to be actuated by no purpose — he spoke no more of passing “beyond Aurora and the Ganges,” but seemed disposed to let the current of chances carry him as it might. If he had any specific object in view, it was something that made him hesitate between going home and returning to Athens when he should have reached Constantinople, now become the ultimate goal of his intended

travels. To what cause this sudden and singular change, both in demeanour and design, was owing, I was on the point of saying, it would be fruitless to conjecture; but a letter to his mother, written a few days before my arrival at Smyrna, throws some light on the sources of his unsatisfied state. He appears by it to have been disappointed of letters and remittances from his agent, and says: “When I arrive at Constantinople, I shall determine whether to proceed into Persia, or return — which latter I do not wish if I can avoid it. But I have no intelligence from Mr H., and but one letter from yourself. I shall stand in need of remittances, whether I proceed or return. I have written to him repeatedly, that he may not plead ignorance of my situation for neglect.”

Here is sufficient evidence that the cause of the undetermined state of his mind, which struck me so forcibly, was owing to the incertitude of his affairs at home; and it is easy to conceive that the false dignity he assumed, and which seemed so like arrogance, was the natural effect of the anxiety and embarrassment he suffered, and of the apprehension of a person of his rank being, on account of his remittances, exposed to require assistance among strangers. But as the scope of my task relates more to the history of his mind, than of his private affairs, I shall resume the narrative of his travels, in which the curiosity of the reader ought to be more legitimately interested.

CHAPTER XXI

*Smyrna — The Sport of the Djerid — Journey to Ephesus — The dead City — The desolate Country —
The Ruins and Obliteration of the Temple — The slight Impression of all on Byron*

The passage in the *Pylades* from Athens to Smyrna was performed without accident or adventure.

At Smyrna Lord Byron remained several days, and saw for the first time the Turkish pastime of the Djerid, a species of tournament to which he more than once alludes. I shall therefore describe the amusement.

The Musselim or Governor, with the chief agas of the city, mounted on horses superbly caparisoned, and attended by slaves, meet, commonly on Sunday morning, on their playground. Each of the riders is furnished with one or two djerids, straight white sticks, a little thinner than an umbrella-stick, less at one end than at the other and about an ell in length, together with a thin cane crooked at the head. The horsemen, perhaps a hundred in number, gallop about in as narrow a space as possible, throwing the djerids at each other and shouting. Each man then selects an opponent who has darted his djerid or is for the moment without a weapon, and rushes furiously towards him, screaming "Olloh! Olloh!" The other flies, looking behind him, and the instant the dart is launched stoops downwards as low as possible, or wields his horse with inconceivable rapidity, and picking up a djerid with his cane, or taking one from a running slave, pursues in his turn the enemy, who wheels on the instant he darts his weapon. The greatest dexterity is requisite in these mimic battles to avoid the concurrence of the "javelin-darting crowd," and to escape the random blows of the flying djerids.

Byron, having satisfied his curiosity with Smyrna, which is so like every other Turkish town as to excite but little interest, set out with Mr Hobhouse on the 13th of March, for Ephesus. As I soon after passed along the same road, I shall here describe what I met with myself in the course of the journey, it being probable that the incidents were in few respects different from those which they encountered.

On ascending the heights after leaving Smyrna, the road was remarkable in being formed of the broken relics of ancient edifices partly macadamised. On the brow of the hill I met a numerous caravan of camels coming from the interior of Asia. These ships of the desert, variously loaded, were moving slowly to their port, and it seemed to me as I rode past them, that the composed docile look of the animals possessed a sort of domesticated grace which lessened the effect of

their deformity.

A caravan, owing to the oriental dresses of the passengers and attendants, with the numerous grotesque circumstances which it presents to the stranger, affords an amusing spectacle. On the back of one camel three or four children were squabbling in a basket; in another cooking utensils were clattering; and from a crib on a third a young camel looked forth inquiringly on the world: a long desultory train of foot-passengers and cattle brought up the rear.

On reaching the summit of the hills behind Smyrna the road lies through fields and cotton-grounds, well cultivated and interspersed with country houses. After an easy ride of three or four hours I passed through the ruins of a considerable Turkish town, containing four or five mosques, one of them, a handsome building, still entire; about twenty houses or so might be described as tenantable, but only a place of sepulchres could be more awful: it had been depopulated by the plague — all was silent, and the streets were matted with thick grass. In passing through an open space, which reminded me of a market-place, I heard the cuckoo with an indescribable sensation of pleasure mingled with solemnity. The sudden presence of a raven at a bridal banquet could scarcely have been a greater phantasma.

Proceeding briskly from this forsaken and dead city, I arrived in the course of about half an hour at a coffee-house on the banks of a small stream, where I partook of some refreshment in the shade of three or four trees, on which several storks were conjugally building their nests. While resting there, I became interested in their work, and observed, that when any of their acquaintances happened to fly past with a stick, they chattered a sort of How-d'ye-do to one another. This civility was so uniformly and reciprocally performed, that the politeness of the stork may be regarded as even less disputable than its piety.

The road from that coffee-house lies for a mile or two along the side of a marshy lake, the environs of which are equally dreary and barren; an extensive plain succeeds, on which I noticed several broken columns of marble, and the evident traces of an ancient causeway, which apparently led through the water. Near the extremity of the lake was another small coffee-house, with a burial-ground and a mosque near it; and about four or five miles beyond I passed a spot, to which several Turks brought a coffinless corpse, and laid it on the grass while they silently dug a grave to receive it.

The road then ascended the hills on the south side of the plain, of which the marshy lake was the centre, and passed through a tract of country calculated to inspire only apprehension and melancholy. Not a habitation nor vestige of living man was in sight, but several cemeteries, with their dull funereal cypresses and tombstones served to show that the country had once been inhabited.

Just as the earliest stars began to twinkle I arrived at a third coffee-house on the roadside, with a little mosque before it, a spreading beech tree for travellers to recline under in the spring, and a rude shed for them in showers or the more intense sunshine of summer. Here I rested for the night, and in the morning at daybreak resumed my journey.

After a short ride I reached the borders of the plain of Ephesus, across which I passed along a road rudely constructed, and raised above the marsh, consisting of broken pillars, entablatures, and inscriptions, at the end of which two other paths diverge; one strikes off to the left, and leads over the Cayster by a bridge above the castle of Aiasaluk — the other, leading to the right, or west, goes directly to Scala Nuova, the ancient Neapolis. By the latter Byron and his friend proceeded towards the ferry, which they crossed, and where they found the river about the size of the Cam at Cambridge, but more rapid and deeper. They then rode up the south bank, and about three o'clock in the afternoon arrived at Aiasaluk, the miserable village which now represents the city of Ephesus.

Having put up their beds in a mean khan, the only one in the town, they partook of some cold provisions which they had brought with them on a stone seat by the side of a fountain, on an open green near to a mosque, shaded with tall cypresses. During their repast a young Turk approached the fountain, and after washing his feet and hands, mounted a flat stone, placed evidently for the purpose on the top of the wall surrounding the mosque, and devoutly said his prayers, totally regardless of their appearance and operations.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in exploring the ruins of Aiasaluk, and next morning they proceeded to examine those of the castle, and the mouldering magnificence of Ephesus. The remains of the celebrated temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world, could not be satisfactorily traced; fragments of walls and arches, which had been plated with marble, were all they could discover, with many broken columns that had once been mighty in their altitude and strength: several fragments were fifteen feet long, and of enormous circumference. Such is the condition of that superb edifice, which was, in its glory, four hundred and twenty feet long by two hundred and twenty feet broad, and adorned with more than a hundred and twenty columns sixty feet high.

When the travellers had satisfied their curiosity, if that can be called satisfaction which found no entire form, but saw only the rubbish of desolation and the fragments of destruction, they returned to Smyrna.

The investigation of the ruins of Ephesus was doubtless interesting at the time, but the visit produced no such impression on the mind of Byron as might have been expected. He never directly refers to it in his works: indeed, after

Athens, the relics of Ephesus are things but of small import, especially to an imagination which, like that of the poet, required the action of living characters to awaken its dormant sympathies.

CHAPTER XXII

Embarks for Constantinople — Touches at Tenedos — Visits Alexandria — Trees — The Trojan Plain — Swims the Hellespont — Arrival at Constantinople

On the 11th of April Lord Byron embarked at Smyrna, in the *Salsette* frigate for Constantinople. The wind was fair during the night, and at half past six next morning, the ship was off the Sygean promontory, the north end of the ancient Lesbos or Mitylene. Having passed the headland, north of the little town of Baba, she came in sight of Tenedos, where she anchored, and the poet went on shore to view the island.

The port was full of small craft, which in their voyage to the Archipelago had put in to wait for a change of wind, and a crowd of Turks belonging to these vessels were lounging about on the shore. The town was then in ruins, having been burned to the ground by a Russian squadron in the year 1807.

Next morning, Byron, with a party of officers, left the ship to visit the ruins of Alexandria Troas, and landed at an open port, about six or seven miles to the south of where the *Salsette* was at anchor. The spot near to where they disembarked was marked by several large cannon-balls of granite; for the ruins of Alexandria have long supplied the fortresses of the Dardanelles with these gigantic missiles.

They rambled some time through the shaggy woods, with which the country is covered, and the first vestiges of antiquity which attracted their attention were two large granite sarcophagi; a little beyond they found two or three fragments of granite pillars, one of them about twenty-five feet in length, and at least five in diameter. Near these they saw arches of brick-work, and on the east of them those magnificent remains, to which early travellers have given the name of the palace of Priam, but which are, in fact, the ruins of ancient baths. An earthquake in the course of the preceding winter had thrown down large portions of them, and the internal divisions of the edifice were, in consequence, choked with huge masses of mural wrecks and marbles.

The visitors entered the interior through a gap, and found themselves in the midst of enormous ruins, enclosed on two sides by walls, raised on arches, and by piles of ponderous fragments. The fallen blocks were of vast dimensions, and showed that no cement had been used in the construction — an evidence of their great antiquity. In the midst of this crushed magnificence stood several lofty portals and arches, pedestals of gigantic columns and broken steps and marble cornices, heaped in desolate confusion.

From these baths the distance to the sea is between two and three miles — a gentle declivity covered with low woods, and partially interspersed with spots of cultivated ground. On this slope the ancient city of Alexandria Troas was built. On the north-west, part of the walls, to the extent of a mile, may yet be traced; the remains of a theatre are also still to be seen on the side of the hill fronting the sea, commanding a view of Tenedos, Lemnos, and the whole expanse of the Ægean.

Having been conducted by the guide, whom they had brought with them from Tenedos, to the principal antiquities of Alexandria Troas, the visitors returned to the frigate, which immediately after got under way. On the 14th of April she came to anchor about a mile and a half from Cape Janissary, the Sygean promontory, where she remained about a fortnight; during which ample opportunity was afforded to inspect the plain of Troy, that scene of heroism, which, for three thousand years, has attracted the attention and interested the feelings and fancy of the civilized world.

Whether Lord Byron entertained any doubt of Homer's Troy ever having existed, is not very clear. It is probable, from the little he says on the subject, that he took no interest in the question. For although no traveller could enter with more sensibility into the local associations of celebrated places, he yet never seemed to care much about the visible features of antiquity, and was always more inclined to indulge in reflections than to puzzle his learning with dates or dimensions. His ruminations on the Troad, in *Don Juan*, afford an instance of this, and are conceived in the very spirit of *Childe Harold*.

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would, as 'twere, identify their dust
From out the wide destruction which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till the coming of the just,
Save change. I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted — time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom.
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read,
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom,

Which once named myriads, nameless, lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death?

No task of curiosity can indeed be less satisfactory than the examination of the sites of ancient cities; for the guides, not content with leading the traveller to the spot, often attempt to mislead his imagination, by directing his attention to circumstances which they suppose to be evidence that verifies their traditions. Thus, on the Trojan plain, several objects are still shown which are described as the self-same mentioned in the *Iliad*. The wild fig-trees, and the tomb of Ilus, are yet there — if the guides may be credited. But they were seen with incredulous eyes by the poet; even the tomb of Achilles appears to have been regarded by him with equal scepticism; still his description of the scene around is striking, and tinted with some of his happiest touches.

There on the green and village-cotted hill is
 Flanked by the Hellespont, and by the sea,
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles —
 They say so. Bryant says the contrary.
And farther downward tall and towering still is
 The tumulus, of whom Heaven knows it may be,
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus, —
All heroes, who, if living still, would slay us.

High barrows without marble or a name,
 A vast untill'd and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance still the same,
 And old Scamander, if 'tis he, remain;
The situation seems still form'd for fame,
 A hundred thousand men might fight again
With ease. But where I sought for Ilion's walls
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls.

Troops of untended horses; here and there
 Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth,
Some shepherds unlike Paris, led to stare
 A moment at the European youth,
Whom to the spot their schoolboy feelings bear;
 A Turk with beads in hand and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,

Are what I found there, but the devil a Phrygian.

It was during the time that the *Salsette* lay off Cape Janissary that Lord Byron first undertook to swim across the Hellespont. Having crossed from the castle of Chanak-Kalessi, in a boat manned by four Turks, he landed at five o'clock in the evening half a mile above the castle of Chelit-Bauri, where, with an officer of the frigate who accompanied him, they began their enterprise, emulous of the renown of Leander. At first they swam obliquely upwards, rather towards Nagara Point than the Dardanelles, but notwithstanding their skill and efforts they made little progress. Finding it useless to struggle with the current, they then turned and went with the stream, still however endeavouring to cross. It was not until they had been half an hour in the water, and found themselves in the middle of the strait, about a mile and a half below the castles, that they consented to be taken into the boat, which had followed them. By that time the coldness of the water had so benumbed their limbs that they were unable to stand, and were otherwise much exhausted. The second attempt was made on the 3rd of May, when the weather was warmer. They entered the water at the distance of a mile and a-half above Chelit-Bauri, near a point of land on the western bank of the Bay of Maito, and swam against the stream as before, but not for so long a time. In less than half an hour they came floating down the current close to the ship, which was then anchored at the Dardanelles, and in passing her steered for the bay behind the castle, which they soon succeeded in reaching, and landed about a mile and a-half below the ship. Lord Byron has recorded that he found the current very strong and the water cold; that some large fish passed him in the middle of the channel, and though a little chilled he was not fatigued, and performed the feat without much difficulty, but not with impunity, for by the verses in which he commemorated the exploit it appears he incurred the ague.

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

If in the month of dark December
Leander who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont,

If when the wintry tempest roar'd
He sped to Hero nothing loath,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both.

For me, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat to-day.

But since he crossed the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo, and — Lord knows what beside,
And swam for love as I for glory,

'Twere hard to say who fared the best;
Sad mortals thus the gods still plague you;
He lost his labour, I my jest —
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague.

“The whole distance,” says his Lordship, “from the place whence we started to our landing on the other side, including the length we were carried by the current, was computed by those on board the frigate at upwards of four English miles, though the actual breadth is barely one. The rapidity of the current is such that no boat can row directly across, and it may in some measure be estimated from the circumstance of the whole distance being accomplished by one of the parties in an hour and five, and by the other (Byron) in an hour and ten minutes. The water was extremely cold from the melting of the mountain snows. About three weeks before, in April, we had made an attempt; but having ridden all the way from the Troad the same morning, and the water being of an icy chilliness, we found it necessary to postpone the completion till the frigate anchored below the castles, when we swam the straits as just stated, entering a considerable way above the European, and landing below the Asiatic fort. Chevallier says that a young Jew swam the same distance for his mistress; and Oliver mentions it having been done by a Neapolitan; but our consul (at the Dardanelles), Tarragona, remembered neither of these circumstances, and tried to dissuade us from the attempt. A number of the *Salsette*'s crew were known to have accomplished a greater distance and the only thing that surprised me was, that as doubts had been entertained of the truth of Leander's story, no traveller had ever endeavoured to ascertain its practicability.”

While the *Salsette* lay off the Dardanelles, Lord Byron saw the body of a man who had been executed by being cast into the sea, floating on the stream, moving to and fro with the tumbling of the water, which gave to his arms the effect of scaring away several sea-fowl that were hovering to devour. This incident he

has strikingly depicted in *The Bride of Abydos*.

The sea-birds shriek above the prey
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow;
That hand whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
 Then levell'd with the wave —
What reeks it tho' that corse shall lie
 Within a living grave.
The bird that tears that prostrate form
Hath only robb'd the meaner worm.
The only heart, the only eye,
That bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scatter'd limbs composed,
 And mourned above his turban stone;
That heart hath burst — that eye was closed —
 Yea — closed before his own.

Between the Dardanelles and Constantinople no other adventure was undertaken or befel the poet. On the 13th of May, the frigate came to anchor at sunset, near the headland to the west of the Seraglio Point; and when the night closed in, the silence and the darkness were so complete "that we might have believed ourselves," says Mr Hobhouse, "moored in the lonely cove of some desert island, and not at the foot of a city which, from its vast extent and countless population, is fondly imagined by its present masters to be worthy to be called 'The Refuge of the World.'"

CHAPTER XXIII

*Constantinople — Description — The Dogs and the Dead — Landed at Tophana — The Masterless Dogs
— The Slave Market — The Seraglio — The Defects in the Description*

The spot where the frigate came to anchor affords but an imperfect view of the Ottoman capital. A few tall white minarets, and the domes of the great mosques only are in sight, interspersed with trees and mean masses of domestic buildings. In the distance, inland on the left, the redoubted Castle of the Seven Towers is seen rising above the gloomy walls; and, unlike every other European city, a profound silence prevails over all. This remarkable characteristic of Constantinople is owing to the very few wheel-carriages employed in the city. In other respects the view around is lively, and in fine weather quickened with innumerable objects in motion. In the calmest days the rippling in the flow of the Bosphorus is like the running of a river. In the fifth canto of *Don Juan*, Lord Byron has seized the principal features, and delineated them with sparkling effect.

The European with the Asian shore,
Sprinkled with palaces, the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four,
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam;
The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;
The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm'd the charming Mary Montague.

In the morning, when his Lordship left the ship, the wind blew strongly from the north-east, and the rushing current of the Bosphorus dashed with great violence against the rocky projections of the shore, as the captain's boat was rowed against the stream.

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades.
'Tis a grand sight, from off the giant's grave,
To watch the progress of those rolling seas
Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
Europe and Asia, you being quite at ease.

“The sensations produced by the state of the weather, and leaving a comfortable cabin, were,” says Mr Hobhouse, “in unison with the impressions which we felt, when, passing under the palace of the sultans, and gazing at the gloomy cypresses, which rise above the walls, we saw two dogs gnawing a dead body.” The description in *The Siege of Corinth* of the dogs devouring the dead, owes its origin to this incident of the dogs and the body under the walls of the seraglio.

And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall,
Hold o’er the dead their carnival.
Gorging and growling o’er carcase and limb,
They were too busy to bark at him.
From a Tartar’s scull they had stripp’d the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh,
And their white tusks crunched on the whiter scull,
As it slipp’d through their jaws when their edge grew dull.
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed.
So well had they broken a lingering fast,
With those who had fallen for that night’s repast.
And Alp knew by the turbans that rolled on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band.
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare.
The scalps were in the wild dogs’ maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills but kept away,
Scared by the dogs from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick’d by the birds on the sands of the bay.

This hideous picture is a striking instance of the uses to which imaginative power may turn the slightest hint, and of horror augmented till it reach that extreme point at which the ridiculous commences. The whole compass of English poetry affords no parallel to this passage. It even exceeds the celebrated catalogue of dreadful things on the sacramental table in *Tam O’ Shanter*. It is

true, that the revolting circumstances described by Byron are less sublime in their associations than those of Burns, being mere visible images, unconnected with ideas of guilt, and unlike

The knife a father's throat had mangled,
Which his ain son of life bereft:
The gray hairs yet stuck to the heft.

Nor is there in the vivid group of the vulture flapping the wolf, any accessory to rouse stronger emotions, than those which are associated with the sight of energy and courage, while the covert insinuation, that the bird is actuated by some instigation of retribution in pursuing the wolf for having run away with the bone, approaches the very point and line where the horrible merges in the ludicrous. The whole passage is fearfully distinct, and though in its circumstances, as the poet himself says, "sickening," is yet an amazing display of poetical power and high invention.

The frigate sent the travellers on shore at Tophana, from which the road ascends to Pera. Near this landing-place is a large fountain, and around it a public stand of horses ready saddled, attended by boys. On some of these Lord Byron and his friend, with the officers who had accompanied them, mounted and rode up the steep hill, to the principal Frank Hotel, in Pera, where they intended to lodge. In the course of the ride their attention was attracted to the prodigious number of masterless dogs which lounge and lurk about the corners of the streets; a nuisance both dangerous and disagreeable, but which the Turks not only tolerate but protect. It is no uncommon thing to see a litter of puppies with their mother nestled in a mat placed on purpose for them in a nook by some charitable Mussulman of the neighbourhood; for notwithstanding their merciless military practices, the Turks are pitiful-hearted Titans to dumb animals and slaves. Constantinople has, however, been so often and so well described, that it is unnecessary to notice its different objects of curiosity here, except in so far as they have been contributory to the stores of the poet.

The slave market was of course not unvisited, but the description in *Don Juan* is more indebted to the author's fancy, than any of those other bright reflections of realities to which I have hitherto directed the attention of the reader. The market now-a-days is in truth very uninteresting; few slaves are ever to be seen in it, and the place itself has an odious resemblance to Smithfield. I imagine, therefore, that the trade in slaves is chiefly managed by private bargaining. When there, I saw only two men for sale, whites, who appeared very little concerned about their destination, certainly not more than English rustics

offering themselves for hire to the farmers at a fair or market. Doubtless, there was a time when the slave market of Constantinople presented a different spectacle, but the trade itself has undergone a change — the Christians are now interdicted from purchasing slaves. The luxury of the guilt is reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of the Turks. Still, as a description of things which may have been, Byron's market is probable and curious.

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation
And age and sex were in the market ranged,
Each busy with the merchant in his station.
Poor creatures, their good looks were sadly changed.

All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged.
The negroes more philosophy displayed,
Used to it no doubt, as eels are to be flayed.

Like a backgammon board, the place was dotted
With whites and blacks in groups, on show for sale,
Though rather more irregularly spotted;
Some bought the jet, while others chose the pale.

No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a black-leg, broadcloth by a tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailer,

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures,
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous, some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader;
Some by a place, as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash, but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

The account of the interior of the seraglio in *Don Juan* is also only probably correct, and may have been drawn in several particulars from an inspection of some of the palaces, but the descriptions of the imperial harem are entirely fanciful. I am persuaded, by different circumstances, that Byron could not have

been in those sacred chambers of any of the seraglios. At the time I was in Constantinople, only one of the imperial residences was accessible to strangers, and it was unfurnished. The great seraglio was not accessible beyond the courts, except in those apartments where the Sultan receives his officers and visitors of state. Indeed, the whole account of the customs and usages of the interior of the seraglio, as described in *Don Juan*, can only be regarded as inventions; and though the descriptions abound in picturesque beauty, they have not that air of truth and fact about them which render the pictures of Byron so generally valuable, independent of their poetical excellence. In those he has given of the apartments of the men, the liveliness and fidelity of his pencil cannot be denied; but the Arabian tales and *Vathek* seem to have had more influence on his fancy in describing the imperial harem, than a knowledge of actual things and appearances. Not that the latter are inferior to the former in beauty, or are without images and lineaments of graphic distinctness, but they want that air of reality which constitutes the singular excellence of his scenes drawn from nature; and there is a vagueness in them which has the effect of making them obscure, and even fantastical. Indeed, except when he paints from actual models, from living persons and existing things, his superiority, at least his originality, is not so obvious; and thus it happens, that his gorgeous description of the sultan's seraglio is like a versified passage of an Arabian tale, while the imagery of Childe Harold's visit to Ali Pasha has all the freshness and life of an actual scene. The following is, indeed, more like an imitation of *Vathek*, than anything that has been seen, or is in existence. I quote it for the contrast it affords to the visit referred to, and in illustration of the distinction which should be made between beauties derived from actual scenes and adventures, and compilations from memory and imagination, which are supposed to display so much more of creative invention.

And thus they parted, each by separate doors,
Raba led Juan onward, room by room,
Through glittering galleries and o'er marble floors,
Till a gigantic portal through the gloom
Haughty and huge along the distance towers,
And wafted far arose a rich perfume,
It seem'd as though they came upon a shrine,
For all was vast, still, fragrant, and divine.

The giant door was broad and bright and high,
Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious guise;

Warriors thereon were battling furiously;
Here stalks the victor, there the vanquish'd lies;
There captives led in triumph droop the eye,
And in perspective many a squadron flies.
It seems the work of times before the line
Of Rome transplanted fell with Constantine.

This massy portal stood at the wide close
Of a huge hall, and on its either side
Two little dwarfs, the least you could suppose,
Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
In mockery to the enormous gate which rose
O'er them in almost pyramidic pride.

CHAPTER XXIV

Dispute with the Ambassador — Reflections on Byron's Pride of Rank — Abandons his Oriental Travels — Re-embarks in the "Salsette" — The Dagger Scene — Zea — Returns to Athens — Tour in the Morea — Dangerous Illness — Return to Athens — The Adventure on which "The Giaour" is founded

Although Lord Byron remained two months in Constantinople, and visited every object of interest and curiosity within and around it, he yet brought away with him fewer poetical impressions than from any other part of the Ottoman dominions; at least he has made less use in his works of what he saw and learned there, than of the materials he collected in other places.

From whatever cause it arose, the self-abstraction which I had noticed at Smyrna, was remarked about him while he was in the capital, and the same jealousy of his rank was so nervously awake, that it led him to attempt an obtrusion on the ambassadorial etiquettes — which he probably regretted.

It has grown into a custom, at Constantinople, when the foreign ministers are admitted to audiences of ceremony with the Sultan, to allow the subjects and travellers of their respective nations to accompany them, both to swell the pomp of the spectacle, and to gratify their curiosity. Mr Adair, our ambassador, for whom the *Salsette* had been sent, had his audience of leave appointed soon after Lord Byron's arrival, and his Lordship was particularly anxious to occupy a station of distinction in the procession. The pretension was ridiculous in itself, and showed less acquaintance with courtly ceremonies than might have been expected in a person of his rank and intelligence. Mr Adair assured him that he could obtain no particular place; that in the arrangements for the ceremonial, only the persons connected with the embassy could be considered, and that the Turks neither acknowledged the precedence, nor could be requested to consider the distinctions of our nobility. Byron, however, still persisted, and the minister was obliged to refer him on the subject to the Austrian Internuncio, a high authority in questions of etiquette, whose opinion was decidedly against the pretension.

The pride of rank was indeed one of the greatest weaknesses of Lord Byron, and everything, even of the most accidental kind, which seemed to come between the wind and his nobility, was repelled on the spot. I recollect having some debate with him once respecting a pique of etiquette, which happened between him and Sir William Drummond, somewhere in Portugal or Spain. Sir William was at the time an ambassador (not, however, I believe, in the country where the incident occurred), and was on the point of taking precedence in passing from one room to another, when Byron stepped in before him. The

action was undoubtedly rude on the part of his Lordship, even though Sir William had presumed too far on his riband: to me it seemed also wrong; for, by the custom of all nations from time immemorial, ambassadors have been allowed their official rank in passing through foreign countries, while peers in the same circumstances claim no rank at all; even in our own colonies it has been doubted if they may take precedence of the legislative counsellors. But the rights of rank are best determined by the heralds, and I have only to remark, that it is almost inconceivable that such things should have so morbidly affected the sensibility of Lord Byron; yet they certainly did so, and even to a ridiculous degree. On one occasion, when he lodged in St James's Street, I recollect him rating the footman for using a double knock in accidental thoughtlessness.

These little infirmities are, however, at most only calculated to excite a smile; there is no turpitude in them, and they merit notice but as indications of the humour of character. It was his Lordship's foible to overrate his rank, to grudge his deformity beyond reason, and to exaggerate the condition of his family and circumstances. But the alloy of such small vanities, his caprice and feline temper, were as vapour compared with the mass of rich and rare ore which constituted the orb and nucleus of his brilliancy.

He had not been long in Constantinople, when a change came over his intentions; the journey to Persia was abandoned, and the dreams of India were dissolved. The particular causes which produced this change are not very apparent — but Mr Hobhouse was at the same time directed to return home, and perhaps that circumstance had some influence on his decision, which he communicated to his mother, informing her, that he should probably return to Greece. As in that letter he alludes to his embarrassment on account of remittances, it is probable that the neglect of his agent, with respect to them, was the main cause which induced him to determine on going no farther.

Accordingly, on the 14th of July, he embarked with Mr Hobhouse and the ambassador on board the *Salsette*. It was in the course of the passage to the island of Zea, where he was put on shore, that one of the most emphatic incidents of his life occurred; an incident which throws a remarkable gleam into the springs and intricacies of his character — more, perhaps, than anything which has yet been mentioned.

One day, as he was walking the quarter-deck, he lifted an ataghan (it might be one of the midshipmen's weapons), and unsheathing it, said, contemplating the blade, "I should like to know how a person feels after committing murder." By those who have inquiringly noticed the extraordinary cast of his metaphysical associations, this dagger-scene must be regarded as both impressive and solemn; although the wish to know how a man felt after committing murder does not

imply any desire to perpetrate the crime. The feeling might be appreciated by experiencing any actual degree of guilt; for it is not the deed — the sentiment which follows it makes the horror. But it is doing injustice to suppose the expression of such a wish dictated by desire. Lord Byron has been heard to express, in the eccentricity of conversation, wishes for a more intense knowledge of remorse than murder itself could give. There is, however, a wide and wild difference between the curiosity that prompts the wish to know the exactitude of any feeling or idea, and the direful passions that instigate to guilty gratifications.

Being landed, according to his request, with his valet, two Albanians, and a Tartar, on the shore of Zea, it may be easily conceived that he saw the ship depart with a feeling before unfelt. It was the first time he was left companionless, and the scene around was calculated to nourish stern fancies, even though there was not much of suffering to be withstood.

The landing-place in the port of Zea, I recollect distinctly. The port itself is a small land-locked gulf, or, as the Scottish Highlander would call it, a loch. The banks are rocky and forbidding; the hills, which rise to the altitude of mountains, have, in a long course of ages, been always inhabited by a civilized people. Their precipitous sides are formed into innumerable artificial terraces, the aspect of which, austere, ruinous, and ancient, produces on the mind of the stranger a sense of the presence of a greater antiquity than the sight of monuments of mere labour and art. The town stands high upon the mountain, I counted on the lower side of the road which leads to it forty-nine of those terraces at one place under me, and on the opposite hills, in several places, upwards of sixty. Whether Lord Byron ascended to the town is doubtful. I have never heard him mention that he had; and I am inclined to think that he proceeded at once to Athens by one of the boats which frequent the harbour.

At Athens he met an old fellow-collegian, the Marquis of Sligo, with whom he soon after travelled as far as Corinth; the Marquis turning off there for Tripolizza, while Byron went forward to Patras, where he had some needful business to transact with the consul. He then made the tour of the Morea, in the course of which he visited the Vizier Velhi Pasha, by whom he was treated, as every other English traveller of the time was, with great distinction and hospitality.

Having occasion to go back to Patras, he was seized by the local fever there, and reduced to death's door. On his recovery he returned to Athens, where he found the Marquis, with Lady Hester Stanhope, and Mr Bruce, afterward so celebrated for his adventures in assisting the escape of the French General Lavalette. He took possession of the apartments which I had occupied in the monastery, and made them his home during the remainder of his residence in

Greece; but when I returned to Athens, in October, he was not there himself. I found, however, his valet, Fletcher, in possession.

There is no very clear account of the manner in which Lord Byron employed himself after his return to Athens; but various intimations in his correspondence show that during the winter his pen was not idle. It would, however, be to neglect an important occurrence, not to notice that during the time when he was at Athens alone, the incident which he afterwards embodied in the impassioned fragments of *The Giaour* came to pass; and to apprise the reader that the story is founded on an adventure which happened to himself — he was, in fact, the cause of the girl being condemned, and ordered to be sewn up in a sack and thrown into the sea.

One day, as he was returning from bathing in the Piræus, he met the procession going down to the shore to execute the sentence which the Waywode had pronounced on the girl; and learning the object of the ceremony, and who was the victim, he immediately interfered with great resolution; for, on observing some hesitation on the part of the leader of the escort to return with him to the Governor's house, he drew a pistol and threatened to shoot him on the spot. The man then turned about, and accompanied him back, when, partly by bribery and entreaty, he succeeded in obtaining a pardon for her, on condition that she was sent immediately out of the city. Byron conveyed her to the monastery, and on the same night sent her off to Thebes, where she found a safe asylum.

With this affair, I may close his adventures in Greece; for, although he remained several months subsequent at Athens, he was in a great measure stationary. His health, which was never robust, was impaired by the effects of the fever, which lingered about him; perhaps, too, by the humiliating anxiety he suffered on account of the uncertainty in his remittances. But however this may have been, it was fortunate for his fame that he returned to England at the period he did, for the climate of the Mediterranean was detrimental to his constitution. The heat oppressed him so much as to be positive suffering, and scarcely had he reached Malta on his way home, when he was visited again with a tertian ague.

CHAPTER XXV

Arrival in London — Mr Dallas's Patronage — Arranges for the Publication of "Childe Harold" — The Death of Mrs Byron — His Sorrow — His Affair with Mr Moore — Their Meeting at Mr Rogers's House, and Friendship Lord Byron arrived in London about the middle of July, 1811, having been absent a few days more than two years. The embarrassed condition in which he found his affairs sufficiently explains the dejection and uneasiness with which he was afflicted during the latter part of his residence in Greece; and yet it was not such as ought to have affected him so deeply, nor have I ever been able to comprehend wherefore so much stress has been laid on his supposed friendlessness. In respect both to it and to his ravelled fortune, a great deal too much has been too often said; and the manliness of his character has suffered by the puling.

His correspondence shows that he had several friends to whom he was much attached, and his disposition justifies the belief that, had he not been well persuaded the attachment was reciprocal, he would not have remained on terms of intimacy with them. And though for his rank not rich, he was still able to maintain all its suitable exhibition. The world could never regard as an object of compassion or of sympathy an English noble, whose income was enough to support his dignity among his peers, and whose poverty, however grievous to his pride, caused only the privation of extravagance. But it cannot be controverted, that there was an innate predilection in the mind of Lord Byron to mystify everything about himself: he was actuated by a passion to excite attention, and, like every other passion, it was often indulged at the expense of propriety. He had the infirmity of speaking, though vaguely, and in obscure hints and allusions, more of his personal concerns than is commonly deemed consistent with a correct estimate of the interest which mankind take in the cares of one another. But he lived to feel and to rue the consequences: to repent he could not, for the cause was in the very element of his nature. It was a blemish as incurable as the deformity of his foot.

On his arrival in London, his relation, Mr Dallas, called on him, and in the course of their first brief conversation his Lordship mentioned that he had written a paraphrase of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, but said nothing then of *Childe Harold*, a circumstance which leads me to suspect that he offered him the slighter work first, to enjoy his surprise afterward at the greater. If so, the result answered the intent. Mr Dallas carried home with him the paraphrase of Horace, with which he was grievously disappointed; so much so, that on meeting his

Lordship again in the morning, and being reluctant to speak of it as he really thought, he only expressed some surprise that his noble friend should have produced nothing else during his long absence.

I can easily conceive the emphatic indifference, if my conjecture be well founded, with which Lord Byron must have said to him, "I have occasionally written short poems, besides a great many stanzas in Spenser's measure, relative to the countries I have visited: they are not worth troubling you with, but you shall have them all with you, if you like."

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage was accordingly placed in his hands; Mr Dallas took it home, and was not slow in discovering its beauties, for in the course of the same evening he despatched a note to his Lordship, as fair a specimen of the style of an elderly patronising gentleman as can well be imagined: "You have written," said he, "one of the most delightful poems I ever read. If I wrote this in flattery, I should deserve your contempt rather than your friendship. I have been so fascinated with *Childe Harold*, that I have not been able to lay it down; I would almost pledge my life on its advancing the reputation of your poetical powers, and on its gaining you great honour and regard, if you will do me the credit and favour of attending to my suggestions."

For some reason or another, Lord Byron, however, felt or feigned great reluctance to publish *Childe Harold*. Possibly his repugnance was dictated by diffidence, not with respect to its merits, but from a consciousness that the hero of the poem exhibited traits and resemblances of himself. It would indeed be injustice to his judgment and taste, to suppose he was not sensible of the superiority of the terse and energetic poetry which brightens and burns in every stanza of the *Pilgrimage*, compared with the loose and sprawling lines, and dull rhythm, of the paraphrase. It is true that he alleged it had been condemned by a good critic — the only one who had previously seen it — probably Mr Hobhouse, who was with him during the time he was writing it; but still I cannot conceive he was so blind to excellence, as to prefer in sincerity the other composition, which was only an imitation. But the arguments of Mr Dallas prevailed and in due season *Childe Harold* was prepared for the press.

In the meantime, while busily engaged in his literary projects with Mr Dallas, and in law affairs with his agent, he was suddenly summoned to Newstead by the state of his mother's health: before he had reached the Abbey she had breathed her last. The event deeply affected him; he had not seen her since his return, and a presentiment possessed her when they parted, that she was never to see him again.

Notwithstanding her violent temper and other unseemly conduct, her

affection for him had been so fond and dear, that he undoubtedly returned it with unaffected sincerity; and from many casual and incidental expressions which I have heard him employ concerning her, I am persuaded that his filial love was not at any time even of an ordinary kind. During her life he might feel uneasy respecting her, apprehensive on account of her ungovernable passions and indiscretions, but the manner in which he lamented her death, clearly proves that the integrity of his affection had never been impaired.

On the night after his arrival at the Abbey, the waiting-woman of Mrs Byron, in passing the door of the room where the corpse lay, heard the sound of some one sighing heavily within, and on entering found his Lordship sitting in the dark beside the bed. She remonstrated with him for so giving way to grief, when he burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I had but one friend in the world, and she is gone." Of the fervency of his sorrow I do therefore think there can be no doubt; the very endeavour which he made to conceal it by indifference, was a proof of its depth and anguish, though he hazarded the strictures of the world by the indecorum of his conduct on the occasion of the funeral. Having declined to follow the remains himself, he stood looking from the hall door at the procession, till the whole had moved away; and then, turning to one of the servants, the only person left, he desired him to fetch the sparring-gloves, and proceeded with him to his usual exercise. But the scene was impressive, and spoke eloquently of a grieved heart; he sparred in silence all the time, and the servant thought that he hit harder than was his habit: at last he suddenly flung away the gloves and retired to his own room.

As soon as the funeral was over the publication of *Childe Harold* was resumed, but it went slowly through the press. In the meantime, an incident occurred to him which deserves to be noted — because it is one of the most remarkable in his life, and has given rise to consequences affecting his fame — with advantage.

In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, he had alluded, with provoking pleasantry, to a meeting which had taken place at Chalk Farm some years before, between Mr Jeffrey, the Edinburgh reviewer, and Mr Moore, without recollecting, indeed without having heard, that Mr Moore had explained, through the newspapers, what was alleged to have been ridiculous in the affair. This revival of the subject, especially as it called in question the truth of Mr Moore's statement, obliged that gentleman to demand an explanation; but Lord Byron, being abroad, did not receive this letter, and of course knew not of its contents, so that, on his return, Mr Moore was induced to address his Lordship again. The correspondence which ensued is honourable to the spirit and feelings of both.

Mr Moore, after referring to his first letter, restated the nature of the insult

which the passage in the note to the poem was calculated to convey, adding, "It is now useless to speak of the steps with which it was my intention to follow up that letter, the time which has elapsed since then, though it has done away neither the injury nor the feeling of it, has, in many respects, materially altered my situation, and the only object I have now in writing to your Lordship, is to preserve some consistency with that former letter, and to prove to you that the injured feeling still exists, however circumstances may compel me to be deaf to its dictates at present. When I say 'injured feeling,' let me assure your Lordship that there is not a single vindictive sentiment in my mind towards you; I mean but to express that uneasiness under what I consider to be a charge of falsehood, which must haunt a man of any feeling to his grave, unless the insult be retracted, or atoned for, and which, if I did not feel, I should indeed deserve far worse than your Lordship's satire could inflict upon me." And he concluded by saying, that so far from being influenced by any angry or resentful feeling, it would give him sincere pleasure if, by any satisfactory explanation, his Lordship would enable him to seek the honour of being ranked among his acquaintance.

The answer of Lord Byron was diplomatic but manly. He declared that he never received Mr Moore's letter, and assured him that in whatever part of the world it had reached him, he would have deemed it his duty to return and answer it in person; that he knew nothing of the advertisement to which Mr Moore had alluded, and consequently could not have had the slightest idea of "giving the lie" to an address which he had never seen. "When I put my name to the production," said his Lordship, "which has occasioned this correspondence, I became responsible to all whom it might concern, to explain where it requires explanation, and where insufficiently or too sufficiently explicit, at all events to satisfy; my situation leaves me no choice; it rests with the injured and the angry to obtain reparation in their own way. With regard to the passage in question, *you* were certainly *not* the person towards whom I felt personally hostile: on the contrary, my whole thoughts were engrossed by one whom I had reason to consider as my worst literary enemy, nor could I foresee that his former antagonist was about to become his champion. You do not specify what you would wish to have done. I can neither retract nor apologize for a charge of falsehood which I never advanced."

In reply, Mr Moore commenced by acknowledging that his Lordship's letter was upon the whole as satisfactory as he could expect; and after alluding to specific circumstances in the case, concluded thus: "As your Lordship does not show any wish to proceed beyond the rigid formulary of explanation, it is not for me to make any farther advances. We Irishmen, in business of this kind, seldom know any medium between decided hostility and decided friendship. But as any

approaches towards the latter alternative must now depend entirely on your Lordship, I have only to repeat that I am satisfied with your letter.” Here the correspondence would probably, with most people, have been closed, but Lord Byron’s sensibility was interested, and would not let it rest. Accordingly, on the following day, he rejoined: “Soon after my return to England, my friend Mr Hodgson apprised me that a letter for me was in his possession; but a domestic event hurrying me from London immediately after, the letter, which may most probably be your own, is still unopened in his keeping. If, on examination of the address, the similarity of the handwriting should lead to such a conclusion, it shall be opened in your presence, for the satisfaction of all parties. Mr H. is at present out of town; on Friday I shall see him, and request him to forward it to my address. With regard to the latter part of both your letters, until the principal point was discussed between us, I felt myself at a loss in what manner to reply. Was I to anticipate friendship from one who conceived me to have charged him with falsehood? were not advances under such circumstances to be misconstrued, not perhaps by the person to whom they were addressed, but by others? In my case such a step was impracticable. If you, who conceived yourself to be the offended person, are satisfied that you had no cause for offence, it will not be difficult to convince me of it. My situation, as I have before stated, leaves me no choice. I should have felt proud of your acquaintance had it commenced under other circumstances, but it must rest with you to determine how far it may proceed after so *auspicious* a beginning.”

Mr Moore acknowledges that he was somewhat piqued at the manner in which his efforts towards a more friendly understanding were received, and hastened to close the correspondence by a short note, saying that his Lordship had made him feel the imprudence he was guilty of in wandering from the point immediately in discussion between them. This drew immediately from Lord Byron the following frank and openhearted reply: “You must excuse my troubling you once more upon this very unpleasant subject. It would be a satisfaction to me, and I should think to yourself, that the unopened letter in Mr Hodgson’s possession (supposing it to prove your own) should be returned *in statu quo* to the writer, particularly as you expressed yourself ‘not quite easy under the manner in which I had dwelt on its miscarriage.’

“A few words more and I shall not trouble you further. I felt, and still feel, very much flattered by those parts of your correspondence which held out the prospect of our becoming acquainted. If I did not meet them, in the first instance, as perhaps I ought, let the situation in which I was placed be my defence. You have *now* declared yourself *satisfied*, and on that point we are no

longer at issue. If, therefore, you still retain any wish to do me the honour you hinted at, I shall be most happy to meet you when, where, and how you please, and I presume you will not attribute my saying thus much to any unworthy motive.”

The result was a dinner at the house of Mr Rogers, the amiable and celebrated author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, and the only guest besides the two adversaries was Mr Campbell, author of *The Pleasures of Hope*: a poetical group of four not easily to be matched, among contemporaries in any age or country.

The meeting could not but be interesting, and Mr Moore has described the effect it had on himself with a felicitous warmth, which showed how much he enjoyed the party, and was pleased with the friendship that ensued.

“Among the impressions,” says he, “which this meeting left on me, what I chiefly remember to have remarked was, the nobleness of his air, his beauty, the gentleness of his voice and manners, and — what was naturally not the least attraction — his marked kindness for myself. Being in mourning for his mother, the colour as well of his dress as of his glossy, curling, and picturesque hair, gave more effect to the pure spiritual paleness of his features, in the expression of which, when he spoke, there was a perpetual play of lively thought, though melancholy was their habitual character when in repose.”

CHAPTER XXVI *The Libel in "The Scourge" — The general Impression of his Character — Improvement in his Manners, as his Merit was acknowledgement by the Public — His Address in Management — His first Speech in Parliament — The Publication of "Childe Harold" — Its Reception and Effect*

During the first winter after Lord Byron had returned to England, I was frequently with him. *Childe Harold* was not then published; and although the impression of his satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, was still strong upon the public, he could not well be said to have been then a celebrated character. At that time the strongest feeling by which he appeared to be actuated was indignation against a writer in a scurrilous publication, called *The Scourge*; in which he was not only treated with unjustifiable malignity, but charged with being, as he told me himself, the illegitimate son of a murderer. I had not read the work; but the writer who could make such an absurd accusation, must have been strangely ignorant of the very circumstances from which he derived the materials of his own libel. When Lord Byron mentioned the subject to me, and that he was consulting Sir Vickery Gibbs, with the intention of prosecuting the publisher and the author, I advised him, as well as I could, to desist, simply because the allegation referred to well-known occurrences. His grand-uncle's duel with Mr. Chaworth, and the order of the House of Peers to produce evidence of his grandfather's marriage with Miss Trevannion; the facts of which being matter of history and public record, superseded the necessity of any proceeding.

Knowing how deeply this affair agitated him at that time, I was not surprised at the sequestration in which he held himself — and which made those who were not acquainted with his shy and mystical nature, apply to him the description of his own Lara: The chief of Lara is return'd again, And why had Lara cross'd the bounding main? —

Left by his sire too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself; that heritage of woe.
In him, inexplicably mix'd, appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and fear'd,
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot.
His silence form'd a theme for others' prate;
They guess'd, they gazed, they fain would know his fate,
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walk'd their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,

With them he could seem gay amid the gay;
But own'd that smile, if oft observed and near
Waned in its mirth and wither'd to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip, but pass'd not by;
None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye:
Yet there was softness, too, in his regard,
At times a heart is not by nature hard.
But once perceived, his spirit seem'd to hide
Such weakness as unworthy of its pride,
And stretch'd itself as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half-withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which tenderness might once have wrung from rest,
In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.
There was in him a vital scorn of all,
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall.
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurl'd;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped.

Such was Byron to common observance on his return. I recollect one night meeting him at the Opera. Seeing me with a gentleman whom he did not know, and to whom he was unknown, he addressed me in Italian, and we continued to converse for some time in that language. My friend, who in the meanwhile had been observing him with curiosity, conceiving him to be a foreigner, inquired in the course of the evening who he was, remarking that he had never seen a man with such a Cain-like mark on the forehead before, alluding to that singular scowl which struck me so forcibly when I first saw him, and which appears to have made a stronger impression upon me than it did upon many others. I never, in fact, could overcome entirely the prejudice of the first impression, although I ought to have been gratified by the friendship and confidence with which he always appeared disposed to treat me. When *Childe Harold* was printed, he sent me a quarto copy before the publication; a favour and distinction I have always prized; and the copy which he gave me of *The Bride of Abydos* was one he had prepared for a new edition, and which contains, in his own writing, these six lines in no other copy: Bless'd — as the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall
To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call,
Soft — as the melody of youthful days

That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise,
Sweet — as his native song to exile's ears
Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.

He had not, it is true, at the period of which I am speaking, gathered much of his fame; but the gale was rising — and though the vessel was evidently yielding to the breeze, she was neither crank nor unsteady. On the contrary, the more he became an object of public interest, the less did he indulge his capricious humour. About the time when *The Bride of Abydos* was published, he appeared disposed to settle into a consistent character — especially after the first sale of Newstead. Before that particular event, he was often so disturbed in his mind, that he could not conceal his unhappiness, and frequently spoke of leaving England for ever.

Although few men were more under the impulses of passion than Lord Byron, there was yet a curious kind of management about him which showed that he was well aware how much of the world's favour was to be won by it. Long before *Childe Harold* appeared, it was generally known that he had a poem in the press, and various surmises to stimulate curiosity were circulated concerning it: I do not say that these were by his orders, or under his directions, but on one occasion I did fancy that I could discern a touch of his own hand in a paragraph in the *Morning Post*, in which he was mentioned as having returned from an excursion into the interior of Africa; and when I alluded to it, my suspicion was confirmed by his embarrassment.

I mention this incident not in the spirit of detraction; for in the paragraph there was nothing of puff, though certainly something of oddity — but as a tint of character, indicative of the appetite for distinction by which, about this period, he became so powerfully incited, that at last it grew into a diseased crave, and to such a degree, that were the figure allowable, it might be said, the mouth being incapable of supplying adequate means to appease it — every pore became another mouth greedy of nourishment. I am, however, hastening on too fast. Lord Byron was, at that time, far indeed from being ruled by any such inordinate passion; the fears, the timidity, and bashfulness of young desire still clung to him, and he was throbbing with doubt if he should be found worthy of the high prize for which he was about to offer himself a candidate. The course he adopted on the occasion, whether dictated by management, or the effect of accident, was, however, well calculated to attract attention to his *début* as a public man.

When *Childe Harold* was ready for publication, he determined to make his first appearance as an orator in the House of Lords: the occasion was judiciously

chosen, being a debate on the Nottingham frame-breaking bill; a subject on which it was natural to suppose he possessed some local knowledge that might bear upon a question directed so exclusively against transactions in his own county. He prepared himself as the best orators do in their first essays, not only by composing, but writing down, the whole of his speech beforehand. The reception he met with was flattering; he was complimented warmly by some of the speakers on his own side; but it must be confessed that his *début* was more showy than promising. It lacked weight in metal, as was observed at the time, and the mode of delivery was more like a schoolboy's recital than a masculine grapple with an argument. It was, moreover, full of rhetorical exaggerations, and disfigured with conceits. Still it scintillated with talent, and justified the opinion that he was an extraordinary young man, probably destined to distinction, though he might not be a statesman.

Mr Dallas gives a lively account of his elation on the occasion. "When he left the great chamber," says that gentleman, "I went and met him in the passage; he was glowing with success, and much agitated. I had an umbrella in my right hand, not expecting that he would put out his hand to me; in my haste to take it when offered, I had advanced my left hand: 'What!' said he, 'give your friend your left hand upon such an occasion?' I showed the cause, and immediately changing the umbrella to the other, I gave him my right hand, which he shook and pressed warmly. He was greatly elated, and repeated some of the compliments which had been paid him, and mentioned one or two of the peers who had desired to be introduced to him. He concluded by saying, that he had, by his speech, given me the best advertisement for *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*."

It is upon this latter circumstance, that I have ventured to state my suspicion, that there was a degree of worldly management in making his first appearance in the House of Lords, so immediately preceding the publication of his poem. The speech was, indeed, a splendid advertisement, but the greater and brighter merits of the poem soon proved that it was not requisite, for the speech made no impression, but the poem was at once hailed with delight and admiration. It filled a vacancy in the public mind, which the excitement and inflation arising from the mighty events of the age, had created. The world, in its condition and circumstances, was prepared to receive a work, so original, vigorous, and beautiful; and the reception was such that there was no undue extravagance in the noble author saying in his memorandum, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous."

But he was not to be allowed to revel in such triumphant success with impunity. If the great spirits of the time were smitten with astonishment at the splendour of the rising fire, the imps and elves of malignity and malice fluttered

their bat-wings in all directions. Those whom the poet had afflicted in his satire, and who had remained quietly crouching with lacerated shoulders in the hope that their flagellation would be forgotten, and that the avenging demon who had so punished their imbecility would pass away, were terrified from their obscurity. They came like moths to the candle, and sarcasms in the satire which had long been unheeded, in the belief that they would soon be forgotten, were felt to have been barbed with irremediable venom, when they beheld the avenger Towering in his pride of place.

CHAPTER XXVII *Sketches of Character — His Friendly Dispositions — Introduce Prince K — to him — Our last Interview — His continued Kindness towards me — Instance of it to one of my Friends.*

For some time after the publication of *Childe Harold*, the noble author appeared to more advantage than I ever afterwards saw him. He was soothed by success; and the universal applause which attended his poem seemed to make him think more kindly of the world, of which he has too often complained, while it would be difficult to discover, in his career and fortunes, that he had ever received any cause from it to justify his complaint.

At no time, I imagine, could it be said that Lord Byron was one of those men who interest themselves in the concerns of others. He had always too much to do with his own thoughts about himself, to afford time for the consideration of aught that was lower in his affections. But still he had many amiable fits, and at the particular period to which I allude, he evinced a constancy in the disposition to oblige, which proved how little self-control was wanting to have made him as pleasant as he was uniformly interesting. I felt this towards myself in a matter which had certainly the grace of condescension in it, at the expense of some trouble to him. I then lived at the corner of Bridge Street, Westminster, and in going to the House of Lords he frequently stopped to inquire if I wanted a frank. His conversation, at the same time, was of a milder vein, and with the single exception of one day, while dining together at the St Alban's, it was light and playful, as if gaiety had become its habitude.

Perhaps I regarded him too curiously, and more than once it struck me that he thought so. For at times, when he was in his comfortless moods, he has talked of his affairs and perplexities as if I had been much more acquainted with them than I had any opportunity of being. But he was a subject for study, such as is rarely met with — at least, he was so to me; for his weaknesses were as interesting as his talents, and he often indulged in expressions which would have been blemishes in the reflections of other men, but which in him often proved the germs of philosophical imaginings. He was the least qualified for any sort of business of all men I have ever known; so skinless in sensibility as respected himself, and so distrustful in his universal apprehensions of human nature, as respected others. It was, indeed, a wild, though a beautiful, error of nature, to endow a spirit with such discerning faculties, and yet render it unfit to deal with mankind. But these reflections belong more properly to a general estimate of his character, than to the immediate purpose before me, which was principally to describe the happy effects which the splendid reception of *Childe Harold* had on his feelings; effects which, however, did not last long. He was gratified to the

fullness of his hopes; but the adulation was enjoyed to excess, and his infirmities were aggravated by the surfeit. I did not, however, see the progress of the change, as in the course of the summer I went to Scotland, and soon after again abroad. But on my return, in the following spring, it was very obvious.

I found him, in one respect, greatly improved; there was more of a formed character about him; he was evidently, at the first glance, more mannered, or endeavouring to be so, and easier with the proprieties of his rank; but he had risen in his own estimation above the honours so willingly paid to his genius, and was again longing for additional renown. Not content with being acknowledged as the first poet of the age, and a respectable orator in the House of Lords, he was aspiring to the *éclat* of a man of gallantry; so that many of the most ungracious peculiarities of his temper, though brought under better discipline, were again in full activity.

Considering how much he was then caressed, I ought to have been proud of the warmth with which he received me. I did not, however, so often see him as in the previous year; for I was then on the eve of my marriage, and I should not so soon, after my return to London, have probably renewed my visits, but a foreign nobleman of the highest rank, who had done me the honour to treat me as a friend, came at that juncture to this country, and knowing I had been acquainted with Lord Byron, he requested me to introduce him to his Lordship. This rendered a visit preliminary to the introduction necessary; and so long as my distinguished friend remained in town, we again often met. But after he left the country my visits became few and far between; owing to nothing but that change in a man's pursuits and associates which is one among some of the evils of matrimony. It is somewhat remarkable, that of the last visit I ever paid him, he has made rather a particular memorandum. I remember well, that it was in many respects an occasion not to be at once forgotten; for, among other things, after lighter topics, he explained to me a variety of tribulations in his affairs, and I urged him, in consequence, to marry, with the frankness which his confidence encouraged; subjoining certain items of other good advice concerning a *liaison* which he was supposed to have formed, and which Mr Moore does not appear to have known, though it was much talked of at the time.

During that visit the youthful peculiarities of his temper and character showed all their original blemish. But, as usual, when such was the case, he was often more interesting than when in his discreeter moods. He gave me the copy of *The Bride of Abydos*, with a very kind inscription on it, which I have already mentioned; but still there was an impression on my mind that led me to believe he could not have been very well pleased with some parts of my counselling.

This, however, appears not to have been the case; on the contrary, the tone of his record breathes something of kindness; and long after I received different reasons to believe his recollection of me was warm and friendly.

When he had retired to Genoa, I gave a gentleman a letter to him, partly that I might hear something of his real way of life, and partly in the hope of gratifying my friend by the sight of one of whom he had heard so much. The reception from his Lordship was flattering to me; and, as the account of it contains what I think a characteristic picture, the reader will, I doubt not, be pleased to see so much of it as may be made public without violating the decorum which should always be observed in describing the incidents of private intercourse, when the consent of all parties cannot be obtained to the publication.

Edinburgh, June 3, 1830.

“DEAR GALT, — Though I shall always retain a lively general recollection of my agreeable interview with Lord Byron, at Genoa, in May, 1823, so long a time has since elapsed that much of the aroma of the pleasure has evaporated, and I can but recall generalities. At that time there was an impression in Genoa that he was averse to receive visits from Englishmen, and I was indeed advised not to think of calling on him, as I might run the risk of meeting with a savage reception. However, I resolved to send your note, and to the surprise of every one the messenger brought a most polite answer, in which, after expressing the satisfaction of hearing of his old friend and fellow-traveller, he added that he would do himself the honour of calling on me the next day, which he accordingly did; but owing to the officious blundering of an Italian waiter, who mentioned I was at dinner, his Lordship sent up his card with his compliments that he would not *deranger* the party. I was determined, however, that he should not escape me in this way, and drove out to his residence next morning, when, upon his English valet taking up my name, I was immediately admitted.

“As every one forms a picture to himself of remarkable characters, I had depicted his Lordship in my mind as a tall, sombre, *Childe Harold* personage, tintured somewhat with aristocratic hauteur. You may therefore guess my surprise when the door opened, and I saw leaning upon the lock, a light animated figure, rather *petite* than otherwise, dressed in a nankeen hussar-braided jacket, trousers of the same material, with a white waistcoat; his countenance pale but the complexion clear and healthful, with the hair coming down in little curls on each side of his fine forehead.

“He came towards me with an easy cheerfulness of manner, and after some preliminary inquiries concerning yourself, we entered into a conversation which lasted two hours, in the course of which I felt myself perfectly at ease, from his

Lordship's natural and simple manners; indeed, so much so, that, forgetting all my anticipations, I found myself conversing with him with as fluent an intercourse of mind as I ever experienced, even with yourself.

"It is impossible for me at present to overtake a detail of what passed, but as it produced a kind of scene, I may mention one incident.

"Having remarked that in a long course of desultory reading, I had read most of what had been said by English travellers concerning Italy; yet, on coming to it I found there was no country of which I had less accurate notions: that among other things I was much struck with the harshness of the language. He seemed to jerk at this, and immediately observed, that perhaps in going rapidly through the country, I might not have had many opportunities of hearing it politely spoken. 'Now,' said he, 'there are supposed to be nineteen dialects of the Italian language, and I shall let you hear a lady speak the principal of them, who is considered to do it very well.' I pricked up my ears at hearing this, as I considered it would afford me an opportunity of seeing the far-famed Countess Guiccioli. His Lordship immediately rose and left the apartment, returning in the course of a minute or two leading in the lady, and while arranging chairs for the trio, he said to me, 'I shall make her speak each of the principal dialects, but you are not to mind how I pronounce, for I do not speak Italian well.' After the scene had been performed he resumed to me, 'Now what do you think?' To which I answered, that my opinion still remained unaltered. He seemed at this to fall into a little revery, and then said, abruptly, 'Why 'tis very odd, Moore thought the same.' 'Does your Lordship mean Tom Moore?' 'Yes.' 'Ah, then, my Lord, I shall adhere with more pertinacity to my opinion, when I hear that a man of his exquisite taste in poetry and harmony was also of that opinion.'

"You will be asking what I thought of the lady; I had certainly heard much of her high personal attractions, but all I can say is, that in my eyes her graces did not rank above mediocrity. They were youth, plumpness, and good-nature."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Miff with Lord Byron — Remarkable Coincidences — Plagiarisms of his Lordship

There is a curious note in the memoranda which Lord Byron kept in the year 1813, that I should not pass unnoticed, because it refers to myself, and moreover is characteristic of the excoriated sensibility with which his Lordship felt everything that touched or affected him or his.

When I had read *The Bride of Abydos*, I wrote to him my opinion of it, and mentioned that there was a remarkable coincidence in the story, with a matter in which I had been interested. I have no copy of the letter, and I forget the expressions employed, but Lord Byron seemed to think they implied that he had taken the story from something of mine.

The note is:

“Galt says there is a coincidence between the first part of *The Bride* and some story of his, whether published or not, I know not, never having seen it. He is almost the last person on whom any one would commit literary larceny, and I am not conscious of any witting thefts on any of the genus. As to originality, all pretensions are ludicrous; there is nothing new under the sun.”

It is sufficiently clear that he was offended with what I had said, and was somewhat excited. I have not been able at present to find his answer to my letter, but it would appear by the subjoined that he had written to me something which led me to imagine he was offended at my observations, and that I had in consequence deprecated his wrath.

“Dec. 11, 1813.

“MY DEAR GALT, — There was no offence — there *could* be none. I thought it by no means impossible that we might have hit on something similar, particularly as you are a dramatist, and was anxious to assure you of the truth, *viz.* that I had not wittingly seized upon plot, sentiment, or incident; and I am very glad that I have not in any respect trenched upon your subjects. Something still more singular is, that the *first* part, where you have found a coincidence in some events within your observations on *life*, was *drawn* from *observation* of mine also, and I meant to have gone on with the story, but on *second* thoughts, I thought myself *two centuries* at least too late for the subject; which, though admitting of very powerful feeling and description, yet is not adapted for this age, at least this country. Though the finest works of the Greeks, one of Schiller’s and Alfieri’s, in modern times, besides several of our *old* (and best) dramatists, have been grounded on incidents of a similar cast, I therefore altered

it as you perceive, and in so doing have weakened the whole, by interrupting the train of thought; and in composition I do not think *second* thoughts are the best, though *second* expressions may improve the first ideas.

“I do not know how other men feel towards those they have met abroad, but to me there seems a kind of tie established between all who have met together in a foreign country, as if we had met in a state of pre-existence, and were talking over a life that has ceased; but I always look forward to renewing my travels; and though *you*, I think, are now stationary, if I can at all forward your pursuits *there* as well as here, I shall be truly glad in the opportunity. Ever yours very sincerely,

“B.

“P.S. I believe I leave town for a day or two on Monday, but after that I am always at home, and happy to see you till half-past two.”

This letter was dated on Saturday, the 11th of December, 1813. On Sunday, the 12th, he made the following other note in his memorandum book:

“By Galt’s answer, I find it is some story in *real* life, and not any work with which my late composition coincides. It is still more singular, for mine is drawn from *existence* also.”

The most amusing part of this little fracas is the denial of his Lordship, as to pilfering the thoughts and fancies of others; for it so happens, that the first passage of *The Bride of Abydos*, the poem in question, is almost a literal and unacknowledged translation from Goethe, which was pointed out in some of the periodicals soon after the work was published.

Then, as to his not thieving from me or mine, I believe the fact to be as he has stated; but there are singular circumstances connected with some of his other productions, of which the account is at least curious.

On leaving England I began to write a poem in the Spenserian measure. It was called *The Unknown*, and was intended to describe, in narrating the voyages and adventures of a pilgrim, who had embarked for the Holy Land, the scenes I expected to visit. I was occasionally engaged in this composition during the passage with Lord Byron from Gibraltar to Malta, and he knew what I was about. In stating this, I beg to be distinctly understood, as in no way whatever intending to insinuate that this work had any influence on the composition of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which Lord Byron began to write in Albania; but it must be considered as something extraordinary, that the two works should have been so similar in plan, and in the structure of the verse. His Lordship never saw my attempt that I know of, nor did I his poem until it was printed. It is needless to add, that beyond the plan and verse there was no other similarity between the

two works; I wish there had been.

His Lordship has published a poem, called *The Curse of Minerva*, the subject of which is the vengeance of the goddess on Lord Elgin for the rape of the Parthenon. It has so happened that I wrote at Athens a burlesque poem on nearly the same subject (mine relates to the vengeance of all the gods) which I called *The Atheniad*; the manuscript was sent to his Lordship in Asia Minor, and returned to me through Mr Hobhouse. His *Curse of Minerva*, I saw for the first time in 1828, in Galignani's edition of his works.

In *The Giaour*, which he published a short time before *The Bride of Abydos*, he has this passage, descriptive of the anxiety with which the mother of Hassan looks out for the arrival of her son:

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling —
His mother look'd from her lattice high;
She saw the dew of eve besprinkling
The parterre green beneath her eye:
She saw the planets faintly twinkling —
'Tis twilight — sure his train is nigh.
She could not rest in the garden bower,
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower:
Why comes he not — and his steeds are fleet —
Nor shrink they from the summer heat?
Why sends not the bridegroom his promised gift;
Is his heart more cold or his barb less swift?

His Lordship was well read in the Bible, and the book of Judges, chap. 5, and verse 28, has the following passage: —

"The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming; why tarry the wheels of his chariot?"

It was, indeed, an early trick of his Lordship to filch good things. In the lamentation for Kirke White, in which he compares him to an eagle wounded by an arrow feathered from his own wing, he says,

So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart
And winged the shaft that quivered in his heart.

The ancients have certainly stolen the best ideas of the moderns; this very

thought may be found in the works of that ancient-modern, Waller:

That eagle's fate and mine are one,
Which on the shaft that made him die,
Espied a feather of his own
Wherewith he wont to soar on high.

His Lordship disdained to commit any larceny on me; and no doubt the following passage from *The Giaour* is perfectly original:

It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal;
And shudder as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay.

I do not claim any paternity in these lines: but not the most judicious action of all my youth was to publish certain dramatic sketches, and his Lordship had the printed book in his possession long before *The Giaour* was published, and may have read the following passage in a dream, which was intended to be very hideous:

Then did I hear around
The churme and chirruping of busy reptiles
At hideous banquet on the royal dead: —
Full soon methought the loathsome epicures
Came thick on me, and underneath my shroud
I felt the many-foot and beetle creep,
And on my breast the cold worm coil and crawl.

However, I have said quite enough on this subject, both as respects myself and his seeming plagiarisms, which might be multiplied to legions. Such occasional accidental imitations are not things of much importance. All poets, and authors in general, avail themselves of their reading and knowledge to enhance the interest of their works. It can only be considered as one of Lord Byron's spurts of spleen, that he felt so much about a "coincidence," which ought not to have disturbed him; but it may be thought by the notice taken of it, that it disturbs myself more than it really does; and that it would have been

enough to have merely said — Perhaps, when some friend is hereafter doing as indulgently for me, the same kind of task that I have undertaken for Byron, there may be found among my memoranda notes as little flattering to his Lordship, as those in his concerning me. I hope, however, that friend will have more respect for my memory than to imitate the taste of Mr Moore.

CHAPTER XXIX

Lord Byron in 1813 — The Lady's Tragedy — Miss Milbanke — Growing Uneasiness of Lord Byron's Mind — The Friar's Ghost — The Marriage — A Member of the Drury Lane Committee — Embarrassed Affairs — The Separation

The year 1813 was perhaps the period of all Lord Byron's life in which he was seen to most advantage. The fame of *Childe Harold* was then in its brightest noon; and in that year he produced *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* — compositions not only of equal power, but even tinted with superior beauties. He was himself soothed by the full enjoyment of his political rank and station; and though his manners and character had not exactly answered to the stern and stately imaginations which had been formed of his dispositions and appearance, still he was acknowledged to be no common man, and his company in consequence was eagerly courted.

It forms no part of the plan of this work to repeat the gossip and tattle of private society, but occurrences happened to Lord Byron which engaged both, and some of them cannot well be passed over unnoticed. One of these took place during the spring of this year, and having been a subject of newspaper remark, it may with less impropriety be mentioned than others which were more indecorously made the topics of general discussion. The incident alluded to was an extravagant scene enacted by a lady of high rank, at a rout given by Lady Heathcote; in which, in revenge, as it was reported, for having been rejected by Lord Byron, she made a suicidal attempt with an instrument, which scarcely penetrated, if it could even inflict any permanent mark on, the skin.

The insane attachment of this eccentric lady to his Lordship was well known; insane is the only epithet that can be applied to the actions of a married woman, who, in the disguise of her page, flung herself to a man, who, as she told a friend of mine, was ashamed to be in love with her because she was not beautiful — an expression at once curious and just, evincing a shrewd perception of the springs of his Lordship's conduct, and the acuteness blended with frenzy and talent which distinguished herself. Lord Byron unquestionably at that time cared little for her. In showing me her picture, some two or three days after the affair, and laughing at the absurdity of it, he bestowed on her the endearing diminutive of vixen, with a hard-hearted adjective that I judiciously omit.

The immediate cause of this tragical flourish was never very well understood; but in the course of the evening she had made several attempts to fasten on his Lordship, and was shunned: certain it is, she had not, like Burke in the House of

Commons, premeditatedly brought a dagger in her reticule, on purpose for the scene; but, seeing herself an object of scorn, she seized the first weapon she could find — some said a pair of scissors — others, more scandalously, broken jelly-glass, and attempted an incision of the jugular, to the consternation of all the dowagers, and the pathetic admiration of every Miss who witnessed or heard of the rapture.

Lord Byron at the time was in another room, talking with Prince K — , when Lord P — came, with a face full of consternation, and told them what had happened. The cruel poet, instead of being agitated by the tidings, or standing in the smallest degree in need of a smelling-bottle, knitted his scowl, and said, with a contemptuous indifference, “It is only a trick.” All things considered, he was perhaps not uncharitable; and a man of less vanity would have felt pretty much as his Lordship appeared to do on the occasion. The whole affair was eminently ridiculous; and what increased the absurdity was a letter she addressed to a friend of mine on the subject, and which he thought too good to be reserved only for his own particular study.

It was in this year that Lord Byron first proposed for Miss Milbanke; having been urged by several of his friends to marry, that lady was specially recommended to him for a wife. It has been alleged, that he deeply resented her rejection of his proposal; and I doubt not, in the first instance, his vanity may have been a little piqued; but as he cherished no very animated attachment to her, and moreover, as she enjoyed no celebrity in public opinion to make the rejection important, the resentment was not, I am persuaded, either of an intense or vindictive kind. On the contrary, he has borne testimony to the respect in which he held her character and accomplishments; and an incidental remark in his journal, “I shall be in love with her again, if I don’t take care,” is proof enough that his anger was not of a very fierce or long-lived kind.

The account ascribed to him of his introduction to Miss Milbanke, and the history of their attachment, ought not to be omitted, because it serves to illustrate, in some degree, the state of his feelings towards her, and is so probable, that I doubt not it is in the main correct: —

“The first time of my seeing Miss Milbanke was at Lady ***’s. It was a fatal day; and I remember, that in going upstairs I stumbled, and remarked to Moore, who accompanied me, that it was a bad omen. I ought to have taken the warning. On entering the room, I observed a young lady more simply dressed than the rest of the assembly sitting alone upon a sofa. I took her for a female companion, and asked if I was right in my conjecture. ‘She is a great heiress,’ said he, in a whisper, that became lower as he proceeded, ‘you had better marry her, and repair the old place, Newstead.’

“There was something piquant, and what we term pretty, in Miss Milbanke. Her features were small and feminine, though not regular. She had the fairest skin imaginable. Her figure was perfect for her height, and there was a simplicity, a retired modesty about her, which was very characteristic, and formed a happy contrast to the cold artificial formality and studied stiffness which is called fashion. She interested me exceedingly. I became daily more attached to her, and it ended in my making her a proposal, that was rejected. Her refusal was couched in terms which could not offend me. I was, besides, persuaded, that in declining my offer, she was governed by the influence of her mother; and was the more confirmed in my opinion, by her reviving our correspondence herself twelve months after. The tenour of her letter was, that, although she could not love me, she desired my friendship. Friendship is a dangerous word for young ladies; it is love full-fledged, and waiting for a fine day to fly.”

But Lord Byron possessed this sort of irrepressible predilections — was so much the agent of impulses, that he could not keep long in unison with the world, or in harmony with his friends. Without malice, or the instigation of any ill spirit, he was continually provoking malignity and revenge. His verses on the Princess Charlotte weeping, and his other merciless satire on her father, begot him no friends, and armed the hatred of his enemies. There was, indeed, something like ingratitude in the attack on the Regent, for his Royal Highness had been particularly civil; had intimated a wish to have him introduced to him; and Byron, fond of the distinction, spoke of it with a sense of gratification. These instances, as well as others, of gratuitous spleen, only justified the misrepresentations which had been insinuated against himself, and what was humour in his nature, was ascribed to vice in his principles.

Before the year was at an end, his popularity was evidently beginning to wane: of this he was conscious himself, and braved the frequent attacks on his character and genius with an affectation of indifference, under which those who had at all observed the singular associations of his recollections and ideas, must have discerned the symptoms of a strange disease. He was tainted with a Herodian malady of the mind: his thoughts were often hateful to himself; but there was an ecstasy in the conception, as if delight could be mingled with horror. I think, however, he struggled to master the fatality, and that his resolution to marry was dictated by an honourable desire to give hostages to society, against the wild wilfulness of his imagination.

It is a curious and a mystical fact, that at the period to which I am alluding, and a very short time, only a little month, before he successfully solicited the hand of Miss Milbanke, being at Newstead, he fancied that he saw the ghost of

the monk which is supposed to haunt the abbey, and to make its ominous appearance when misfortune or death impends over the master of the mansion. — The story of the apparition in the sixteenth canto of *Don Juan* is derived from this family legend, and Norman Abbey, in the thirteenth of the same poem, is a rich and elaborate description of Newstead.

After his proposal to Miss Milbanke had been accepted, a considerable time, nearly three months, elapsed before the marriage was completed, in consequence of the embarrassed condition in which, when the necessary settlements were to be made, he found his affairs. This state of things, with the previous unhappy controversy with himself, and anger at the world, was ill-calculated to gladden his nuptials: but, besides these real evils, his mind was awed with gloomy presentiments, a shadow of some advancing misfortune darkened his spirit, and the ceremony was performed with sacrificial feelings, and those dark and chilling circumstances, which he has so touchingly described in *The Dream*: —

I saw him stand
Before an altar with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The starlight of his boyhood: — as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The self-same aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then —
As in that hour — a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced — and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The faltering vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him: he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been —
But the old mansion and the accustom'd hall,
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour.
And her, who was his destiny, came back,
And thrust themselves between him and the light.

This is very affectingly described; and his prose description bears testimony to its correctness. “It had been predicted by Mrs Williams that twenty-seven was

to be a dangerous age for me. The fortune-telling witch was right; it was destined to prove so. I shall never forget the 2nd of January, 1815, Lady Byron was the only unconcerned person present; Lady Noel, her mother, cried; I trembled like a leaf, made the wrong responses, and after the ceremony called her Miss Milbanke.

“There is a singular history attached to the ring. The very day the match was concluded a ring of my mother’s, that had been lost, was dug up by the gardener at Newstead. I thought it was sent on purpose for the wedding; but my mother’s marriage had not been a fortunate one, and this ring was doomed to be the seal of an unhappier union still.

“After the ordeal was over, we set off for a country-seat of Sir Ralph’s (Lady B.’s father), and I was surprised at the arrangements for the journey, and somewhat out of humour, to find the lady’s maid stuck between me and my bride. It was rather too early to assume the husband; so I was forced to submit, but it was not with a very good grace. I have been accused of saying, on getting into the carriage, that I had married Lady Byron out of spite, and because she had refused me twice. Though I was for a moment vexed at her prudery, or whatever you may choose to call it, if I had made so uncavalier, not to say brutal, a speech, I am convinced Lady Byron would instantly have left the carriage to me and the maid. She had spirit enough to have done so, and would properly have resented the affront. Our honeymoon was not all sunshine; it had its clouds.

“I was not so young when my father died, but that I perfectly remember him, and had a very early horror of matrimony from the sight of domestic broils: this feeling came over me very strongly at my wedding. Something whispered me that I was sealing my own death-warrant. I am a great believer in presentiments: Socrates’s demon was not a fiction; Monk Lewis had his monitor, and Napoleon many warnings. At the last moment I would have retreated, could I have done so; I called to mind a friend of mine, who had married a young, beautiful, and rich girl, and yet was miserable; he had strongly urged me against putting my neck in the same yoke.”

For some time after the marriage things went on in the usual matrimonial routine, until he was chosen into the managing committee of Drury Lane; an office in which, had he possessed the slightest degree of talent for business, he might have done much good. It was justly expected that the illiterate presumption which had so long deterred poetical genius from approaching the stage, would have shrunk abashed from before him; but he either felt not the importance of the duty he had been called to perform, or, what is more probable, yielding to the allurements of the moment, forgot that duty, in the amusement

which he derived from the talents and peculiarities of the players. No situation could be more unfit for a man of his temperament, than one which exposed him to form intimacies with persons whose profession, almost necessarily, leads them to undervalue the domestic virtues.

It is said, that the course of life into which he was drawn after he joined the managing committee of Drury Lane was not in unison with the methodical habits of Lady Byron. But independently of outdoor causes of connubial discontent and incompatibility of temper, their domestic affairs were falling into confusion.

“My income at this period,” says Lord Byron, “was small, and somewhat bespoken. We had a house in town, gave dinner-parties, had separate carriages, and launched into every sort of extravagance. This could not last long; my wife’s ten thousand pounds soon melted away. I was beset by duns, and at length an execution was levied, and the bailiffs put in possession of the very beds we had to sleep on. This was no very agreeable state of affairs, no very pleasant scene for Lady Byron to witness; and it was agreed she should pay her father a visit till the storm had blown over, and some arrangement had been made with my creditors.” From this visit her Ladyship never returned; a separation took place; but too much has been said to the world respecting it, and I have no taste for the subject. Whatever was the immediate cause, the event itself was not of so rare a kind as to deserve that the attention of the public should be indelicately courted to it.

Beyond all question, however, Lord Byron’s notions of connubial obligations were rather philosophical. “There are,” said he to Captain Parry, “so many undefinable and nameless, and not to be named, causes of dislike, aversion, and disgust in the matrimonial state, that it is always impossible for the public, or the friends of the parties, to judge between man and wife. Theirs is a relation about which nobody but themselves can form a correct idea, or have any right to speak. As long as neither party commits gross injustice towards the other; as long as neither the woman nor the man is guilty of any offence which is injurious to the community; as long as the husband provides for his offspring, and secures the public against the dangers arising from their neglected education, or from the charge of supporting them; by what right does it censure him for ceasing to dwell under the same roof with a woman, who is to him, because he knows her, while others do not, an object of loathing? Can anything be more monstrous, than for the public voice to compel individuals who dislike each other to continue their cohabitation? This is at least the effect of its interfering with a relationship, of which it has no possible means of judging. It does not indeed drag a man to a woman’s bed by physical force, but it does exert a moral force continually and effectively to accomplish the same purpose. Nobody can

escape this force, but those who are too high or those who are too low for public opinion to reach; or those hypocrites who are, before others, the loudest in their approbation of the empty and unmeaning forms of society, that they may securely indulge all their propensities in secret.”

In the course of the conversation, in which he is represented to have stated these opinions, he added what I have pleasure in quoting, because the sentiments are generous in respect to his wife, and strikingly characteristic of himself: —

“Lady Byron has a liberal mind, particularly as to religious opinions: and I wish when I married her that I had possessed the same command over myself that I now do. Had I possessed a little more wisdom and more forbearance, we might have been happy. I wished, when I was just married to have remained in the country, particularly till my pecuniary embarrassments were over. I knew the society of London; I knew the characters of many who are called ladies, with whom Lady Byron would necessarily have to associate, and I dreaded her contact with them. But I have too much of my mother about me to be dictated to; I like freedom from constraint; I hate artificial regulations: my conduct has always been dictated by my own feelings, and Lady Byron was quite the creature of rules. She was not permitted either to ride, or run, or walk, but as the physician prescribed. She was not suffered to go out when I wished to go: and then the old house was a mere ghost-house, I dreamed of ghosts and thought of them waking. It was an existence I could not support.” Here Lord Byron broke off abruptly, saying, “I hate to speak of my family affairs, though I have been compelled to talk nonsense concerning them to some of my butterfly visitors, glad on any terms to get rid of their importunities. I long to be again on the mountains. I am fond of solitude, and should never talk nonsense, if I always found plain men to talk to.”

CHAPTER XXX

Reflections on his domestic Verses — Consideration of his Works — "The Corsair" — Probabilities of the Character and Incidents of the Story — On the Difference between poetical Invention and moral Experience: illustrated by the Difference between the Genius of Shakespeare and that of Byron The task just concluded may disappoint the expectations of some of my readers, but I would rather have said less than so much, could so little have been allowed; for I have never been able to reconcile to my notions of propriety, the exposure of domestic concerns which the world has no right claim to know, and can only urge the plea of curiosity for desiring to see explained. The scope of my undertaking comprehends only the public and intellectual character of Lord Byron; every word that I have found it necessary to say respecting his private affairs has been set down with reluctance; nor should I have touched so freely on his failings, but that the consequences have deeply influenced his poetical conceptions.

There is, however, one point connected with his conjugal differences which cannot be overlooked, nor noticed without animadversion. He was too active himself in bespeaking the public sympathy against his lady. It is true that but for that error the world might never have seen the verses written by him on the occasion; and perhaps it was the friends who were about him at the time who ought chiefly to be blamed for having given them circulation: but in saying this, I am departing from the rule I had prescribed to myself, while I ought only to have remarked that the compositions alluded to, both the *Fare-thee-well* and the *Anathema on Mrs Charlemont*, are splendid corroborations of the metaphysical fact which it is the main object of this work to illustrate, namely, that Byron was only original and truly great when he wrote from the dictates of his own breast, and described from the suggestions of things he had seen. When his imagination found not in his subject uses for the materials of his experience, and opportunities to embody them, it seemed to be no longer the same high and mysterious faculty that so ruled the tides of the feelings of others. He then appeared a more ordinary poet — — a skilful verse-maker. The necromancy which held the reader spellbound became ineffectual; and the charm and the glory which interested so intensely, and shone so radiantly on his configurations from realities, all failed and faded; for his genius dealt not with airy fancies, but had its power and dominion amid the living and the local of the actual world.

I shall now return to the consideration of his works, and the first in order is *The Corsair*, published in 1814. He seems to have been perfectly sensible that

this beautiful composition was in his best peculiar manner. It is indeed a pirate's isle, peopled with his own creatures.

It has been alleged that Lord Byron was indebted to Sir Walter Scott's poem of *Rokeby* for the leading incidents of *The Corsair*, but the resemblance is not to me very obvious: besides, the whole style of the poem is so strikingly in his own manner, that even had he borrowed the plan, it was only as a thread to string his own original conceptions upon; the beauty and brilliancy of them could not be borrowed, and are not imitations.

There were two islands in the Archipelago, when Lord Byron was in Greece, considered as the chief haunts of the pirates, Stampalia, and a long narrow island between Cape Colonna and Zea. Jura also was a little tainted in its reputation. I think, however, from the description, that the pirate's isle of *The Corsair* is the island off Cape Colonna. It is a rude, rocky mass. I know not to what particular Coron, if there be more than one, the poet alludes; for the Coron of the Morea is neighbour to, if not in, the Mainote territory, a tract of country which never submitted to the Turks, and was exempted from the jurisdiction of Mussulman officers by the payment of an annual tribute. The Mainotes themselves are all pirates and robbers. If it be in that Coron that Byron has placed Seyd the pasha, it must be attributed to inadvertency. His Lordship was never there, nor in any part of Maina; nor does he describe the place, a circumstance which of itself goes far to prove the inadvertency. It is, however, only in making it the seat of a Turkish pasha that any error has been committed. In working out the incidents of the poem where descriptions of scenery are given, they relate chiefly to Athens and its neighbourhood. In themselves these descriptions are executed with an exquisite felicity; but they are brought in without any obvious reason wherefore. In fact, they appear to have been written independently of the poem, and are patched on "shreds of purple" which could have been spared.

The character of Conrad the Corsair may be described as a combination of the warrior of Albania and a naval officer — Childe Harold mingled with the hero of *The Giaour*.

A man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Robust, but not Herculean, to the sight,
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet in the whole, who paused to look again
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men:
They gaze and marvel how, and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.

Sun-burnt his cheek, his forehead high and pale,
The sable curls in wild profusion veil.
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals:
Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen.
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work'd feelings fearful, and yet undefined:
Such might he be that none could truly tell,
Too close inquiry his stern glance could quell.
There breathed but few whose aspect could defy
The full encounter of his searching eye;
He had the skill, when cunning gaze to seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.

There was a laughing devil in his sneer
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell
Hope withering fled, and mercy sigh'd, farewell.

It will be allowed that, in this portrait, some of the darker features and harsher lineaments of Byron himself are very evident, but with a more fixed sternness than belonged to him; for it was only by fits that he could put on such severity. Conrad is, however, a higher creation than any which he had previously described. Instead of the listlessness of Childe Harold, he is active and enterprising; such as the noble pilgrim would have been, but for the satiety which had relaxed his energies. There is also about him a solemnity different from the animation of the Giaour — a penitential despair arising from a cause undisclosed. The Giaour, though wounded and fettered, and laid in a dungeon, would not have felt as Conrad is supposed to feel in that situation. The following bold and terrific verses, descriptive of the maelstrom agitations of remorse, could not have been appropriately applied to the despair of grief, the predominant source of emotion in *The Giaour*.

There is a war, a chaos of the mind
When all its elements convulsed combined,
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent remorse.
That juggling fiend who never spake before,
But cries, "I warn'd thee," when the deed is o'er;
Vain voice, the spirit burning, but unbent,
May writhe, rebel — the weak alone repent.

The character of Conrad is undoubtedly finely imagined; as the painters would say, it is in the highest style of art, and brought out with sublime effect; but still it is only another phase of the same portentous meteor, that was nebulous in *Childe Harold*, and fiery in *The Giaour*. To the safe and shop-resorting inhabitants of Christendom, *The Corsair* seems to present many improbabilities; nevertheless, it is true to nature, and in every part of the Levant the traveller meets with individuals whose air and physiognomy remind him of Conrad. The incidents of the story, also, so wild and extravagant to the snug and legal notions of England, are not more in keeping with the character, than they are in accordance with fact and reality. The poet suffers immeasurable injustice, when it is attempted to determine the probability of the wild scenes and wilder adventurers of his tales, by the circumstances and characters of the law-regulated system of our diurnal affairs. Probability is a standard formed by experience, and it is not surprising that the anchorites of libraries should object to the improbability of *The Corsair*, and yet acknowledge the poetical power displayed in the composition; for it is a work which could only have been written by one who had himself seen or heard on the spot of transactions similar to those he has described. No course of reading could have supplied materials for a narration so faithfully descriptive of the accidents to which an Ægean pirate is exposed as *The Corsair*. Had Lord Byron never been out of England, the production of a work so appropriate in reflection, so wild in spirit, and so bold in invention, as in that case it would have been, would have entitled him to the highest honours of original conception, or been rejected as extravagant; considered as the result of things seen, and of probabilities suggested, by transactions not uncommon in the region where his genius gathered the ingredients of its sorceries, more than the half of its merits disappear, while the other half brighten with the lustre of truth.

The manners, the actions, and the incidents were new to the English mind; but to the inhabitant of the Levant they have long been familiar, and the traveller who visits that region will hesitate to admit that Lord Byron possessed those creative powers, and that discernment of dark bosoms for which he is so much

celebrated; because he will see there how little of invention was necessary to form such heroes as Conrad, and how much the actual traffic of life and trade is constantly stimulating enterprise and bravery. But let it not, therefore, be supposed, that I would undervalue either the genius of the poet, or the merits of the poem, in saying so, for I do think a higher faculty has been exerted in *The Corsair* than in *Childe Harold*. In the latter, only actual things are described, freshly and vigorously as they were seen, and feelings expressed eloquently as they were felt; but in the former, the talent of combination has been splendidly employed. The one is a view from nature, the other is a composition both from nature and from history.

Lara, which appeared soon after *The Corsair*, is an evident supplement to it; the description of the hero corresponds in person and character with Conrad; so that the remarks made on *The Corsair* apply, in all respects, to *Lara*. The poem itself is perhaps, in elegance, superior; but the descriptions are not so vivid, simply because they are more indebted to imagination. There is one of them, however, in which the lake and abbey of Newstead are dimly shadowed, equal in sweetness and solemnity to anything the poet has ever written.

It was the night, and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding each with imaged beam:
So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide, like happiness, away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the sky;
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee:
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And innocence would offer to her love;
These deck the shore, the waves their channel make
In windings bright and mazy, like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there,
Secure that naught of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, in such a night!
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deemed: nor longer there he stood;
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate:
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate:
Such scene reminded him of other days,

Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze;
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now —
No, no! the storm may beat upon his brow
Unfelt, unsparing; but a night like this,
A night of beauty, mock'd such breast as his.

He turn'd within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall:
There were the painted forms of other times —
'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults,
And half a column of the pompous page,
That speeds the spacious tale from age to age;
Where history's pen its praise or blame supplies
And lies like truth, and still most truly lies;
He wand'ring mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of stone,
And the high-fretted roof and saints that there
O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer;
Reflected in fantastic figures grew
Like life, but not like mortal life to view;
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

That Byron wrote best when he wrote of himself and of his own, has probably been already made sufficiently apparent. In this respect he stands alone and apart from all other poets, and there will be occasion to show, that this peculiarity extended much farther over all his works, than merely to those which may be said to have required him to be thus personal. The great distinction, indeed, of his merit consists in that singularity. Shakspeare, in drawing the materials of his dramas from tales and history has, with wonderful art, given from his own invention and imagination the fittest and most appropriate sentiments and language; and admiration at the perfection with which he has accomplished this, can never be exhausted. The difference between Byron and Shakspeare consists in the curious accident, if it may be so called, by which the former was placed in circumstances which taught him to feel in himself the very

sentiments that he has ascribed to his characters. Shakspeare created the feelings of his, and with such excellence, that they are not only probable to the situations, but give to the personifications the individuality of living persons. Byron's are scarcely less so; but with him there was no invention, only experience, and when he attempts to express more than he has himself known, he is always comparatively feeble.

CHAPTER XXXI

Byron determines to reside abroad — Visits the Plain of Waterloo — State of his Feelings

From different incidental expressions in his correspondence it is sufficiently evident that Byron, before his marriage, intended to reside abroad. In his letter to me of the 11th December, 1813, he distinctly states this intention, and intimates that he then thought of establishing his home in Greece. It is not therefore surprising that, after his separation from Lady Byron, he should have determined to carry this intention into effect; for at that period, besides the calumny heaped upon him from all quarters, the embarrassment of his affairs, and the retaliatory satire, all tended to force him into exile; he had no longer any particular tie to bind him to England.

On the 25th of April, 1816, he sailed for Ostend, and resumed the composition of *Childe Harold*, it may be said, from the moment of his embarkation. In it, however, there is no longer the fiction of an imaginary character stalking like a shadow amid his descriptions and reflections — — he comes more decidedly forwards as the hero in his own person.

In passing to Brussels he visited the field of Waterloo, and the slight sketch which he has given in the poem of that eventful conflict is still the finest which has yet been written on the subject.

But the note of his visit to the field is of more importance to my present purpose, inasmuch as it tends to illustrate the querulous state of his own mind at the time.

“I went on horseback twice over the field, comparing it with my recollection of similar scenes. As a plain, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination. I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Mantinea, Leuctra, Chævronæ, and Marathon, and the field round Mont St Jean and Hugoumont appears to want little but a better cause and that indefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except perhaps the last-mentioned.”

The expression “a better cause,” could only have been engendered in mere waywardness; but throughout his reflections at this period a peevish ill-will towards England is often manifested, as if he sought to attract attention by exasperating the national pride; that pride which he secretly flattered himself was to be augmented by his own fame.

I cannot, in tracing his travels through the third canto, test the accuracy of his

descriptions as in the former two; but as they are all drawn from actual views they have the same vivid individuality impressed upon them. Nothing can be more simple and affecting than the following picture, nor less likely to be an imaginary scene:

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemies. And let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau, o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, rush'd from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

Perhaps few passages of descriptive poetry excel that in which reference is made to the column of Avenches, the ancient Aventicum. It combines with an image distinct and picturesque, poetical associations full of the grave and moral breathings of olden forms and hoary antiquity.

By a lone wall, a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days:
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewilder'd gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands,
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Aventicum, hath strew'd her subject lands.

But the most remarkable quality in the third canto is the deep, low bass of thought which runs through several passages, and which gives to it, when considered with reference to the circumstances under which it was written, the serious character of documentary evidence as to the remorseful condition of the poet's mind. It would be, after what has already been pointed out in brighter incidents, affectation not to say, that these sad bursts of feeling and wild paroxysms, bear strong indications of having been suggested by the wreck of his domestic happiness, and dictated by contrition for the part he had himself taken in the ruin. The following reflections on the unguarded hour, are full of pathos

and solemnity, amounting almost to the deep and dreadful harmony of *Manfred*:

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind;
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
'Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul, turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those who walk in darkness: on the sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports invite;
But there are wanderers o'er eternity,
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be.

These sentiments are conceived in the mood of an awed spirit; they breathe of sorrow and penitence. Of the weariness of satiety the pilgrim no more complains; he is no longer despondent from exhaustion, and the lost appetite of passion, but from the weight of a burden which he cannot lay down; and he clings to visible objects, as if from their nature he could extract a moral strength.

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me,
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities tortures: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, where the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

These dim revelations of black and lowering thought are overshadowed with

a darker hue than sorrow alone could have cast. A consciousness of sinful blame is evident amid them; and though the fantasies that loom through the mystery, are not so hideous as the guilty reveries in the weird caldron of Manfred's conscience, still they have an awful resemblance to them. They are phantoms of the same murky element, and, being more akin to fortitude than despair, prophesy not of hereafter, but oracularly confess suffering.

Manfred himself hath given vent to no finer horror than the oracle that speaks in this magnificent stanza:

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee —
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles — nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; — in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not of their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

There are times in life when all men feel their sympathies extinct, and Lord Byron was evidently in that condition, when he penned these remarkable lines; but independently of their striking beauty, the scenery in which they were conceived deserves to be considered with reference to the sentiment that pervades them. For it was amid the same obscure ravines, pine-tufted precipices and falling waters of the Alps, that he afterward placed the outcast Manfred — an additional corroboration of the justness of the remarks which I ventured to offer, in adverting to his ruminations in contemplating, while yet a boy, the Malvern hills, as if they were the scenes of his impassioned childhood. In “the palaces of nature,” he first felt the consciousness of having done some wrong, and when he would infuse into another, albeit in a wilder degree, the feelings he had himself felt, he recalled the images which had ministered to the cogitations of his own contrition. But I shall have occasion to speak more of this, when I come to consider the nature of the guilt and misery of Manfred.

That *Manfred* is the greatest of Byron's works will probably not be disputed. It has more than the fatal mysticism of *Macbeth*, with the satanic grandeur of the *Paradise Lost*, and the hero is placed in circumstances, and amid scenes, which accord with the stupendous features of his preternatural character. How then, it may be asked, does this moral phantom, that has never been, bear any resemblance to the poet himself? Must not, in this instance, the hypothesis

which assigns to Byron's heroes his own sentiments and feelings be abandoned? I think not. In noticing the deep and solemn reflections with which he was affected in ascending the Rhine, and which he has embodied in the third canto of *Childe Harold*, I have already pointed out a similarity in the tenour of the thoughts to those of *Manfred*, as well as the striking acknowledgment of the "filed" mind. There is, moreover, in the drama, the same distaste of the world which Byron himself expressed when cogitating on the desolation of his hearth, and the same contempt of the insufficiency of his genius and renown to mitigate contrition — all in strange harmony with the same magnificent objects of sight. Is not the opening soliloquy of *Manfred* the very echo of the reflections on the Rhine?

My slumbers — if I slumber — are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not; in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within — and yet I live and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing man.

But the following is more impressive: it is the very phrase he would himself have employed to have spoken of the consequences of his fatal marriage:

My injuries came down on those who lov'd me,
On those whom I best lov'd; I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence —
But my embrace was fatal.

He had not, indeed, been engaged in any duel of which the issue was mortal; but he had been so far engaged with more than one, that he could easily conceive what it would have been to have quelled an enemy in just defence. But unless the reader can himself discern, by his sympathies, that there is the resemblance I contend for, it is of no use to multiply instances. I shall, therefore, give but one other extract, which breathes the predominant spirit of all Byron's works — that sad translation of the preacher's "vanity of vanities; all is vanity!"

Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;

Some perishing of pleasure — some of study —
Some worn with toil — some of mere weariness —
Some of disease — and some insanity —
And some of wither'd or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are number'd in the lists of Fate;
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken — and of all these things
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or, having been, that I am still on earth.

CHAPTER XXXII

Byron's Residence in Switzerland — Excursion to the Glaciers — "Manfred" founded on a magical Sacrifice, not on Guilt — Similarity between Sentiments given to Manfred and those expressed by Lord Byron in his own Person

The account given by Captain Medwin of the manner in which Lord Byron spent his time in Switzerland, has the raciness of his Lordship's own quaintness, somewhat diluted. The reality of the conversations I have heard questioned, but they relate in some instances to matters not generally known, to the truth of several of which I can myself bear witness; moreover they have much of the poet's peculiar modes of thinking about them, though weakened in effect by the reporter. No man can give a just representation of another who is not capable of putting himself into the character of his original, and of thinking with his power and intelligence. Still there are occasional touches of merit in the feeble outlines of Captain Medwin, and with this conviction it would be negligence not to avail myself of them.

"Switzerland," said his Lordship, "is a country I have been satisfied with seeing once; Turkey I could live in for ever. I never forget my predilections: I was in a wretched state of health and worse spirits when I was at Geneva; but quiet and the lake, better physicians than Polidori, soon set me up. I never led so moral a life as during my residence in that country; but I gained no credit by it. Where there is mortification there ought to be reward. On the contrary, there is no story so absurd that they did not invent at my cost. I was watched by glasses on the opposite side of the lake, and by glasses, too, that must have had very distorted optics; I was waylaid in my evening drives. I believe they looked upon me as a man-monster.

"I knew very few of the Genevese. Hentsh was very civil to me, and I have a great respect for Sismondi. I was forced to return the civilities of one of their professors by asking him and an old gentleman, a friend of Gray's, to dine with me I had gone out to sail early in the morning, and the wind prevented me from returning in time for dinner. I understand that I offended them mortally.

"Among our countrymen I made no new acquaintances; Shelley, Monk Lewis, and Hobhouse were almost the only English people I saw. No wonder; I showed a distaste for society at that time, and went little among the Genevese; besides, I could not speak French. When I went the tour of the lake with Shelley and Hobhouse, the boat was nearly wrecked near the very spot where St Preux and Julia were in danger of being drowned. It would have been classical to have been lost there, but not agreeable."

The third canto of *Childe Harold*, *Manfred*, and *The Prisoner of Chillon* are the fruits of his travels up the Rhine and of his sojourn in Switzerland. Of the first it is unnecessary to say more; but the following extract from the poet's travelling memorandum-book, has been supposed to contain the germ of the tragedy

"September 22, 1816. — Left Thun in a boat, which carried us the length of the lake in three hours. The lake small, but the banks fine; rocks down to the water's edge: landed at Newhouse; passed Interlachen; entered upon a range of scenes beyond all description or previous conception; passed a rock bearing an inscription; two brothers, one murdered the other; just the place for it. After a variety of windings, came to an enormous rock; arrived at the foot of the mountain (the Jungfrau) glaciers; torrents, one of these nine hundred feet, visible descent; lodge at the curate's; set out to see the valley; heard an avalanche fall like thunder; glaciers; enormous storm comes on thunder and lightning and hail, all in perfection and beautiful. The torrent is in shape, curving over the rock, like the tail of the white horse streaming in the wind, just as might be conceived would be that of the pale horse on which Death is mounted in the Apocalypse: it is neither mist nor water, but a something between both; its immense height gives a wave, a curve, a spreading here, a condensation there, wonderful, indescribable

"September 23. — Ascent of the Wingren, the *dent d'argent* shining like truth on one side, on the other the clouds rose from the opposite valley, curling up perpendicular precipices like the foam of the ocean of hell during a spring-tide. It was white and sulphury, and immeasurably deep in appearance; the side we ascended was of course not of so precipitous a nature; but on arriving at the summit, we looked down on the other side upon a boiling sea of cloud dashing against the crag on which we stood. Arrived at the Greenderwold, mounted and rode to the higher glacier, twilight, but distinct, very fine; glacier like a frozen hurricane; starlight beautiful; the whole of the day was fine, and, in point of weather, as the day in which Paradise was made. Passed whole woods of withered pines, all withered, trunks stripped and lifeless, done by a single winter."

Undoubtedly in these brief and abrupt but masterly touches, hints for the scenery of *Manfred* may be discerned, but I can perceive nothing in them which bears the least likelihood to their having influenced the conception of that sublime work.

There has always been from the first publication of *Manfred*, a strange misapprehension with respect to it in the public mind. The whole poem has been

misunderstood, and the odious supposition that ascribes the fearful mystery and remorse of a hero to a foul passion for his sister, is probably one of those coarse imaginations which have grown out of the calumnies and accusations heaped upon the author. How can it have happened that none of the critics have noticed that the story is derived from the human sacrifices supposed to have been in use among the students of the black art?

Manfred is represented as being actuated by an insatiable curiosity — a passion to know the forbidden secrets of the world. The scene opens with him at his midnight studies — his lamp is almost burned out — and he has been searching for knowledge and has not found it, but only that

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The tree of knowledge is not that of life.
Philosophy and science and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world
I have essayed, and in my mind there is,
A power to make these subject to itself.

He is engaged in calling spirits; and, as the incantation proceeds, they obey his bidding, and ask him what he wants; he replies, "forgetfulness."

FIRST SPIRIT

Of what — of whom — and why?

MANFRED

Of that which is within me; read it there — —
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

SPIRIT

We can but give thee that which we possess; —
Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth, the whole or portion, or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators. Each and all —
These shall be thine.

MANFRED

Oblivion, self oblivion —
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely, what I ask?

SPIRIT

It is not in our essence, in our skill,
But — thou may'st die.

MANFRED

Will death bestow it on me?

SPIRIT

We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal, and to us the past
Is as the future, present. Art thou answer'd?

MANFRED

Ye mock me, but the power which brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves! scoff not at my will;
The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being is as bright,
Pervading and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours though coop'd in clay.
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

SPIRIT

We answer as we answer'd. Our reply
Is even in thine own words.

MANFRED

Why say ye so?

SPIRIT

If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied in telling thee the thing
Mortals call death hath naught to do with us.

MANFRED

I then have call'd you from your realms in vain.

This impressive and original scene prepares the reader to wonder why it is that Manfred is so desirous to drink of Lethe. He has acquired dominion over spirits, and he finds, in the possession of the power, that knowledge has only brought him sorrow. They tell him he is immortal, and what he suffers is as inextinguishable as his own being: why should he desire forgetfulness? — Has he not committed a great secret sin? What is it? — He alludes to his sister, and in his subsequent interview with the witch we gather a dreadful meaning concerning her fate. Her blood has been shed, not by his hand nor in punishment, but in the shadow and occultations of some unutterable crime and mystery.

She was like me in lineaments; her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine,
But soften'd all and temper'd into beauty.
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe; nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears, which I had not;
And tenderness — but that I had for her;
Humility, and that I never had:
Her faults were mine — her virtues were her own;
I lov'd her and — destroy'd her —

WITCH

With thy hand?

MANFRED

Not with my hand, but heart, which broke her heart.
It gaz'd on mine, and withered. I have shed
Blood, but not hers, and yet her blood was shed; —
I saw, and could not stanch it.

There is in this little scene, perhaps, the deepest pathos ever expressed; but it is not of its beauty that I am treating; my object in noticing it here is, that it may be considered in connection with that where Manfred appears with his insatiate

thirst of knowledge, and manacled with guilt. It indicates that his sister, Astarte, had been self-sacrificed in the pursuit of their magical knowledge. Human sacrifices were supposed to be among the initiate propitiations of the demons that have their purposes in magic — as well as compacts signed with the blood of the self-sold. There was also a dark Egyptian art, of which the knowledge and the efficacy could only be obtained by the novitiate's procuring a voluntary victim — the dearest object to himself and to whom he also was the dearest; and the primary spring of Byron's tragedy lies, I conceive, in a sacrifice of that kind having been performed, without obtaining that happiness which the votary expected would be found in the knowledge and power purchased at such a price. His sister was sacrificed in vain. The manner of the sacrifice is not divulged, but it is darkly intimated to have been done amid the perturbations of something horrible.

Night after night for years
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower
Without a witness. — I have been within it —
So have we all been oftentimes; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. — To be sure there is
One chamber where none enter — . . .
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower:
How occupied — we know not — but with him,
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings — her — whom of all earthly things
That liv'd, the only thing he seem'd to love.

With admirable taste, and its thrilling augmentation of the horror, the poet leaves the deed which was done in that unapproachable chamber undivulged, while we are darkly taught, that within it lie the relics or the ashes of the "one without a tomb."

CHAPTER XXXIII

State of Byron in Switzerland — He goes to Venice — The fourth Canto of "Childe Harold" — Ruminations on his own Condition — Beppo — Lament of Tasso — Curious Example of Byron's metaphysical Love

The situation of Lord Byron in Switzerland was comfortless. He found that "the mountain palaces of Nature" afforded no asylum to a haunted heart; he was ill at ease with himself, even dissatisfied that the world had not done him enough of wrong to justify his misanthropy.

Some expectation that his lady would repent of her part in the separation probably induced him to linger in the vicinity of Geneva, the thoroughfare of the travelling English, whom he affected to shun. If it were so, he was disappointed, and, his hopes being frustrated, he broke up the establishment he had formed there and crossed the Alps. After visiting some of the celebrated scenes and places in the north of Italy he passed on to Venice, where he domiciled himself for a time.

During his residence at Venice Lord Byron avoided as much as possible any intercourse with his countrymen. This was perhaps in some degree necessary, and it was natural in the state of his mind. He had become an object of great public interest by his talents; the stories connected with his domestic troubles had also increased his notoriety, and in such circumstances he could not but shrink from the inquisition of mere curiosity. But there was an insolence in the tone with which he declares his "utter abhorrence of any contact with the travelling English," that can neither be commended for its spirit, nor palliated by any treatment he had suffered. Like Coriolanus he may have banished his country, but he had not, like the Roman, received provocation: on the contrary, he had been the aggressor in the feuds with his literary adversaries; and there was a serious accusation against his morals, or at least his manners, in the circumstances under which Lady Byron withdrew from his house. It was, however, his misfortune throughout life to form a wrong estimate of himself in everything save in his poetical powers.

A life in Venice is more monotonous than in any other great city; but a man of genius carries with him everywhere a charm, which secures to him both variety and enjoyment. Lord Byron had scarcely taken up his abode in Venice, when he began the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, which he published early in the following year, and dedicated to his indefatigable friend Mr Hobhouse by an epistle dated on the anniversary of his marriage, "the most unfortunate day," as he says, "of his past existence."

In this canto he has indulged his excursive moralizing beyond even the wide licence he took in the three preceding parts; but it bears the impression of more reading and observation. Though not superior in poetical energy, it is yet a higher work than any of them, and something of a more resolved and masculine spirit pervades the reflections, and endows, as it were, with thought and enthusiasm the aspect of the things described. Of the merits of the descriptions, as of real things, I am not qualified to judge: the transcripts from the tablets of the author's bosom he has himself assured us are faithful.

“With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line, which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese, in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted and imagined that I had drawn a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and the disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether — and have done so.”

This confession, though it may not have been wanted, gives a pathetic emphasis to those passages in which the poet speaks of his own feelings. That his mind was jarred, and out of joint, there is too much reason to believe; but he had in some measure overcome the misery that clung to him during the dismal time of his sojourn in Switzerland, and the following passage, though breathing the sweet and melancholy spirit of dejection, possesses a more generous vein of nationality than is often met with in his works, even when the same proud sentiment might have been more fitly expressed:

I've taught me other tongues — and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise,
Nor is it harsh to make or hard to find
A country with — aye, or without mankind.
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
Th' inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea?

Perhaps I lov'd it well, and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,

My spirit shall resume it — if we may,
Unbodied, choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my line,
With my land's language; if too fond and far
These aspirations in their hope incline —
If my fame should be as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull oblivion bar

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations — let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head,
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me:
"Sparta had many a worthier son than he";
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted — they have torn me — and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

It will strike the reader as remarkable, that although the poet, in the course of this canto, takes occasion to allude to Dante and Tasso, in whose destinies there was a shadowy likeness of his own, the rumination is mingled with less of himself than might have been expected, especially when it is considered how much it was a habit with him, to make his own feelings the basis and substratum of the sentiments he ascribed to others. It has also more than once surprised me that he has so seldom alluded to Alfieri, whom of all poets, both in character and conduct, he most resembled; with this difference, however, that Alfieri was possessed of affections equally intense and durable, whereas the caprice of Byron made him uncertain in his partialities, or what was the same in effect, made his friends set less value on them than perhaps they were entitled to.

Before *Childe Harold* was finished, an incident occurred which suggested to Byron a poem of a very different kind to any he had yet attempted: — without vouching for the exact truth of the anecdote, I have been told, that he one day received by the mail a copy of Whistlecraft's prospectus and specimen of an intended national work; and, moved by its playfulness, immediately after reading it, began Beppo, which he finished at a sitting. The facility with which he composed renders the story not improbable; but, singular as it may seem, the poem itself has the facetious flavour in it of his gaiety, stronger than even his grave works have of his frowardness, commonly believed to have been — I think, unjustly — the predominant mood of his character.

The *Ode to Venice* is also to be numbered among his compositions in that city; a spirited and indignant effusion, full of his peculiar lurid fire, and rich in a variety of impressive and original images. But there is a still finer poem which belongs to this period of his history, though written, I believe, before he reached Venice — *The Lament of Tasso*: and I am led to notice it the more particularly, as one of its noblest passages affords an illustration of the opinion which I have early maintained — that Lord Byron's extraordinary pretensions to the influence of love was but a metaphysical conception of the passion.

It is no marvel — from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lovely flowers,
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours.

It has been remarked by an anonymous author of *Memoirs of Lord Byron*, a work written with considerable talent and acumen, that “this is so far from being in character, that it is the very reverse; for whether Tasso was in his senses or not, if his love was sincere, he would have made the object of his affection the sole theme of his meditation, instead of generalising his passion, and talking about the original sympathies of his nature.” In truth, no poet has better described love than Byron has his own peculiar passion.

His love was passion's essence — as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus enamour'd were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distemper'd though it seems.

In tracing the course of Lord Byron's career, I have not deemed it at all necessary to advert to the instances of his generosity, or to conduct less pleasant to record. Enough has appeared to show that he was neither deficient in warmth

of heart nor in less amiable feelings; but, upon the whole, it is not probable that either in his charities or his pleasures he was greatly different from other young men, though he undoubtedly had a wayward delight in magnifying his excesses, not in what was to his credit, like most men, but in what was calculated to do him no honour. More notoriety has been given to an instance of lavish liberality at Venice, than the case deserved, though it was unquestionably prompted by a charitable impulse. The house of a shoemaker, near his Lordship's residence, in St Samuel, was burned to the ground, with all it contained, by which the proprietor was reduced to indigence. Byron not only caused a new but a superior house to be erected, and also presented the sufferer with a sum of money equal in value to the whole of his stock in trade and furniture. I should endanger my reputation for impartiality if I did not, as a fair set-off to this, also mention that it is said he bought for five hundred crowns a baker's wife. There might be charity in this, too.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Removes to Ravenna — The Countess Guiccioli

Although Lord Byron resided between two and three years at Venice, he was never much attached to it. "To see a city die daily, as she does," said he, "is a sad contemplation. I sought to distract my mind from a sense of her desolation and my own solitude, by plunging into a vortex that was anything but pleasure. When one gets into a mill-stream, it is difficult to swim against it, and keep out of the wheels." He became tired and disgusted with the life he led at Venice, and was glad to turn his back on it. About the close of the year 1819 he accordingly removed to Ravenna; but before I proceed to speak of the works which he composed at Ravenna, it is necessary to explain some particulars respecting a personal affair, the influence of which on at least one of his productions is as striking as any of the many instances already described upon others. I allude to the intimacy which he formed with the young Countess Guiccioli.

This lady, at the age of sixteen, was married to the Count, one of the richest noblemen in Romagna, but far advanced in life. "From the first," said Lord Byron, in his account of her, "they had separate apartments, and she always called him, Sir! What could be expected from such a preposterous connection. For some time she was an *Angiolina* and he a *Marino Faliero*, a good old man; but young Italian women are not satisfied with good old men, and the venerable Count did not object to her availing herself of the privileges of her country in selecting a cicisbeo; an Italian would have made it quite agreeable: indeed, for some time he winked at our intimacy, but at length made an exception against me, as a foreigner, a heretic, an Englishman, and, what was worse than all, a Liberal.

"He insisted — Teresa was as obstinate — her family took her part. Catholics cannot get divorces; but to the scandal of all Romagna, the matter was at last referred to the Pope, who ordered her a separate maintenance on condition that she should reside under her father's roof. All this was not agreeable, and at length I was forced to smuggle her out of Ravenna, having discovered a plot laid with the sanction of the legate, for shutting her up in a convent for life."

The Countess Guiccioli was at this time about twenty, but she appeared younger; her complexion was fair, with large, dark, languishing eyes; and her auburn hair fell in great profusion of natural ringlets over her shapely shoulders. Her features were not so regular as in their expression pleasing, and there was an

amiable gentleness in her voice which was peculiarly interesting. Leigh Hunt's account of her is not essentially dissimilar from any other that I have either heard of or met with. He differs, however, in one respect, from every other, in saying that her hair was *yellow*; but considering the curiosity which this young lady has excited, perhaps it may be as well to transcribe his description at length, especially as he appears to have taken some pains on it, and more particularly as her destiny seems at present to promise that the interest for her is likely to be revived by another unhappy English connection.

"Her appearance," says Mr Hunt, "might have reminded an English spectator of Chaucer's heroine:

Yclothed was she, fresh for to devise,
Her yellow hair was braided in a tress
Behind her back, a yardé long I guess,
And in the garden (as the same uprist)
She walketh up and down, where as her list.

And then, as Dryden has it:

At every turn she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand.

Madame Guiccioli, who was at that time about twenty, was handsome and lady-like, with an agreeable manner, and a voice not partaking too much of the Italian fervour to be gentle. She had just enough of it to give her speaking a grace — none of her graces appeared entirely free from art; nor, on the other hand, did they betray enough of it to give you an ill opinion of her sincerity and good-humour . . . Her hair was what the poet has described, or rather *blond*, with an inclination to yellow; a very fair and delicate yellow, at all events, and within the limits of the poetical. She had regular features of the order properly called handsome, in distinction to prettiness or piquancy; being well proportioned to one another, large, rather than otherwise, but without coarseness, and more harmonious than interesting. Her nose was the handsomest of the kind I ever saw; and I have known her both smile very sweetly, and look intelligently, when Lord Byron has said something kind to her. I should not say, however, that she was a very intelligent person. Both her wisdom and her want of wisdom were on the side of her feelings, in which there was doubtless mingled a good deal of the self-love natural to a flattered beauty. . . . In a word, Madame Guiccioli was a kind of buxom parlour-boarder, compressing herself artificially into dignity and

elegance, and fancying she walked, in the eyes of the whole world, a heroine by the side of a poet. When I saw her at Monte Nero, near Leghorn, she was in a state of excitement and exultation, and had really something of this look. At that time, also, she looked no older than she was; in which respect, a rapid and very singular change took place, to the surprise of everybody. In the course of a few months she seemed to have lived as many years.”

This is not very perspicuous portraiture, nor does it show that Mr Hunt was a very discerning observer of character. Lord Byron himself is represented to have said, that extraordinary pains were taken with her education: “Her conversation is lively without being frivolous; without being learned, she has read all the best authors of her own and the French language. She often conceals what she knows, from the fear of being thought to know too much; possibly because she knows I am not fond of blues. To use an expression of Jeffrey’s, ‘If she has blue stockings, she contrives that her petticoats shall hide them.’”

Lord Byron was at one time much attached to her; nor could it be doubted that their affection was reciprocal; but in both, their union outlived their affection, for before his departure to Greece his attachment had perished, and he left her, as it is said, notwithstanding the rank and opulence she had forsaken on his account, without any provision. He had promised, it was reported, to settle two thousand pounds on her, but he forgot the intention, or died before it was carried into effect. On her part, the estrangement was of a different and curious kind — she had not come to hate him, but she told a lady, the friend of a mutual acquaintance of Lord Byron and mine, that she feared more than loved him.

CHAPTER XXXV

Residence in Ravenna — The Carbonari — Byron's Part in their Plot — The Murder of the military Commandant — The poetical Use of the Incident — "Marino Faliero" — Reflections — "The Prophecy of Dante"

Lord Byron has said himself, that except Greece, he was never so attached to any place in his life as to Ravenna. The peasantry he thought the best people in the world, and their women the most beautiful. "Those at Tivoli and Frescati," said he, "are mere Sabines, coarse creatures, compared to the Romagnese. You may talk of your English women; and it is true, that out of one hundred Italian and English you will find thirty of the latter handsome; but then there will be one Italian on the other side of the scale, who will more than balance the deficit in numbers — one who, like the Florence Venus, has no rival, and can have none in the North. I found also at Ravenna much education and liberality of thinking among the higher classes. The climate is delightful. I was not broken in upon by society. Ravenna lies out of the way of travellers. I was never tired of my rides in the pine forest: it breathes of the Decameron; it is poetical ground. Francesca lived and Dante was exiled and died at Ravenna. There is something inspiring in such an air.

"The people liked me as much as they hated the government. It is not a little to say, I was popular with all the leaders of the constitutional party. They knew that I came from a land of liberty, and wished well to their cause. I would have espoused it, too, and assisted them to shake off their fetters. They knew my character, for I had been living two years at Venice, where many of the Ravennese have houses. I did not, however, take part in their intrigues, nor join in their political coteries; but I had a magazine of one hundred stand of arms in the house, when everything was ripe for revolt — — a curse on Carignan's imbecility! I could have pardoned him that, too, if he had not impeached his partisans.

"The proscription was immense in Romagna, and embraced many of the first nobles: almost all my friends, among the rest the Gambas (the father and brother of the Countess Guiccioli), who took no part in the affair, were included in it. They were exiled, and their possessions confiscated. They knew that this must eventually drive me out of the country. I did not follow them immediately: I was not to be bullied — I had myself fallen under the eye of the government. If they could have got sufficient proof they would have arrested me."

The latter part of this declaration bears, in my opinion, indubitable marks of being genuine. It has that magnifying mysticism about it which more than any

other quality characterized Lord Byron's intimations concerning himself and his own affairs; but it is a little clearer than I should have expected in the acknowledgment of the part he was preparing to take in the insurrection. He does not seem *here* to be sensible, that in confessing so much, he has justified the jealousy with which he was regarded.

"Shortly after the plot was discovered," he proceeds to say, "I received several anonymous letters, advising me to discontinue my forest rides; but I entertained no apprehensions of treachery, and was more on horseback than ever. I never stir out without being well armed, nor sleep without pistols. They knew that I never missed my aim; perhaps this saved me."

An event occurred at this time at Ravenna that made a deep impression on Lord Byron. The commandant of the place, who, though suspected of being secretly a Carbonaro, was too powerful a man to be arrested, was assassinated opposite to his residence. The measures adopted to screen the murderer proved, in the opinion of his Lordship, that the assassination had taken place by order of the police, and that the spot where it was perpetrated had been selected by choice. Byron at the moment had his foot in the stirrup, and his horse started at the report of the shot. On looking round he saw a man throw down a carbine and run away, and another stretched on the pavement near him. On hastening to the spot, he found it was the commandant; a crowd collected, but no one offered any assistance. His Lordship directed his servant to lift the bleeding body into the palace — he assisted himself in the act, though it was represented to him that he might incur the displeasure of the government — and the gentleman was already dead. His adjutant followed the body into the house. "I remember," says his Lordship, "his lamentation over him — 'Poor devil he would not have harmed a dog.'"

It was from the murder of this commandant that the poet sketched the scene of the assassination in the fifth canto of *Don Juan*.

The other evening ('twas on Friday last),
This is a fact, and no poetic fable —
Just as my great coat was about me cast,
My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
I heard a shot — 'twas eight o'clock scarce past,
And running out as fast as I was able,
I found the military commandant
Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to pant.

Poor fellow! for some reason, surely bad,

They had him slain with five slugs, and left him there
To perish on the pavement: so I had
Him borne into the house, and up the stair;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

The scars of his old wounds were near his new,
Those honourable scars which bought him fame,
And horrid was the contrast to the view —
But let me quit the theme, as such things claim
Perhaps ev'n more attention than is due
From me: I gazed (as oft I've gazed the same)
To try if I could wrench aught out of death
Which should confirm, or shake, or make a faith.

Whether *Marino Faliero* was written at Ravenna or completed there, I have not ascertained, but it was planned at Venice, and as far back as 1817. I believe this is considered about the most ordinary performance of all Lord Byron's works; but if it is considered with reference to the time in which it was written, it will probably be found to contain many great and impressive passages. Has not the latter part of the second scene in the first act reference to the condition of Venice when his Lordship was there? And is not the description which Israel Bertuccio gives of the conspirators applicable to, as it was probably derived from, the Carbonari, with whom there is reason to say Byron was himself disposed to take a part?

Know, then, that there are met and sworn in secret
A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true;
Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long
Grieved over that of Venice, and have right
To do so; having served her in all climes,
And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same for those within her walls.
They are not numerous, nor yet too few
For their great purpose; they have arms, and means,
And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.

This drama, to be properly appreciated, both in its taste and feeling should be considered as addressed to the Italians of the epoch at which it was written. Had

it been written in the Italian instead of the English language, and could have come out in any city of Italy, the effect would have been prodigious. It is, indeed, a work not to be estimated by the delineations of character nor the force of passion expressed in it, but altogether by the apt and searching sarcasm of the political allusions. Viewed with reference to the time and place in which it was composed, it would probably deserve to be ranked as a high and bold effort: simply as a drama, it may not be entitled to rank above tragedies of the second or third class. But I mean not to set my opinion of this work against that of the public, the English public; all I contend for is, that it possesses many passages of uncommon beauty, and that its chief tragic merit consists in its political indignation; but above all, that is another and a strong proof too, of what I have been endeavouring to show, that the power of the poet consisted in giving vent to his own feelings, and not, like his great brethren, or even his less, in the invention of situations or of appropriate sentiments. It is, perhaps, as it stands, not fit to succeed in representation; but it is so rich in matter that it would not be a difficult task to make out of little more than the third part a tragedy which would not dishonour the English stage.

I have never been able to understand why it has been so often supposed that Lord Byron was actuated in the composition of his different works by any other motive than enjoyment: perhaps no poet had ever less of an ulterior purpose in his mind during the fits of inspiration (for the epithet may be applied correctly to him and to the moods in which he was accustomed to write) than this singular and impassioned man. Those who imagine that he had any intention to impair the reverence due to religion, or to weaken the hinges of moral action, give him credit for far more design and prospective purpose than he possessed. They could have known nothing of the man, the main defect of whose character, in relation to everything, was in having too little of the element or principle of purpose. He was a thing of impulses, and to judge of what he either said or did, as the results of predetermination, was not only to do the harshest injustice, but to show a total ignorance of his character. His whole fault, the darkest course of those flights and deviations from propriety which have drawn upon him the severest animadversion, lay in the unbridled state of his impulses. He felt, but never reasoned. I am led to make these observations by noticing the ungracious, or, more justly, the illiberal spirit in which *The Prophecy of Dante*, which was published with the *Marino Faliero*, has been treated by the anonymous author of *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron*.

Of *The Prophecy of Dante* I am no particular admirer. It contains, unquestionably, stanzas of resounding energy, but the general verse of the poem

is as harsh and abrupt as the clink and clang of the cymbal; moreover, even for a prophecy, it is too obscure, and though it possesses abstractedly too many fine thoughts, and too much of the combustion of heroic passion to be regarded as a failure, yet it will never be popular. It is a quarry, however, of very precious poetical expression.

It was written at Ravenna, and at the suggestion of the Guiccioli, to whom it is dedicated in a sonnet, prettily but inharmoniously turned. Like all his other best performances, this rugged but masterly composition draws its highest interest from himself and his own feelings, and can only be rightly appreciated by observing how fitly many of the bitter breathings of Dante apply to his own exiled and outcast condition. For, however much he was himself the author of his own banishment, he felt when he wrote these haughty verses that he had been sometimes shunned.

CHAPTER XXXVI

*The Tragedy of "Sardanapalus" considered, with Reference to Lord Byron's own Circumstances —
"Cain"*

Among the mental enjoyments which endeared Ravenna to Lord Byron, the composition of *Sardanapalus* may be reckoned the chief. It seems to have been conceived in a happier mood than any of all his other works; for, even while it inculcates the dangers of voluptuous indulgence, it breathes the very essence of benevolence and philosophy. Pleasure takes so much of the character of virtue in it, that but for the moral taught by the consequences, enjoyment might be mistaken for duty. I have never been able to satisfy myself in what the resemblance consists, but from the first reading it has always appeared to me that there was some elegant similarity between the characters of Sardanapalus and Hamlet, and my inclination has sometimes led me to imagine that the former was the nobler conception of the two.

The Assyrian monarch, like the Prince of Denmark, is highly endowed, capable of the greatest undertakings; he is yet softened by a philosophic indolence of nature that makes him undervalue the enterprises of ambition, and all those objects in the attainment of which so much of glory is supposed to consist. They are both alike incapable of rousing themselves from the fond reveries of moral theory, even when the strongest motives are presented to them. Hamlet hesitates to act, though his father's spirit hath come from death to incite him; and Sardanapalus derides the achievements that had raised his ancestors to an equality with the gods.

Thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. — By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read! the restless slaves
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes
And lead them forth to glory.

Again:

The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they murmur
Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the deserts' dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges,
Nor decimated them with savage laws,

Nor sweated them to build up pyramids
Or Babylonian walls.

The nothingness of kingly greatness and national pride were never before so finely contemned as by the voluptuous Assyrian, and were the scorn not mitigated by the skilful intermixture of mercifulness and philanthropy, the character would not be endurable. But when the same voice which pronounced contempt on the toils of honour says,

Enough
For me if I can make my subjects feel
The weight of human misery less,

it is impossible to repress the liking which the humane spirit of that thought is calculated to inspire. Nor is there any want of dignity in Sardanapalus, even when lolling softest in his luxury.

Must I consume my life — this little life —
In guarding against all may make it less!
It is not worth so much — It were to die
Before my hour to live in dread of death. . . .
Till now no drop of an Assyrian vein
Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasure e'er been lavish'd
On objects which could cost her sons a tear.
If then they hate me 'tis because I hate not,
If they rebel 'tis because I oppress not.

This is imagined in the true tone of Epicurean virtue, and it rises to magnanimity when he adds in compassionate scorn,

Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mow'd down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility.

But the graciousness in the conception of the character of Sardanapalus, is not to be found only in these sentiments of his meditations, but in all and every situation in which the character is placed. When Salamenes bids him not sheath

his sword —

‘Tis the sole sceptre left you now with safety,
the king replies —

“A heavy one;” and subjoins, as if to conceal his distaste for war, by ascribing a dislike to the sword itself,

The hilt, too, hurts my hand.

It may be asked why I dwell so particularly on the character of Sardanapalus. It is admitted that he is the most heroic of voluptuaries, the most philosophical of the licentious. The first he is undoubtedly, but he is not licentious; and in omitting to make him so, the poet has prevented his readers from disliking his character upon principle. It was a skilful stroke of art to do this; had it been otherwise, and had there been no affection shown for the Ionian slave, Sardanapalus would have engaged no sympathy. It is not, however, with respect to the ability with which the character has been imagined, nor to the poetry with which it is invested, that I have so particularly made it a subject of criticism; it was to point out how much in it Lord Byron has interwoven of his own best nature.

At the time when he was occupied with this great work, he was confessedly in the enjoyment of the happiest portion of his life. The Guiccioli was to him a Myrrha, but the Carbonari were around, and in the controversy, in which Sardanapalus is engaged, between the obligations of his royalty and his inclinations for pleasure, we have a vivid insight of the cogitation of the poet, whether to take a part in the hazardous activity which they were preparing, or to remain in the seclusion and festal repose of which he was then in possession. The Assyrian is as much Lord Byron as Childe Harold was, and bears his lineaments in as clear a likeness, as a voluptuary unsated could do those of the emaciated victim of satiety. Over the whole drama, and especially in some of the speeches of Sardanapalus, a great deal of fine but irrelevant poetry and moral reflection has been profusely spread; but were the piece adapted to the stage, these portions would of course be omitted, and the character denuded of them would then more fully justify the idea which I have formed of it, than it may perhaps to many readers do at present, hidden as it is, both in shape and contour, under an excess of ornament.

That the character of Myrrha was also drawn from life, and that the Guiccioli was the model, I have no doubt. She had, when most enchanted by her passion for Byron — at the very time when the drama was written — many sources of regret; and he was too keen an observer, and of too jealous a nature, not to have marked every shade of change in her appearance, and her every moment of melancholy reminiscence; so that, even though she might never have given

expression to her sentiments, still such was her situation, that it could not but furnish him with fit suggestions from which to fill up the moral being of the Ionian slave. Were the character of Myrrha scanned with this reference, while nothing could be discovered to detract from the value of the composition, a great deal would be found to lessen the merit of the poet's invention. He had with him the very being in person whom he has depicted in the drama, of dispositions and endowments greatly similar, and in circumstances in which she could not but feel as Myrrha is supposed to have felt — and it must be admitted, that he has applied the good fortune of that incident to a beautiful purpose.

This, however, is not all that the tragedy possesses of the author. The character of Zarina is, perhaps, even still more strikingly drawn from life. There are many touches in the scene with her which he could not have imagined, without thinking of his own domestic disasters. The first sentiment she utters is truly conceived in the very frame and temper in which Byron must have wished his lady to think of himself, and he could not embody it without feeling *that* —

How many a year has pass'd,
Though we are still so young, since we have met
Which I have borne in widowhood of heart.

The following delicate expression has reference to his having left his daughter with her mother, and unfolds more of his secret feelings on the subject than anything he has expressed more ostentatiously elsewhere:

I wish'd to thank you, that you have not divided
My heart from all that's left it now to love.

And what Sardanapalus says of his children is not less applicable to Byron, and is true:

Deem not
I have not done you justice: rather make them
Resemble your own line, than their own sire;
I trust them with you — to you.

And when Zarina says,

They ne'er
Shall know from me aught but what may honour
Their father's memory,

he puts in her mouth only a sentiment which he knew, if his wife never expressed to him, she profoundly acknowledged in resolution to herself. The whole of this scene is full of the most penetrating pathos; and did the drama not contain, in every page, indubitable evidence to me, that he has shadowed out in it himself his wife, and his mistress, this little interview would prove a vast deal in confirmation of the opinion so often expressed, that where his genius was most in its element, it was when it dealt with his own sensibilities and circumstances. It is impossible to read the following speech, without a conviction that it was written at Lady Byron:

My gentle, wrong'd Zarina!
I am the very slave of circumstance
And impulse — borne away with every breath!
Misplaced upon the throne — misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be — let it end.
But take this with thee: if I was not form'd
To prize a love like thine — a mind like thine —
Nor dote even on thy beauty — as I've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that look'd like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last — that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them.

At Ravenna *Cain* was also written; a dramatic poem, in some degree, chiefly in its boldness, resembling the ancient mysteries of the monasteries before the secular stage was established. This performance, in point of conception, is of a sublime order. The object of the poem is to illustrate the energy and the art of Lucifer in accomplishing the ruin of the first-born. By an unfair misconception, the arguments of Lucifer have been represented as the sentiments of the author upon some imaginary warranty derived from the exaggerated freedom of his life; and yet the moral tendency of the reflections are framed in a mood of reverence as awful towards Omnipotence as the austere divinity of Milton. It would be presumption in me, however, to undertake the defence of any question in theology; but I have not been sensible to the imputed impiety, while I have felt in many passages influences that have their being amid the shadows and

twilights of “old religion”;

”Stupendous spirits
That mock the pride of man, and people space
With life and mystical predominance.”

The morning hymns and worship with which the mystery opens are grave, solemn, and scriptural, and the dialogue which follows with Cain is no less so: his opinion of the tree of life is, I believe, orthodox; but it is daringly expressed: indeed, all the sentiments ascribed to Cain are but the questions of the sceptics. His description of the approach of Lucifer would have shone in the *Paradise Lost*.

A shape like to the angels,
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect,
Of spiritual essence. Why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft
In twilight’s hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o’er the inhibited walls,
And the immortal trees which overtop
The cherubim-defended battlements?
I shrink not from these, the fire-arm’d angels;
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous; and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, or might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality.

There is something spiritually fine in this conception of the terror or presentiment of coming evil. The poet rises to the sublime in making Lucifer first inspire Cain with the knowledge of his immortality — a portion of truth which hath the efficacy of falsehood upon the victim; for Cain, feeling himself already unhappy, knowing that his being cannot be abridged, has the less scruple to desire to be as Lucifer, “mighty.” The whole speech of Lucifer, beginning,

Souls who dare use their immortality,
is truly satanic; a daring and dreadful description given by everlasting despair

of the Deity.

But, notwithstanding its manifold immeasurable imaginations, *Cain* is only a polemical controversy, the doctrines of which might have been better discussed in the pulpit of a college chapel. As a poem it is greatly unequal; many passages consist of mere metaphysical disquisition, but there are others of wonderful scope and energy. It is a thing of doubts and dreams and reveries — dim and beautiful, yet withal full of terrors. The understanding finds nothing tangible; but amid dread and solemnity, sees only a shapen darkness with eloquent gestures. It is an argument invested with the language of oracles and omens, conceived in some religious trance, and addressed to spirits.

CHAPTER XXXVII

*Removal to Pisa — The Lanfranchi Palace — Affair with the Guard at Pisa — Removal to Monte Nero —
Junction with Mr Hunt — Mr Shelley's Letter*

The unhappy distrusts and political jealousies of the times obliged Lord Byron, with the Gambas, the family of the Guiccioli, to remove from Ravenna to Pisa. In this compulsion he had no cause to complain; a foreigner meddling with the politics of the country in which he was only accidentally resident, could expect no deferential consideration from the government. It has nothing to do with the question whether his Lordship was right or wrong in his principles. The government was in the possession of the power, and in self-defence he could expect no other course towards him than what he did experience. He was admonished to retreat: he did so. Could he have done otherwise, he would not. He would have used the Austrian authority as ill as he was made to feel it did him.

In the autumn of 1821, Lord Byron removed from Ravenna to Pisa, where he hired the Lanfranchi palace for a year — one of those massy marble piles which appear

“So old, as if they had for ever stood —
So strong, as if they would for ever stand!”

Both in aspect and character it was interesting to the boding fancies of the noble tenant. It is said to have been constructed from a design of Michael Angelo; and in the grandeur of its features exhibits a bold and colossal style not unworthy of his genius.

The Lanfranchi family, in the time of Dante, were distinguished in the factions of those days, and one of them has received his meed of immortality from the poet, as the persecutor of Ugolino. They are now extinct, and their traditionary reputation is illustrated by the popular belief in the neighbourhood, that their ghosts are restless, and still haunt their former gloomy and gigantic habitation.

The building was too vast for the establishment of Lord Byron, and he occupied only the first floor.

The life he led at this period was dull and unvaried. Billiards, conversations, reading, and occasionally writing, constituted the regular business of the day. In the cool of the afternoon, he sometimes went out in his carriage, oftener on horseback, and generally amused himself with pistol practice at a five-paul

piece. He dined at half an hour after sunset, and then drove to Count Gamba's, where he passed several hours with the Countess Guiccioli, who at that time still resided with her father. On his return he read or wrote till the night was far spent, or rather till the morning was come again, sipping at intervals spirits diluted with water, as medicine to counteract some nephritic disorder to which he considered himself liable.

Notwithstanding the tranquillity of this course of life, he was accidentally engaged in a transaction which threatened unpleasant consequences, and had a material effect on his comfort. On the 21st of March, 1822, as he was returning from his usual ride, in company with several of his friends, a hussar officer, at full speed, dashed through the party, and violently jostled one of them. Lord Byron, with his characteristic impetuosity, instantly pushed forwards, and the rest followed, and overtook the hussar. His Lordship inquired what he meant by the insult; but for answer, received the grossest abuse: on which he and one of his companions gave their cards, and passed on. The officer followed, hallooing, and threatening with his hand on his sabre. They were now near the Paggia gate. During this altercation, a common artilleryman interfered, and called out to the hussar, "Why don't you arrest them? — command us to arrest them." Upon which the officer gave the word to the guard at the gate. His Lordship, hearing the order, spurred his horse, and one of his party doing the same, they succeeded in forcing their way through the soldiers, while the gate was closed on the rest of the party, with whom an outrageous scuffle ensued.

Lord Byron, on reaching his palace, gave directions to inform the police, and, not seeing his companions coming up, rode back towards the gate. On his way the hussar met him, and said, "Are you satisfied?" — "No: tell me your name!" — "Serjeant-major Masi." One of his Lordship's servants, who at this moment joined them, seized the hussar's horse by the bridle, but his master commanded him to let it go. The hussar then spurred his horse through the crowd, which by this time had collected in front of the Lanfranchi palace, and in the attempt was wounded by a pitchfork. Several of the servants were arrested, and imprisoned: and, during the investigation of the affair before the police, Lord Byron's house was surrounded by the dragoons belonging to Serjeant-major Masi's troop, who threatened to force the doors. The result upon these particulars was not just; all Lord Byron's Italian servants were banished from Pisa; and with them the father and brother of the Guiccioli, who had no concern whatever in the affair. Lord Byron himself was also advised to quit the town, and, as the Countess accompanied her father, he soon after joined them at Leghorn, and passed six weeks at Monte Nero, a country house in the vicinity of that city.

It was during his Lordship's residence at Monte Nero, that an event took

place — his junction with Mr Leigh Hunt — which had some effect both on his literary and his moral reputation. Previous to his departure from England, there had been some intercourse between them — Byron had been introduced by Moore to Hunt, when the latter was suffering imprisonment for the indiscretion of his pen, and by his civility had encouraged him, perhaps, into some degree of forgetfulness as to their respective situations in society. — Mr Hunt at no period of their acquaintance appears to have been sufficiently sensible that a man of positive rank has it always in his power, without giving anything like such a degree of offence as may be resented otherwise than by estrangement, to inflict mortification, and, in consequence, presumed too much to an equality with his Lordship — at least this is the impression his conduct made upon me, from the familiarity of his dedicatory epistle prefixed to *Rimini* to their riding out at Pisa together dressed alike — "We had blue frock-coats, white waistcoats and trousers, and velvet caps, *à la Raphael*, and cut a gallant figure." I do not discover on the part of Lord Byron, that his Lordship ever forgot his rank; nor was he a personage likely to do so; in saying, therefore, that Mr Hunt presumed upon his condescension, I judge entirely by his own statement of facts. I am not undertaking a defence of his lordship, for the manner in which he acted towards Mr Hunt, because it appears to me to have been, in many respects, mean; but I do think there was an original error, a misconception of himself on the part of Mr Hunt, that drew down about him a degree of humiliation that he might, by more self-respect, have avoided. However, I shall endeavour to give as correct a summary of the whole affair as the materials before me will justify.

The occasion of Hunt's removal to Italy will be best explained by quoting the letter from his friend Shelley, by which he was induced to take that obviously imprudent step.

"*Pisa, Aug. 26, 1821.*

"MY DEAREST FRIEND, — Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination on his part to come and live at Pisa, and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which I think ought to add to your determination — for such a one I hope you have formed — of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these 'regions mild, of calm and serene air.'

"He proposes that you should come, and go shares with him and me in a periodical work to be conducted here, in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the profits of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron

engage must, for various yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As to myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other, and effectuate the arrangement; since (to intrust you with a secret, which for your sake I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less in the borrowed splendour of such a partnership. You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

“I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. I, as you know, have it not; but I suppose that at last I shall make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask.” . . .

Now, before proceeding farther, it seems from this epistle, and there is no reason to question Shelley’s veracity, that Lord Byron was the projector of *The Liberal*; that Hunt’s political notoriety was mistaken for literary reputation, and that there was a sad lack of common sense in the whole scheme.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Mr Hunt arrives in Italy — Meeting with Lord Byron — Tumults in the House — Arrangements for Mr Hunt's Family — Extent of his Obligations to Lord Byron — Their Copartnery — Meanness of the whole Business

On receiving Mr Shelley's letter, Mr Hunt prepared to avail himself of the invitation which he was the more easily enabled to do, as his friend, notwithstanding what he had intimated, borrowed two hundred pounds from Lord Byron, and remitted to him. He reached Leghorn soon after his Lordship had taken up his temporary residence at Monte Nero.

The meeting with his Lordship was in so many respects remarkable, that the details of it cannot well be omitted. The day was very hot; and when Hunt reached the house he found the hottest-looking habitation he had ever seen. Not content with having a red wash over it, the red was the most unseasonable of all reds — a salmon-colour; but the greatest of all heats was within.

Lord Byron was grown so fat that he scarcely knew him; and was dressed in a loose nankeen jacket and white trousers, his neckcloth open, and his hair in thin ringlets about his throat; altogether presenting a very different aspect from the compact, energetic, and curly-headed person whom Hunt had known in England.

His Lordship took the stranger into an inner room, and introduced him to a young lady who was in a state of great agitation. This was the Guiccioli; presently her brother also, in great agitation, entered, having his arm in a sling. This scene and confusion had arisen from a quarrel among the servants, in which the young Count, having interfered, had been stabbed. He was very angry, the Countess was more so, and would not listen to the comments of Lord Byron, who was for making light of the matter. Indeed, it looked somewhat serious, for though the stab was not much, the inflicter threatened more, and was at that time revengefully keeping watch, with knotted brows, under the portico, with the avowed intention of assaulting the first person who issued forth. He was a sinister-looking, meager caitiff, with a red cap — gaunt, ugly, and unshaven; his appearance altogether more squalid and miserable than Englishmen would conceive it possible to find in such an establishment. An end, however, was put to the tragedy by the fellow throwing himself on a bench, and bursting into tears — wailing and asking pardon for his offence, and perfecting his penitence by requesting Lord Byron to kiss him in token of forgiveness. In the end, however, he was dismissed; and it being arranged that Mr Hunt should move his family to apartments in the Lanfranchi palace at Pisa, that gentleman returned to Leghorn.

The account which Mr Hunt has given, in his memoir of Lord Byron, is

evidently written under offended feeling; and, in consequence, though he does not appear to have been much indebted to the munificence of his Lordship, the tendency is to make his readers sensible that he was, if not ill used, disappointed. The Casa Lanfranchi was a huge and gaunt building, capable, without inconvenience or intermixture, of accommodating several families. It was, therefore, not a great favour in his Lordship, considering that he had invited Mr Hunt from England, to become a partner with him in a speculation purely commercial, to permit him to occupy the ground-floor or flat, as it would be called in Scotland. The apartments being empty, furniture was necessary, and the plainest was provided; good of its kind and respectable, it yet could not have cost a great deal. It was chosen by Mr Shelley, who intended to make a present of it to Mr Hunt; but when the apartments were fitted up, Lord Byron insisted upon paying the account, and to that extent Mr Hunt incurred a pecuniary obligation to his Lordship. The two hundred pounds already mentioned was a debt to Mr Shelley, who borrowed the money from Lord Byron.

Soon after Mr Hunt's family were settled in their new lodgings, Shelley returned to Leghorn, with the intention of taking a sea excursion — in the course of which he was lost: Lord Byron knowing how much Hunt was dependent on that gentleman, immediately offered him the command of his purse, and requested to be considered as standing in the place of Shelley, his particular friend. This was both gentlemanly and generous, and the offer was accepted, but with feelings neither just nor gracious: "Stern necessity and a large family compelled me," says Mr Hunt, "and during our residence at Pisa I had from him, or rather from his steward, to whom he always sent me for the money, and who doled it out to me as if my disgraces were being counted, the sum of seventy pounds."

"This sum," he adds, "together with the payment of our expenses when we accompanied him from Pisa to Genoa, and thirty pounds with which he enabled us subsequently to go from Genoa to Florence, was all the money I ever received from Lord Byron, exclusive of the two hundred pounds, which, in the first instance, he made a debt of Mr Shelley, by taking his bond." — The whole extent of the pecuniary obligation appears certainly not to have exceeded five hundred pounds; no great sum — but little or great, the manner in which it was recollected reflects no credit either on the head or heart of the debtor.

Mr Hunt, in extenuation of the bitterness with which he has spoken on the subject, says, that "Lord Byron made no scruple of talking very freely of me and mine." It may, therefore, be possible, that Mr Hunt had cause for his resentment, and to feel the humiliation of being under obligations to a mean man; at the same time Lord Byron, on his side, may upon experience have found equal reason to

repent of his connection with Mr Hunt. And it is certain that each has sought to justify, both to himself and to the world, the rupture of a copartnery which ought never to have been formed. But his Lordship's conduct is the least justifiable. He had allured Hunt to Italy with flattering hopes; he had a perfect knowledge of his hampered circumstances, and he was thoroughly aware that, until their speculation became productive, he must support him. To the extent of about five hundred pounds he did so: a trifle, considering the glittering anticipations of their scheme.

Viewing their copartnery, however, as a mere commercial speculation, his Lordship's advance could not be regarded as liberal, and no modification of the term munificence or patronage could be applied to it. But, unless he had harassed Hunt for the repayment of the money, which does not appear to have been the case, nor could he morally, perhaps even legally, have done so, that gentleman had no cause to complain. The joint adventure was a failure, and except a little repining on the part of the one for the loss of his advance, and of grudging on that of the other for the waste of his time, no sharper feeling ought to have arisen between them. But vanity was mingled with their golden dreams. Lord Byron mistook Hunt's political notoriety for literary reputation, and Mr Hunt thought it was a fine thing to be chum and partner with so renowned a lord. After all, however, the worst which can be said of it is, that formed in weakness it could produce only vexation.

But the dissolution of the vapour with which both parties were so intoxicated, and which led to their quarrel, might have occasioned only amusement to the world, had it not left an ignoble stigma on the character of Lord Byron, and given cause to every admirer of his genius to deplore, that he should have so forgotten his dignity and fame.

There is no disputing the fact, that his Lordship, in conceiving the plan of *The Liberal*, was actuated by sordid motives, and of the basest kind, inasmuch as it was intended that the popularity of the work should rest upon satire; or, in other words, on the ability to be displayed by it in the art of detraction. Being disappointed in his hopes of profit, he shuffled out of the concern as meanly as any higgler could have done who had found himself in a profitless business with a disreputable partner. There is no disguising this unvarnished truth; and though his friends did well in getting the connection ended as quickly as possible, they could not eradicate the original sin of the transaction, nor extinguish the consequences which it of necessity entailed. Let me not, however, be misunderstood: my objection to the conduct of Byron does not lie against the wish to turn his extraordinary talents to profitable account, but to the mode in which he proposed to, and did, employ them. Whether Mr Hunt was or was not

a fit copartner for one of his Lordship's rank and celebrity, I do not undertake to judge; but any individual was good enough for that vile prostitution of his genius, to which, in an unguarded hour, he submitted for money. Indeed, it would be doing injustice to compare the motives of Mr Hunt in the business with those by which Lord Byron was infatuated. He put nothing to hazard; happen what might, he could not be otherwise than a gainer; for if profit failed, it could not be denied that the "foremost" poet of all the age had discerned in him either the promise or the existence of merit, which he was desirous of associating with his own. This advantage Mr Hunt did gain by the connection; and it is his own fault that he cannot be recollected as the associate of Byron, but only as having attempted to deface his monument.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Mr Shelley — Sketch of his Life — His Death — The Burning of his Body, and the Return of the Mourners

It has been my study in writing these sketches to introduce as few names as the nature of the work would admit of; but Lord Byron connected himself with persons who had claims to public consideration on account of their talents; and, without affectation, it is not easy to avoid taking notice of his intimacy with some of them, especially, if in the course of it any circumstance came to pass which was in itself remarkable, or likely to have produced an impression on his Lordship's mind. His friendship with Mr Shelley, mentioned in the preceding chapter, was an instance of this kind.

That unfortunate gentleman was undoubtedly a man of genius — full of ideal beauty and enthusiasm. And yet there was some defect in his understanding by which he subjected himself to the accusation of atheism. In his dispositions he is represented to have been ever calm and amiable; and but for his metaphysical errors and reveries, and a singular incapability of conceiving the existing state of things as it practically affects the nature and condition of man, to have possessed many of the gentlest qualities of humanity. He highly admired the endowments of Lord Byron, and in return was esteemed by his Lordship; but even had there been neither sympathy nor friendship between them, his premature fate could not but have saddened Byron with no common sorrow.

Mr Shelley was some years younger than his noble friend; he was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., of Castle Goring, Sussex. At the age of thirteen he was sent to Eton, where he rarely mixed in the common amusements of the other boys; but was of a shy, reserved disposition, fond of solitude, and made few friends. He was not distinguished for his proficiency in the regular studies of the school; on the contrary, he neglected them for German and chemistry. His abilities were superior, but deteriorated by eccentricity. At the age of sixteen he was sent to the University of Oxford, where he soon distinguished himself by publishing a pamphlet, under the absurd and world-defying title of *The Necessity of Atheism*; for which he was expelled from the University.

The event proved fatal to his prospects in life; and the treatment he received from his family was too harsh to win him from error. His father, however, in a short time relented, and he was received home; but he took so little trouble to conciliate the esteem of his friends, that he found the house uncomfortable, and left it. He then went to London; where he eloped with a young lady to Gretna

Green. Their united ages amounted to thirty-two; and the match being deemed unsuitable to his rank and prospects, it so exasperated his father, that he broke off all communication with him.

After their marriage the young couple resided some time in Edinburgh. They then passed over to Ireland, which being in a state of disturbance, Shelley took a part in politics, more reasonable than might have been expected. He inculcated moderation.

About this time he became devoted to the cultivation of his poetical talents; but his works were sullied with the erroneous inductions of an understanding which, inasmuch as he regarded all the existing world in the wrong, must be considered as having been either shattered or defective.

His rash marriage proved, of course, an unhappy one. After the birth of two children, a separation, by mutual consent, took place, and Mrs Shelley committed suicide.

He then married a daughter of Mr Godwin, the author of *Caleb Williams*, and they resided for some time at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, much respected for their charity. In the meantime, his irreligious opinions had attracted public notice, and, in consequence of his unsatisfactory notions of the Deity, his children, probably at the instance of his father, were taken from him by a decree of the Lord Chancellor: an event which, with increasing pecuniary embarrassments, induced him to quit England, with the intention of never returning.

Being in Switzerland when Lord Byron, after his domestic tribulations, arrived at Geneva, they became acquainted. He then crossed the Alps, and again at Venice renewed his friendship with his Lordship; he thence passed to Rome, where he resided some time; and after visiting Naples, fixed his permanent residence in Tuscany. His acquirements were constantly augmenting, and he was without question an accomplished person. He was, however, more of a metaphysician than a poet, though there are splendid specimens of poetical thought in his works. As a man, he was objected to only on account of his speculative opinions; for he possessed many amiable qualities, was just in his intentions, and generous to excess.

When he had seen Mr Hunt established in the Casa Lanfranchi with Lord Byron at Pisa, Mr Shelley returned to Leghorn, for the purpose of taking a sea excursion; an amusement to which he was much attached. During a violent storm the boat was swamped, and the party on board were all drowned. Their bodies were, however, afterwards cast on shore; Mr Shelley's was found near Via Reggio, and, being greatly decomposed, and unfit to be removed, it was determined to reduce the remains to ashes, that they might be carried to a place

of sepulture. Accordingly preparations were made for the burning.

Wood in abundance was found on the shore, consisting of old trees and the wreck of vessels: the spot itself was well suited for the ceremony. The magnificent bay of Spezzia was on the right, and Leghorn on the left, at equal distances of about two-and-twenty miles. The headlands project boldly far into the sea; in front lie several islands, and behind dark forests and the cliffy Apennines. Nothing was omitted that could exalt and dignify the mournful rites with the associations of classic antiquity; frankincense and wine were not forgotten. The weather was serene and beautiful, and the pacified ocean was silent, as the flame rose with extraordinary brightness. Lord Byron was present; but he should himself have described the scene and what he felt.

These antique obsequies were undoubtedly affecting; but the return of the mourners from the burning is the most appalling orgia, without the horror of crime, of which I have ever heard. When the duty was done, and the ashes collected, they dined and drank much together, and bursting from the calm mastery with which they had repressed their feelings during the solemnity, gave way to frantic exultation. They were all drunk; they sang, they shouted, and their barouche was driven like a whirlwind through the forest. I can conceive nothing descriptive of the demoniac revelry of that flight, but scraps of the dead man's own song of Faust, Mephistophiles, and Ignis Fatuus, in alternate chorus.

The limits of the sphere of dream,
The bounds of true and false are past;
Lead us on, thou wand'ring Gleam;
Lead us onwards, far and fast,
To the wide, the desert waste.

But see how swift, advance and shift,
Trees behind trees — row by row,
Now clift by clift, rocks bend and lift,
Their frowning foreheads as we go;
The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
How they snort, and how they blow.
Honour her to whom honour is due,
Old mother Baubo, honour to you.
An able sow with old Baubo upon her
Is worthy of glory and worthy of honour.

The way is wide, the way is long,
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?

But what is that for a Dequian among:
Some on a ram, and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along.

Every trough will be boat enough,
With a rag for a sail, we can sweep through the sky.
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

CHAPTER XL

*"The Two Foscari" — "Werner" — "The Deformed Transformed" — "Don Juan" — "The Liberal" —
Removes from Pisa to Genoa*

I have never heard exactly where the tragedy of *The Two Foscari* was written: that it was imagined in Venice is probable. The subject is, perhaps, not very fit for a drama, for it has no action; but it is rich in tragic materials, revenge and affection, and the composition is full of the peculiar stuff of the poet's own mind. The exulting sadness with which Jacopo Foscari looks in the first scene from the window, on the Adriatic, is Byron himself recalling his enjoyment of the sea.

How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, heart more daring,
The wave all roughen'd: with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lip th' audacious brine
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup.

The whole passage, both prelude and remainder, glows with the delicious recollections of laying and revelling in the summer waves. But the exile's feeling is no less beautifully given and appropriate to the author's condition, far more so, indeed, than to that of Jacopo Foscari.

Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking
Another region with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers driven by Attila
From fertile Italy to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country,
And many thoughts; but afterward address'd
Myself to those about me, to create
A new home and first state.

What follows is still more pathetic:

Ay — we but hear

Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading them?
That melody which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pastime for the ling'ring sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow-canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet but poisonous thought
And dies. — You call this weakness! It is strength,
I say — the parent of all honest feeling:
He who loves not his country can love nothing.

MARINA

Obey her then, 'tis she that puts thee forth.

JACOPO FOSCARI

Ay, there it is. 'Tis like a mother's curse
Upon my soul — the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations;
Their hands upheld each other by the way;
Their tents were pitch'd together — I'm alone —
Ah, you never yet
Were far away from Venice — never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart; you never
Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbed vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.

All this speaks of the voluntary exile's own regrets, and awakens sympathy for the anguish which pride concealed, but unable to repress, gave vent to in the imagined sufferings of one that was to him as Hecuba.

It was at Pisa that *Werner, or The Inheritance*, a tragedy, was written, or at least completed. It is taken entirely from the German's tale, Kruitznier, published many years before, by one of the Miss Lees, in their *Canterbury Tales*. So far back as 1815, Byron began a drama upon the same subject, and nearly completed an act when he was interrupted. "I have adopted," he says himself, "the characters, plan, and even the language of many parts of this story"; an acknowledgment which exempts it from that kind of criticism to which his principal works are herein subjected.

But *The Deformed Transformed*, which was also written at Pisa, is, though confessedly an imitation of Goethe's *Faust*, substantially an original work. In the opinion of Mr Moore, it probably owes something to the author's painful sensibility to the defect in his own foot; an accident which must, from the acuteness with which he felt it, have essentially contributed to enable him to comprehend and to express the envy of those afflicted with irremediable exceptions to the ordinary course of fortune, or who have been amerced by nature of their fair proportions. But save only a part of the first scene, the sketch will not rank among the felicitous works of the poet. It was intended to be a satire — probably, at least — but it is only a fragment — a failure.

Hitherto I have not noticed *Don Juan* otherwise than incidentally. It was commenced in Venice, and afterward continued at intervals to the end of the sixteenth canto, until the author left Pisa, when it was not resumed, at least no more has been published. Strong objections have been made to its moral tendency; but, in the opinion of many, it is the poet's masterpiece, and undoubtedly it displays all the variety of his powers, combined with a quaint playfulness not found to an equal degree in any other of his works. The serious and pathetic portions are exquisitely beautiful; the descriptive have all the distinctness of the best pictures in *Childe Harold*, and are, moreover, generally drawn from nature, while the satire is for the most part curiously associated and sparkingly witty. The characters are sketched with amazing firmness and freedom, and though sometimes grotesque, are yet not often overcharged. It is professedly an epic poem, but it may be more properly described as a poetical novel. Nor can it be said to inculcate any particular moral, or to do more than unmantle the decorum of society. Bold and buoyant throughout, it exhibits a free irreverent knowledge of the world, laughing or mocking as the thought serves, in the most unexpected antitheses to the proprieties of time, place, and circumstance.

The object of the poem is to describe the progress of a libertine through life, not an unprincipled prodigal, whose profligacy, growing with his growth, and

strengthening with his strength, passes from voluptuous indulgence into the sordid sensuality of systematic debauchery, but a young gentleman, who, whirled by the vigour and vivacity of his animal spirits into a world of adventures, in which his stars are chiefly in fault for his *liaisons*, settles at last into an honourable lawgiver, a moral speaker on divorce bills, and possibly a subscriber to the Society for the Suppression of Vice. The author has not completed his design, but such appears to have been the drift of it, affording ample opportunities to unveil the foibles and follies of all sorts of men — and women too. It is generally supposed to contain much of the author's own experience, but still, with all its riant knowledge of bowers and boudoirs, it is deficient as a true limning of the world, by showing man as if he were always ruled by one predominant appetite.

In the character of Donna Inez and Don José, it has been imagined that Lord Byron has sketched himself and his lady. It may be so; and if it were, he had by that time got pretty well over the lachrymation of their parting. It is no longer doubtful that the twenty-seventh stanza records a biographical fact, and the thirty-sixth his own feelings, when,

Poor fellow! he had many things to wound him,
Let's own, since it can do no good on earth;
It was a trying moment that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
Where all his household gods lay shiver'd round him:
No choice was left his feelings or his pride,
Save death or Doctors' Commons.

It has been already mentioned, that while the poet was at Dr Glennie's academy at Dulwich, he read an account of a shipwreck, which has been supposed to have furnished some of the most striking incidents in the description of the disastrous voyage in the second canto in *Don Juan*. I have not seen that work; but whatever Lord Byron may have found in it suitable to his purpose, he has undoubtedly made good use of his grandfather's adventures. The incident of the spaniel is related by the admiral.

In the licence of *Don Juan*, the author seems to have considered that his wonted accuracy might be dispensed with.

The description of Haidee applies to an Albanian, not a Greek girl. The splendour of her father's house is altogether preposterous; and the island has no resemblance to those of the Cyclades. With the exception of Zea, his Lordship, however, did not visit them. Some degree of error and unlike description, runs

indeed through the whole of the still life around the portrait of Haidee. The fête which Lambro discovers on his return, is, however, prettily described; and the dance is as perfect as true.

And farther on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls.
Their leader sang, and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

The account of Lambro proceeding to the house is poetically imagined; and, in his character, may be traced a vivid likeness of Ali Pasha, and happy illustrative allusions to the adventures of that chief.

The fourth canto was written at Ravenna; it is so said within itself; and the description of Dante's sepulchre there may be quoted for its truth, and the sweet modulation of the moral reflection interwoven with it.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid;
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust; but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb and not the warrior's column.
The time must come when both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy and the poet's volume
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death or Homer's birth.

The fifth canto was also written in Ravenna. But it is not my intention to analyze this eccentric and meandering poem; a composition which cannot be well estimated by extracts. Without, therefore, dwelling at greater length on its variety and merits. I would only observe that the general accuracy of the poet's descriptions is verified by that of the scenes in which Juan is placed in England, a point the reader may determine for himself; while the vagueness of the parts derived from books, or sketched from fancy, as contrasted with them, justifies the opinion, that invention was not the most eminent faculty of Byron, either in scenes or in characters. Of the demerits of the poem it is only necessary to remark, that it has been proscribed on account of its immorality; perhaps, however, there was more of prudery than of equity in the decision, at least it is

liable to be so considered, so long as reprints are permitted of the older dramatists, with all their unpruned licentiousness.

But the wheels of Byron's destiny were now hurrying. Both in the conception and composition of *Don Juan* he evinced an increasing disregard of the world's opinion; and the project of *The Liberal* was still more fatal to his reputation. Not only were the invidious eyes of bigotry now eagerly fixed upon his conduct, but those of admiration were saddened and turned away from him. His principles, which would have been more correctly designated as paradoxes, were objects of jealousy to the Tuscan Government; and it has been already seen that there was a disorderliness about the Casa Lanfranchi which attracted the attention of the police. His situation in Pisa became, in consequence, irksome; and he resolved to remove to Genoa, an intention which he carried into effect about the end of September, 1822, at which period his thoughts began to gravitate towards Greece. Having attained to the summit of his literary eminence, he grew ambitious of trying fortune in another field of adventure.

In all the migrations of Lord Byron there was ever something grotesque and desultory. In moving from Ravenna to Pisa, his caravan consisted of seven servants, five carriages, nine horses, a monkey, a bulldog, and a mastiff, two cats, three peafowl, a harem of hens, books, saddles, and firearms, with a chaos of furniture nor was the exodus less fantastical; for in addition to all his own clanjamphry, he had Mr Hunt's miscellaneous assemblage of chattels and chatter and little ones.

CHAPTER XLI *Genoa — Change in the Manners of Lord Byron — Residence at the Casa Saluzzi — "The Liberal" — Remarks on the Poet's Works in general and on Hunt's Strictures on his Character* Previously to their arrival at Genoa, a house had been taken for Lord

Byron and the Guiccioli in Albaro, a pleasant village on a hill, in the vicinity of the city; it was the Casa Saluzzi, and I have been told, that during the time he resided there, he seemed to enjoy a more uniform and temperate gaiety than in any former period of his life. There might have been less of sentiment in his felicity, than when he lived at Ravenna, as he seldom wrote poetry, but he appeared to some of his occasional visitors, who knew him in London, to have become more agreeable and manly. I may add, at the risk of sarcasm for the vanity, that in proof of his mellowed temper towards me, besides the kind frankness with which he received my friend, as already mentioned, he sent me word, by the Earl of Blesinton, that he had read my novel of *The Entail* three times, and thought the old Leddy Grippy one of the most living-like heroines he had ever met with. This was the more agreeable, as I had heard within the same week, that Sir Walter Scott had done and said nearly the same thing. Half the compliment from two such men would be something to be proud of.

Lord Byron's residence at Albaro was separate from that of Mr Hunt, and, in consequence, they were more rarely together than when domiciled under the same roof as at Pisa. Indeed, by this time, if one may take Mr Hunt's own account of the matter, they appear to have become pretty well tired of each other. He had found out that a peer is, as a friend, but as a plebeian, and a great poet not always a high-minded man. His Lordship had, on his part, discovered that something more than smartness or ingenuity is necessary to protect patronage from familiarity. Perhaps intimate acquaintance had also tended to enable him to appreciate, with greater accuracy, the meretricious genius and artificial tastes of his copartner in *The Liberal*. It is certain that he laughed at his affected admiration of landscapes, and considered his descriptions of scenery as drawn from pictures.

One day, as a friend of mine was conversing with his Lordship at the Casa Saluzzi, on the moral impressions of magnificent scenery, he happened to remark that he thought the view of the Alps in the evening, from Turin, the sublimest scene he had ever beheld. "It is impossible," said he, "at such a time, when all the west is golden and glowing behind them, to contemplate such vast masses of the Deity without being awed into rest, and forgetting such things as man and his follies." — "Hunt," said his Lordship, smiling, "has no perception of the sublimity of Alpine scenery; he calls a mountain a great impostor."

In the mean time the materials for the first number of *The Liberal* had been transmitted to London, where the manuscript of *The Vision of Judgment* was already, and something of its quality known. All his Lordship's friends were disturbed at the idea of the publication. They did not like the connection he had formed with Mr Shelley — they liked still less the copartnery with Mr Hunt. With the justice or injustice of these dislikes I have nothing to do. It is an historical fact that they existed, and became motives with those who deemed themselves the custodiers of his Lordship's fame, to seek a dissolution of the association.

The first number of *The Liberal*, containing *The Vision of Judgment*, was received soon after the copartnery had established themselves at Genoa, accompanied with hopes and fears. Much good could not be anticipated from a work which outraged the loyal and decorous sentiments of the nation towards the memory of George III. To the second number Lord Byron contributed the *Heaven and Earth*, a sacred drama, which has been much misrepresented in consequence of its fraternity with *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment*; for it contains no expression to which religion can object, nor breathes a thought at variance with the Genesis. The history of literature affords no instance of a condemnation less justifiable, on the plea of profanity, than that of this Mystery. That it abounds in literary blemishes, both of plan and language, and that there are harsh jangles and discords in the verse, is not disputed; but still it abounds in a grave patriarchal spirit, and is echo to the oracles of Adam and Melchisedek. It may not be worthy of Lord Byron's genius, but it does him no dishonour, and contains passages which accord with the solemn diapasons of ancient devotion. The disgust which *The Vision of Judgment* had produced, rendered it easy to persuade the world that there was impiety in the *Heaven and Earth*, although, in point of fact, it may be described as hallowed with the Scriptural theology of Milton. The objections to its literary defects were magnified into sins against worship and religion.

The Liberal stopped with the fourth number, I believe. It disappointed not merely literary men in general, but even the most special admirers of the talents of the contributors. The main defect of the work was a lack of knowledge. Neither in style nor genius, nor even in general ability, was it wanting; but where it showed learning it was not of a kind in which the age took much interest. Moreover, the manner and cast of thinking of all the writers in it were familiar to the public, and they were too few in number to variegate their pages with sufficient novelty. But the main cause of the failure was the antipathy formed and fostered against it before it appeared. It was cried down, and it must be

acknowledged that it did not much deserve a better fate.

With *The Liberal* I shall close my observations on the works of Lord Byron. They are too voluminous to be examined even in the brief and sketchy manner in which I have considered those which are deemed the principal. Besides, they are not, like them, all characteristic of the author, though possessing great similarity in style and thought to one another. Nor would such general criticism accord with the plan of this work. Lord Byron was not always thinking of himself; like other authors, he sometimes wrote from imaginary circumstances; and often fancied both situations and feelings which had no reference to his own, nor to his experience. But were the matter deserving of the research, I am persuaded, that with Mr Moore's work, and the poet's original journals, notes, and letters, innumerable additions might be made to the list of passages which the incidents of his own life dictated.

The abandonment of *The Liberal* closed his Lordship's connection with Mr Hunt; their friendship, if such ever really existed, was ended long before. It is to be regretted that Byron has not given some account of it himself; for the manner in which he is represented to have acted towards his unfortunate partner, renders another version of the tale desirable. At the same time — and I am not one of those who are disposed to magnify the faults and infirmities of Byron — I fear there is no excess of truth in Hunt's opinion of him. I judge by an account which Lord Byron gave himself to a mutual friend, who did not, however, see the treatment in exactly the same light as that in which it appeared to me. But, while I cannot regard his Lordship's conduct as otherwise than unworthy, still the pains which Mr Hunt has taken to elaborate his character and dispositions into every modification of weakness, almost justifies us in thinking that he was treated according to his deserts. Byron had at least the manners of a gentleman, and though not a judicious knowledge of the world, he yet possessed prudence enough not to be always unguarded. Mr Hunt informs us, that when he joined his Lordship at Leghorn, his own health was impaired, and that his disease rather increased than diminished during his residence at Pisa and Genoa; to say nothing of the effect which the loss of his friend had on him, and the disappointment he suffered in *The Liberal*; some excuse may, therefore, be made for him. In such a condition, misapprehensions were natural; jocularities might be mistaken for sarcasm, and caprice felt as insolence.

CHAPTER XLII

Lord Byron resolves to join the Greeks — Arrives at Cephalonia — Greek Factions — Sends Emissaries to the Grecian Chiefs — Writes to London about the Loan — To Mavrocordato on the Dissensions — Embarks at last for Missolonghi

While *The Liberal* was halting onward to its natural doom, the attention of Lord Byron was attracted towards the struggles of Greece.

In that country his genius was first effectually developed; his name was associated with many of its most romantic scenes, and the cause was popular with all the educated and refined of Europe. He had formed besides a personal attachment to the land, and perhaps many of his most agreeable local associations were fixed amid the ruins of Greece, and in her desolated valleys. The name is indeed alone calculated to awaken the noblest feelings of humanity. The spirit of her poets, the wisdom and the heroism of her worthies; whatever is splendid in genius, unparalleled in art, glorious in arms, and wise in philosophy, is associated in their highest excellence with that beautiful region.

Had Lord Byron never been in Greece, he was, undoubtedly, one of those men whom the resurrection of her spirit was likeliest to interest; but he was not also one fitted to do her cause much service. His innate indolence, his sedentary habits, and that all-engrossing consideration for himself, which, in every situation, marred his best impulses, were shackles upon the practice of the stern bravery in himself which he has so well expressed in his works.

It was expected when he sailed for Greece, nor was the expectation unreasonable with those who believe imagination and passion to be of the same element, that the enthusiasm which flamed so highly in his verse was the spirit of action, and would prompt him to undertake some great enterprise. But he was only an artist; he could describe bold adventures and represent high feeling, as other gifted individuals give eloquence to canvas and activity to marble; but he did not possess the wisdom necessary for the instruction of councils. I do, therefore, venture to say, that in embarking for Greece, he was not entirely influenced by such exoterical motives as the love of glory or the aspirations of heroism. His laurels had for some time ceased to flourish, the sear and yellow, the mildew and decay, had fallen upon them, and he was aware that the bright round of his fame was ovalling from the full and showing the dim rough edge of waning.

He was, moreover, tired of the Guiccioli, and again afflicted with a desire for some new object with which to be in earnest. The Greek cause seemed to offer this, and a better chance for distinction than any other pursuit in which he could

then engage. In the spring of 1823 he accordingly made preparations for transferring himself from Genoa to Greece, and opened a correspondence with the leaders of the insurrection, that the importance of his adhesion might be duly appreciated.

Greece, with a fair prospect of ultimate success, was at that time as distracted in her councils as ever. Her arms had been victorious, but the ancient jealousy of the Greek mind was unmitigated. The third campaign had commenced, and yet no regular government had been organized; the fiscal resources of the country were neglected: a wild energy against the Ottomans was all that the Greeks could depend on for continuing the war.

Lord Byron arrived in Cephalonia about the middle of August, 1823, where he fixed his residence for some time. This was prudent, but it said nothing for that spirit of enterprise with which a man engaging in such a cause, in such a country, and with such a people, ought to have been actuated — especially after Marco Botzaris, one of the best and most distinguished of the chiefs, had earnestly urged him to join him at Missolonghi. I fear that I may not be able to do justice to Byron's part in the affairs of Greece; but I shall try. He did not disappoint me, for he only acted as might have been expected, from his unsteady energies. Many, however, of his other friends longed in vain to hear of that blaze of heroism, by which they anticipated that his appearance in the field would be distinguished.

Among his earliest proceedings was the equipment of forty Suliotes, or Albanians, whom he sent to Marco Botzaris to assist in the defence of Missolonghi. An adventurer of more daring would have gone with them; and when the battle was over, in which Botzaris fell, he transmitted bandages and medicines, of which he had brought a large supply from Italy, and pecuniary succour, to the wounded.

This was considerate, but there was too much consideration in all that he did at this time, neither in unison with the impulses of his natural character, nor consistent with the heroic enthusiasm with which the admirers of his poetry imagined he was kindled.

In the mean time he had offered to advance one thousand dollars a month for the succour of Missolonghi and the troops with Marco Botzaris; but the government, instead of accepting the offer, intimated that they wished previously to confer with him, which he interpreted into a desire to direct the expenditure of the money to other purposes. In his opinion his Lordship was probably not mistaken; but his own account of his feeling in the business does not tend to exalt the magnanimity of his attachment to the cause: "I will take care," says he, "that it is for the public cause, otherwise I will not advance a para. The

opposition say they want to cajole me, and the party in power say the others wish to seduce me; so, between the two, I have a difficult part to play; however, I will have nothing to do with the factions, unless to reconcile them, if possible."

It is difficult to conceive that Lord Byron, "the searcher of dark bosoms," could have expressed himself so weakly and with such vanity; but the shadow of coming fate had already reached him, and his judgment was suffering in the blight that had fallen on his reputation. To think of the possibility of reconciling two Greek factions, or any factions, implies a degree of ignorance of mankind, which, unless it had been given in his Lordship's own writing, would not have been credible; and as to having nothing to do with the factions, for what purpose went he to Greece, unless it was to take a part with one of them? I abstain from saying what I think of his hesitation in going to the government instead of sending two of his associated adventurers, Mr Trelawney and Mr Hamilton Brown, whom he despatched to collect intelligence as to the real state of things, substituting their judgment for his own. When the *Hercules*, the ship he chartered to carry him to Greece, weighed anchor, he was committed with the Greeks, and everything short of unequivocal folly he was bound to have done with and for them.

His two emissaries or envoys proceeded to Tripolizza, where they found Colocotroni seated in the palace of the late vizier, Velhi Pasha, in great power; the court-yard and galleries filled with armed men in garrison, while there was no enemy at that time in the Morea able to come against them! The Greek chieftains, like their classic predecessors, though embarked in the same adventure, were personal adversaries to each other. Colocotroni spoke of his compeer Mavrocordato in the very language of Agamemnon, when he said that he had declared to him, unless he desisted from his intrigues, he would mount him on an ass and whip him out of the Morea; and that he had only been restrained from doing so by the representation of his friends, who thought it would injure their common cause. Such was the spirit of the chiefs of the factions which Lord Byron thought it not impossible to reconcile!

At this time Missolonghi was in a critical state, being blockaded both by land and sea; and the report of Trelawney to Lord Byron concerning it, was calculated to rouse his Lordship to activity. "There have been," says he, "thirty battles fought and won by the late Marco Botzaris, and his gallant tribe of Suliotes, who are shut up in Missolonghi. If it fall, Athens will be in danger, and thousands of throats cut: a few thousand dollars would provide ships to relieve it; a portion of this sum is raised, and I would coin my heart to save this key of Greece." Bravely said! but deserving of little attention. The fate of Missolonghi could have had no visible effect on that of Athens.

The distance between these two places is more than a hundred miles, and Lord Byron was well acquainted with the local difficulties of the intervening country; still it was a point to which the eyes of the Greeks were all at that time directed; and Mavrocordato, then in correspondence with Lord Byron, and who was endeavouring to collect a fleet for the relief of the place, induced his Lordship to undertake to provide the money necessary for the equipment of the fleet, to the extent of twelve thousand pounds. It was on this occasion his Lordship addressed a letter to the Greek chiefs, that deserves to be quoted, for the sagacity with which it suggests what may be the conduct of the great powers of Christendom.

“I must frankly confess,” says he, “that unless union and order are confirmed, all hopes of a loan will be in vain, and all the assistance which the Greeks could expect from abroad, an assistance which might be neither trifling nor worthless, will be suspended or destroyed; and what is worse, the great powers of Europe, of whom no one was an enemy to Greece, but seemed inclined to favour her in consenting to the establishment of an independent power, will be persuaded that the Greeks are unable to govern themselves, and will, perhaps, undertake to arrange your disorders in such a way, as to blast the brightest hopes you indulge, and that are indulged by your friends.”

In the meantime, Lord Byron was still at the villa he had hired in Cephalonia, where his conduct was rather that of a spectator than an ally. Colonel Stanhope, in a letter of the 26th of November, describes him as having been there about three months, and spending his time exactly as every one acquainted with his habits must have expected. “The first six weeks he spent on board a merchant-vessel, and seldom went on shore, except on business. Since that period he has lived in a little villa in the country, in absolute retirement, Count Gamba (brother to the Guiccioli) being his only companion.” — Such, surely, was not exactly playing that part in the Greek cause which he had taught the world to look for. It is true, that the accounts received there of the Greek affairs were not then favourable. Everybody concurred in representing the executive government as devoid of public virtue, and actuated by avarice or personal ambition. This intelligence was certainly not calculated to increase Lord Byron’s ardour, and may partly excuse the causes of his personal inactivity. I say personal, because he had written to London to accelerate the attempt to raise a loan, and, at the suggestion of Colonel Stanhope, he addressed a letter to Mavrocordato respecting the inevitable consequences of their calamitous dissensions. The object of this letter was to induce a reconciliation between the rival factions, or to throw the odium, of having thwarted the loan, upon the Executive, and thereby to degrade the members of it in the opinion of the people. “I am very

uneasy,” said his Lordship to the prince, “at hearing that the dissensions of Greece still continue; and at a moment when she might triumph over everything in general, as she has triumphed in part. Greece is at present placed between three measures; either to reconquer her liberty, or to become a dependence of the sovereigns of Europe, or to return to a Turkish province; she has already the choice only of these three alternatives. Civil war is but a road which leads to the two latter. If she is desirous of the fate of Wallachia and the Crimea, she may obtain it *to-morrow*; if that of Italy, *the day after*. But if she wishes to become *truly Greece, free and independent*, she must resolve *to-day*, or she will never again have the opportunity,” etc., etc.

Meanwhile, the Greek people became impatient for Lord Byron to come among them. They looked forward to his arrival as to the coming of a Messiah. Three boats were successively despatched for him and two of them returned, one after the other, without him. On the 29th of December, 1823, however, his Lordship did at last embark.

CHAPTER XLIII

Lord Byron's Conversations on Religion with Dr Kennedy

While Lord Byron was hesitating, in the Island of Cephalonia, about proceeding to Greece, an occurrence took place, of which much has been made. I allude to the acquaintance he formed with a Dr Kennedy, the publication of whose conversations with him on religion has attracted some degree of public attention.

This gentleman was originally destined for the Scottish bar, but afterwards became a student of medicine, and entering the medical department of the army, happened to be stationed in Cephalonia when Lord Byron arrived. He appears to have been a man of kind dispositions, possessed of a better heart than judgment; in all places wherever his duty bore him he took a lively interest in the condition of the inhabitants, and was active, both in his official and private capacity, to improve it. He had a taste for circulating pious tracts, and zealously co-operated in distributing copies of the Scriptures.

Firmly settled, himself, in a conviction of the truth of Christianity, he was eager to make converts to his views of the doctrines; but whether he was exactly the kind of apostle to achieve the conversion of Lord Byron may, perhaps, be doubted. His sincerity and the disinterestedness of his endeavours would secure to him from his Lordship an indulgent and even patient hearing. But I fear that without some more effectual calling, the arguments he appears to have employed were not likely to have made Lord Byron a proselyte. His Lordship was so constituted in his mind, and by his temperament, that nothing short of regeneration could have made him a Christian, according to the gospel of Dr Kennedy.

Lord Byron had but loose feelings in religion — scarcely any. His sensibility and a slight constitutional leaning towards superstition and omens showed that the sense of devotion was, however, alive and awake within him; but with him religion was a sentiment, and the convictions of the understanding had nothing whatever to do with his creed. That he was deeply imbued with the essence of natural piety; that he often felt the power and being of a God thrilling in all his frame, and glowing in his bosom, I declare my thorough persuasion; and that he believed in some of the tenets and in the philosophy of Christianity, as they influence the spirit and conduct of men, I am as little disposed to doubt; especially if those portions of his works which only trend towards the subject, and which bear the impression of fervour and earnestness, may be admitted as evidence. But he was not a member of any particular church, and, without a

reconstruction of his mind and temperament, I venture to say, he could not have become such; not in consequence, as too many have represented, of any predilection, either of feeling or principle, against Christianity, but entirely owing to an organic peculiarity of mind. He reasoned on every topic by instinct, rather than by induction or any process of logic; and could never be so convinced of the truth or falsehood of an abstract proposition, as to feel it affect the current of his actions. He may have assented to arguments, without being sensible of their truth; merely because they were not objectionable to his feelings at the time. And, in the same manner, he may have disputed even fair inferences, from admitted premises, if the state of his feelings happened to be indisposed to the subject. I am persuaded, nevertheless, that to class him among absolute infidels were to do injustice to his memory, and that he has suffered uncharitably in the opinion of "the rigidly righteous," who, because he had not attached himself to any particular sect or congregation, assumed that he was an adversary to religion. To claim for him any credit, as a pious man, would be absurd; but to suppose he had not as deep an interest as other men "in his soul's health" and welfare, was to impute to him a nature which cannot exist. Being, altogether, a creature of impulses, he certainly could not be ever employed in doxologies, or engaged in the logomachy of churchmen; but he had the sentiment which at a tamer age might have made him more ecclesiastical. There was as much truth as joke in the expression, when he wrote,

I am myself a moderate Presbyterian.

A mind constituted like that of Lord Byron, was little susceptible of impressions from the arguments of ordinary men. It was necessary that Truth, in visiting him, should come arrayed in her solemnities, and with Awe and Reverence for her precursors. Acknowledged superiority, yea, celebrated wisdom, were indispensable, to bespeak his sincere attention; and, without disparagement, it may be fairly said, these were not the attributes of Dr Kennedy. On the contrary, there was a taint of cant about him — perhaps he only acted like those who have it — but still he was not exactly the dignitary to command unaffected deference from the shrewd and irreverent author of *Don Juan*. The result verified what ought to have been the anticipation. The doctor's attempt to quicken Byron to a sense of grace failed; but his Lordship treated him with politeness. The history of the affair will, however, be more interesting than any reflections which it is in my humble power to offer.

Some of Dr Kennedy's acquaintances wished to hear him explain, in "a logical and demonstrative manner, the evidences and doctrines of Christianity"; and Lord Byron, hearing of the intended meeting, desired to be present, and was accordingly invited. He attended; but was not present at several others which

followed; he however intimated to the doctor, that he would be glad to converse with him, and the invitation was accepted. "On religion," says the doctor, "his Lordship was in general a hearer, proposing his difficulties and objections with more fairness than could have been expected from one under similar circumstances; and with so much candour, that they often seemed to be proposed more for the purpose of procuring information, or satisfactory answers, than from any other motive."

At the first meeting, Dr Kennedy explained, becomingly, his views of the subject, and that he had read every work against Christianity which fell in his way. It was this consideration which had induced him with such confidence to enter upon the discussion, knowing, on the one hand, the strength of Christianity, and, on the other, the weakness of its assailants. "To show you, therefore," said the doctor, "the grounds on which I demand your attention to what I may say on the nature and evidence of Christianity, I shall mention the names of some of the authors whose works I have read or consulted." When he had mentioned all these names, Lord Byron asked if he had read Barrow's and Stillingfleet's works? The doctor replied, "I have seen them, but I have not read them."

After a disquisition, chiefly relative to the history of Christianity, Dr Kennedy observed, "We must, on all occasions, but more particularly in fair and logical discussions with sceptics, or Deists, make a distinction between Christianity, as it is found in the Scriptures, and the errors, abuses, and imperfections of Christians themselves." To this his Lordship remarked, that he always had taken care to make that distinction, as he knew enough of Christianity to feel that it was both necessary and just. The doctor remarked that the contrary was almost universally the case with those who doubted or denied the truth of Christianity, and proceeded to illustrate the statement. He then read a summary of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; but he had not proceeded far, when he observed signs of impatience in Lord Byron, who inquired if these sentiments accorded with the doctor's? and being answered they did, and with those of all sound Christians, except in one or two minor things, his Lordship rejoined, that he did not wish to hear the opinions of others, whose writings he could read at any time, but only his own. The doctor then read on till coming to the expression "grace of God." His Lordship inquired, "What do you mean by grace?" "The primary and fundamental meaning of the word," replied the doctor, somewhat surprised at his ignorance (I quote his own language), "is favour; though it varies according to the context to express that disposition of God which leads Him to grant a favour, the action of doing so, or the favour itself, or its effects on those who receive it." The arrogance of the use of the term ignorance here, requires no animadversion; but to suppose the greatest

master, then in existence, of the English language, not acquainted with the meaning of the word, when he asked to be informed of the meaning attached to it by the individual making use of it, gives us some insight into the true character of the teacher. The doctor closed the book, as he perceived that Lord Byron, as he says, had no distinct conception of many of the words used; and his Lordship subjoined, "What we want is, to be convinced that the Bible is true; because if we can believe that, it will follow as a matter of course, that we must believe all the doctrines it contains."

The reply to this was to the effect, that the observation was partly just; but though the strongest evidence were produced of the Scriptures being the revealed will of God, they (his Lordship and others present) would still remain unbelievers, unless they knew and comprehended the doctrines contained in the Scriptures. This was not conclusive, and Lord Byron replied, that they wished him to prove that the Scriptures were the Word of God, which the doctor, with more than apostolic simplicity, said that such was his object, but he should like to know what they deemed the clearest course to follow with that object in view. After some farther conversation — "No other plan was proposed by them," says the doctor; and he adds, "they had violated their engagement to hear me for twelve hours, for which I had stipulated." This may, perhaps, satisfy the reader as to the quality of the doctor's understanding; but as the subject, in its bearing, touches Lord Byron's character, I shall proceed a little farther into the marrow of the matter.

The inculcation being finished for that evening, Lord Byron said, that when he was young his mother brought him up strictly; and that he had access to a great many theological works, and remembered that he was particularly pleased with Barrow's writings, and that he also went regularly to church. He declared that he was not an infidel, who denied the Scriptures and wished to remain in unbelief; on the contrary, he was desirous to believe, as he experienced no happiness in having his religious opinions so unsteady and unfixed. But he could not, he added, understand the Scriptures. "Those people who conscientiously believe, I always have respected, and was always disposed to trust in them more than in others." A desultory conversation then ensued, respecting the language and translations of the Scriptures; in the course of which his Lordship remarked, that Scott, in his Commentary on the Bible, did not say that it was the devil who tempted Eve, nor does the Bible say a word about the devil. It is only said that the serpent spoke, and that it was the subtlest of all the beasts of the field. — Will it be said that truth and reason were served by Dr Kennedy's answer? "As beasts have not the faculty of speech, the just inference is, that the beast was only an instrument made use of by some invisible and

superior being. The Scriptures accordingly tell us, that the devil is the father of lies — the lie made by the serpent to Eve being the first we have on record; they call him also a murderer from the beginning, as he was the cause of the sentence of death which was pronounced against Adam and all his posterity; and still farther, to remove all doubt, and to identify him as the agent who used the serpent as an instrument, he is called the serpent — the devil.”

Lord Byron inquired what the doctor thought of the theory of Warburton, that the Jews had no distinct idea of a future state? The doctor acknowledged that he had often seen, but had never read *The Divine Legation*. And yet, he added, had Warburton read his Bible with more simplicity and attention, he would have enjoyed a more solid and honourable fame.

His Lordship then said, that one of the greatest difficulties he had met with was the existence of so much pure and unmixed evil in the world, and which he could not reconcile to the idea of a benevolent Creator. The doctor set aside the question as to the origin of evil; but granted the extensive existence of evil in the universe; to remedy which, he said, the Gospel was proclaimed; and after some of the customary commonplaces, he ascribed much of the existing evil to the slackness of Christians in spreading the Gospel.

“Is there not,” said his Lordship, “some part of the New Testament where it appears that the disciples were struck with the state of physical evil, and made inquiries into the cause?” — “There are two passages,” was the reply. The disciples inquired, when they saw a man who had been born blind, whether it was owing to his own or his parents’ sin? — and, after quoting the other instance, he concludes, that moral and physical evil in individuals are not always a judgment or punishment, but are intended to answer certain ends in the government of the world.

“Is there not,” said his Lordship, “a prophecy in the New Testament which it is alleged has not been fulfilled, although it was declared that the end of the world would come before the generation then existing should pass away?” — “The prediction,” said Dr Kennedy, “related to the destruction of Jerusalem, which certainly took place within the time assigned; though some of the expressions descriptive of the signs of that remarkable event are of such a nature as to appear to apply to Christ’s coming to judge the world at the end of time.”

His Lordship then asked, if the doctor thought that there had been fewer wars and persecutions, and less slaughter and misery, in the world since the introduction of Christianity than before? The doctor answered this by observing, that since Christianity inculcates peace and good-will to all men, we must always separate pure religion from the abuses of which its professors are guilty.

Two other opinions were expressed by his Lordship in the conversation. The

doctor, in speaking of the sovereignty of God, had alluded to the similitude of the potter and his clay; for his Lordship said, if he were broken in pieces, he would say to the potter, "Why do you treat me thus?" The other was an absurdity. It was — if the whole world were going to hell, he would prefer going with them than go alone to heaven.

Such was the result of the first council of Cephalonia, if one may venture the allusion. It is manifest, without saying much for Lord Byron's ingenuity, that he was fully a match for the doctor, and that he was not unacquainted with the subject under discussion.

In the next conversation Lord Byron repeated, "I have no wish to reject Christianity without investigation; on the contrary, I am very desirous of believing. But I do not see very much the need of a Saviour, nor the utility of prayer. Devotion is the affection of the heart, and this I feel. When I view the wonders of creation, I bow to the Majesty of Heaven; and when I feel the enjoyments of life, I feel grateful to God for having bestowed them upon me." Upon this some discussion arose, turning chiefly on the passage in the third chapter of John, "Unless a man is converted, he cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven"; which naturally led to an explanatory interlocutor, concerning new birth, regeneration, etc.; and thence diverged into the topics which had been the subject of the former conversation.

Among other things, Lord Byron inquired, "if the doctor really thought that the devil appeared before God, as is mentioned in the Book of Job, or is it only an allegorical or poetical mode of speaking?" — The reply was, "I believe it in the strict and literal meaning."

"If it be received in a literal sense," said his Lordship, "it gives me a much higher idea of the majesty, power, and wisdom of God, to believe that the devils themselves are at His nod, and are subject to His control, with as much ease as the elements of nature follow the respective laws which His will has assigned them."

This notion was characteristic, and the poetical feeling in which it originated, when the doctor attempted to explain the doctrine of the Manicheans, was still more distinctly developed; for his Lordship again expressed how much the belief of the real appearance of Satan, to hear and obey the commands of God, added to his views of the grandeur and majesty of the Creator.

This second conversation was more desultory than the first; religion was brought in only incidentally, until his Lordship said, "I do not reject the doctrines of Christianity; I want only sufficient proofs of it, to take up the profession in earnest; and I do not believe myself to be so bad a Christian as many of them who preach against me with the greatest fury — many of whom I

have never seen nor injured.”

“You have only to examine the causes which prevent you” (from being a true believer), said the doctor, “and you will find they are futile, and only tend to withhold you from the enjoyment of real happiness; which at present it is impossible you can find.”

“What, then, you think me in a very bad way?”

“I certainly think you are,” was the reply; “and this I say, not on my own authority, but on that of the Scriptures. — Your Lordship must be converted, and must be reformed, before anything can be said of you, except that you are bad, and in a bad way.”

“But,” replied his Lordship, “I already believe in predestination, which I know you believe, and in the depravity of the human heart in general, and of my own in particular; thus you see there are two points in which we agree. I shall get at the others by-and-by. You cannot expect me to become a perfect Christian at once.”

And farther his Lordship subjoined:

“Predestination appears to me just; from my own reflection and experience, I am influenced in a way which is incomprehensible, and am led to do things which I never intended; and if there is, as we all admit, a Supreme Ruler of the universe; and if, as you say, he has the actions of the devils, as well as of his own angels, completely at his command, then those influences, or those arrangements of circumstances, which lead us to do things against our will, or with ill-will, must be also under his directions. But I have never entered into the depths of the subject; I have contented myself with believing that there is a predestination of events, and that predestination depends on the will of God.”

Dr Kennedy, in speaking of this second conversation, bears testimony to the respectfulness of his Lordship’s attention. “There was nothing in his manner which approached to levity, or anything that indicated a wish to mock at religion; though, on the other hand, an able dissembler would have done and said all that he did, with such feelings and intentions.”

Subsequent to the second conversation, Dr Kennedy asked a gentleman who was intimate with Lord Byron, if he really thought his Lordship serious in his desire to hear religion explained. “Has he exhibited any contempt or ridicule at what I have said?” This gentleman assured him that he had never heard Byron allude to the subject in any way which could induce him to suspect that he was merely amusing himself. “But, on the contrary, he always names you with respect. I do not, however, think you have made much impression on him: he is just the same fellow as before. He says, he does not know what religion you are of, for you neither adhere to creeds nor councils.”

It ought here to be noticed, as showing the general opinion entertained of his Lordship with respect to these polemical conversations, that the wits of the garrison made themselves merry with what was going on. Some of them affected to believe, or did so, that Lord Byron's wish to hear Dr Kennedy proceeded from a desire to have an accurate idea of the opinions and manners of the Methodists, in order that he might make Don Juan become one for a time, and so be enabled to paint their conduct with greater accuracy.

The third conversation took place soon after this comment had been made on Lord Byron's conduct. The doctor inquired if his Lordship had read any of the religious books he had sent. "I have looked," replied Byron, "into Boston's *Fourfold State*, but I have not had time to read it far: I am afraid it is too deep for me."

Although there was no systematic design, on the part of Lord Byron, to make Dr Kennedy subservient to any scheme of ridicule; yet it is evident that he was not so serious as the doctor so meritoriously desired.

"I have begun," said his Lordship, "very fairly; I have given some of your tracts to Fletcher (his valet), who is a good sort of man, but still wants, like myself, some reformation; and I hope he will spread them among the other servants, who require it still more. Bruno, the physician, and Gamba, are busy, reading some of the Italian tracts; and I hope it will have a good effect on them. The former is rather too decided against it at present; and too much engaged with a spirit of enthusiasm for his own profession, to attend to other subjects; but we must have patience, and we shall see what has been the result. I do not fail to read, from time to time, my Bible, though not, perhaps, so much as I should."

"Have you begun to pray that you may understand it?"

"Not yet. I have not arrived at that pitch of faith yet; but it may come by-and-by. You are in too great a hurry."

His Lordship then went to a side-table, on which a great number of books were ranged; and, taking hold of an octavo, gave it to the doctor. It was *Illustrations of the Moral Government of God*, by E. Smith, M.D., London. "The author," said he, "proves that the punishment of hell is not eternal; it will have a termination."

"The author," replied the doctor, "is, I suppose, one of the Socinians; who, in a short time, will try to get rid of every doctrine in the Bible. How did your Lordship get hold of this book?"

"They sent it out to me from England, to make a convert of me, I suppose. The arguments are strong, drawn from the Bible itself; and by showing that a time will come when every intelligent creature shall be supremely happy, and eternally so, it expunges that shocking doctrine, that sin and misery will for ever

exist under the government of God, Whose highest attribute is love and goodness. To my present apprehension, it would be a most desirable thing, could it be proved that, alternately, all created beings were to be happy. This would appear to be most consistent with the nature of God. — I cannot yield to your doctrine of the eternal duration of punishment. — This author's opinion is more humane; and, I think, he supports it very strongly from Scripture."

The fourth conversation was still more desultory, being carried on at table amid company; in the course of it Lord Byron, however, declared "that he was so much of a believer as to be of opinion that there is no contradiction in the Scriptures which cannot be reconciled by an attentive consideration and comparison of passages."

It is needless to remark that Lord Byron, in the course of these conversations, was incapable of preserving a consistent seriousness. The volatility of his humour was constantly leading him into playfulness, and he never lost an opportunity of making a pun or saying a quaint thing. "Do you know," said he to the doctor, "I am nearly reconciled to St Paul; for he says there is no difference between the Jews and the Greeks, and I am exactly of the same opinion, for the character of both is equally vile."

Upon the whole it must be conceded, that whatever was the degree of Lord Byron's dubiety as to points of faith and doctrine, he could not be accused of gross ignorance, nor described as animated by any hostile feeling against religion.

In this sketch of these conversations, I have restricted myself chiefly to those points which related to his Lordship's own sentiments and belief. It would have been inconsistent with the concise limits of this work to have detailed the controversies. A fair summary of what Byron did not believe, what he was disposed to believe but had not satisfied himself with the evidence, and what he did believe, seemed to be the task I ought to undertake. The result confirmed the statement of his Lordship's religious condition, given in the preliminary remarks which, I ought to mention, were written before I looked into Dr Kennedy's book; and the statement is not different from the estimate which the conversations warrant. It is true that Lord Byron's part in the conversations is not very characteristic; but the integrity of Dr Kennedy is a sufficient assurance that they are substantially correct.

CHAPTER XLIV

*Voyage to Cephalonia — Letter — Count Gamba's Address — Grateful Feelings of the Turks —
Endeavours of Lord Byron to mitigate the Horrors of the War*

Lord Byron, after leaving Argostoli, on the 29th December, 1823, the port of Cephalonia, sailed for Zante, where he took on board a quantity of specie. Although the distance from Zante to Missolonghi is but a few hours' sail, the voyage was yet not without adventures. Missolonghi, as I have already mentioned, was then blockaded by the Turks, and some address was necessary, on that account, to effect an entrance, independent of the difficulties, at all times, of navigating the canals which intersect the shallows. In the following letter to Colonel Stanhope, his Lordship gives an account of what took place. It is very characteristic; I shall therefore quote it.

*"Scrofer, or some such name, on board a
Cephaloniate Mistice, Dec. 31, 1823.*

"MY DEAR STANHOPE, — We are just arrived here — that is, part of my people and I, with some things, etc., and which it may be as well not to specify in a letter (which has a risk of being intercepted, perhaps); but Gamba and my horses, negro, steward, and the press, and all the committee things, also some eight thousand dollars of mine (but never mind, we have more left — do you understand?) are taken by the Turkish frigates; and my party and myself in another boat, have had a narrow escape, last night (being close under their stern, and hailed, but we would not answer, and bore away) as well as this morning. Here we are, with sun and charming weather, within a pretty little port enough; but whether our Turkish friends may not send in their boats, and take us out (for we have no arms, except two carbines and some pistols, and, I suspect, not more than four fighting people on board), is another question; especially if we remain long here, since we are blocked out of Missolonghi by the direct entrance. You had better send my friend George Drake, and a body of Suliotes, to escort us by land or by the canals, with all convenient speed. Gamba and our *Bombard* are taken into Patras, I suppose, and we must take a turn at the Turks to get them out. But where the devil is the fleet gone? the Greek, I mean — leaving us to get in without the least intimation to take heed that the Moslems were out again. Make my respects to Mavrocordato, and say that I am here at his disposal. I am uneasy at being here. We are very well. — Yours, *etc.*

“N. B.

“P.S. The *Bombard* was twelve miles out when taken; at least, so it appeared to us (if taken she actually be, for it is not certain), and we had to escape from another vessel that stood right in between us and the port.”

Colonel Stanhope on receiving this despatch, which was carried to him by two of Lord Byron's servants, sent two armed boats, and a company of Suliotes, to escort his Lordship to Missolonghi, where he arrived on the 5th of January, and was received with military honours, and the most enthusiastic demonstrations of popular joy. No mark of respect which the Greeks could think of was omitted. The ships fired a salute as he passed. Prince Mavrocordato, and all the authorities, with the troops and the population, met him on his landing, and accompanied him to the house which had been prepared for him, amid the shouts of the multitude and the discharge of cannon.

In the meantime, Count Gamba and his companions being taken before Yusuff Pasha at Patras, expected to share the fate of certain unfortunate prisoners whom that stern chief had sacrificed the preceding year at Prevesa; and their fears would probably have been realised but for the intrepid presence of mind displayed by the Count, who, assuming a haughty style, accused the Ottoman captain of the frigate of a breach of neutrality, in detaining a vessel under English colours, and concluded by telling the Pasha that he might expect the vengeance of the British Government in thus interrupting a nobleman who was merely on his travels, and bound to Calamata. Perhaps, however, another circumstance had quite as much influence with the Pasha as this bravery. In the master of the vessel he recognised a person who had saved his life in the Black Sea fifteen years before, and in consequence not only consented to the vessel's release, but treated the whole of the passengers with the utmost attention, and even urged them to take a day's shooting in the neighbourhood.

The first measure which his Lordship attempted after his arrival, was to mitigate the ferocity with which the war was carried on; one of the objects, as he explained to my friend who visited him at Genoa, which induced him to embark in the cause. And it happened that the very day he reached the town was signalised by his rescuing a Turk who had fallen into the hands of some Greek sailors. This man was clothed by his Lordship's orders, and sent over to Patras; and soon after Count Gamba's release, hearing that four other Turks were prisoners in Missolonghi, he requested that they might be placed in his hands, which was immediately granted. These he also sent to Patras, with a letter addressed to Yusuff, expressing his hope that the prisoners thence-forward taken on both sides would be treated with humanity. This act was followed by another equally praiseworthy. A Greek cruiser having captured a Turkish boat, in which

there was a number of passengers, chiefly women and children, they were also placed at the disposal of his Lordship, at his particular request. Captain Parry has given a description of the scene between Lord Byron, and that multitude of mothers and children, too interesting to be omitted here. "I was summoned to attend him, and receive his orders that everything should be done which might contribute to their comfort. He was seated on a cushion at the upper end of the room, the women and children were standing before him with their eyes fixed steadily on him; and on his right hand was his interpreter, who was extracting from the women a narrative of their sufferings. One of them, apparently about thirty years of age, possessing great vivacity, and whose manners and dress, though she was then dirty and disfigured, indicated that she was superior in rank and condition to her companions, was spokeswoman for the whole. I admired the good order the others preserved, never interfering with the explanation, or interrupting the single speaker. I also admired the rapid manner in which the interpreter explained everything they said, so as to make it almost appear that there was but one speaker. After a short time it was evident that what Lord Byron was hearing affected his feelings; his countenance changed, his colour went and came, and I thought he was ready to weep. But he had, on all occasions, a ready and peculiar knack in turning conversation from any disagreeable or unpleasant subject; and he had recourse to this expedient. He rose up suddenly, and, turning round on his heel as was his wont, he said something to his interpreter, who immediately repeated it to the women. All eyes were immediately fixed on me; and one of the party, a young and beautiful woman, spoke very warmly. Lord Byron seemed satisfied, and said they might retire. The women all slipped off their shoes in an instant, and, going up to his Lordship, each in succession, accompanied by their children, kissed his hand fervently, invoked, in the Turkish manner, a blessing, both on his hand and heart, and then quitted the room. This was too much for Lord Byron, and he turned his face away to conceal his emotion"

A vessel was then hired, and the whole of them, to the number of twenty-four, were sent to Prevesa, provided with every requisite for their comfort during the passage. These instances of humanity excited a sympathy among the Turks. The Governor of Prevesa thanked his Lordship, and assured him that he would take care that equal attention should be in future paid to the Greeks, who might fall into his hands.

CHAPTER XLV

Proceedings at Missolonghi — Byron's Suliote Brigade — Their Insubordination — Difference with Colonel Stanhope — Imbecility of the Plans for the Independence of Greece

The arrival of Lord Byron at Missolonghi was not only hailed as a new era in the history of Greece, but as the beginning of a new cycle in his own extraordinary life. His natural indolence disappeared; the Sardanapalian sloth was thrown off, and he took a station in the van of her efforts that bespoke heroic achievement.

After paying the fleet, which indeed had only come out in the expectation of receiving the arrears from the loan he had promised to Mavrocordato, he resolved to form a brigade of Suliotes. Five hundred of the remains of Marco Botzaris's gallant followers were accordingly taken into his pay. "He burns with military ardour and chivalry," says Colonel Stanhope, "and will proceed with the expedition to Lepanto." But the expedition was delayed by causes which ought to have been foreseen.

The Suliotes, conceiving that in his Lordship they had found a patron whose wealth and generosity were equally boundless, refused to quit Missolonghi till their arrears were paid. Savage in the field, and untamable in the city, they became insubordinate and mercenary; nor was their conduct without excuse. They had long defended the town with untired bravery; their families had been driven into it in the most destitute condition; and all the hopes that had led them to take up arms were still distant and prospective. Besides, Mavrocordato, unlike the other Grecian captains, having no troops of his own, affected to regard these mercenaries as allies, and was indulgent to their excesses. The town was overawed by their turbulence, conflicts took place in the street; riot and controversy everywhere prevailed, and blood was shed.

Lord Byron's undisciplined spirit could ill brook delay; he partook of the general vehemence, and lost the power of discerning the comparative importance both of measures and things. He was out of his element; confusion thickened around him; his irritability grew into passion; and there was the rush and haste, the oblivion and alarm of fatality in all he undertook and suggested.

One day, a party of German adventurers reached the fortress so demoralized by hardships, that few of them were fit for service. It was intended to form a corps of artillery, and these men were destined for that branch of the service; but their condition was such, that Stanhope doubted the practicability of carrying the measure into effect at that time. He had promised to contribute a hundred pounds to their equipment. Byron attributed the Colonel's objections to

reluctance to pay the money; and threatened him if it were refused, with a punishment, new in Grecian war — — to libel him in the *Greek Chronicle*! a newspaper which Stanhope had recently established.

It is, however, not easy to give a correct view of the state of affairs at that epoch in Missolonghi. All parties seem to have been deplorably incompetent to understand the circumstances in which they were placed; — the condition of the Greeks, and that their exigencies required only physical and military means. They talked of newspapers and types, and libels, as if the moral instruments of civil exhortation were adequate to wrench the independence of Greece from the bloody grasp of the Ottoman. No wonder that Byron, accustomed to the management only of his own fancies, was fluttered amid the conflicts of such riot and controversy.

His situation at this period was indeed calculated to inspire pity. Had he survived, it might, instead of awakening the derision of history, have supplied to himself materials for another canto of *Don Juan*. I shall select one instance of his afflictions.

The captain of a British gun-brig came to Missolonghi to demand an equivalent for an Ionian boat, which had been taken in the act of going out of the Gulf of Lepanto, with provisions and arms. The Greek fleet at that time blockading the port consisted of five brigs, and the Turks had fourteen vessels of war in the gulf. The captain maintained that the British Government recognised no blockade which was not efficient, and that the efficiency depended on the numerical superiority of cannon. On this principle he demanded restitution of the property. Mavrocordato offered to submit the case to the decision of the British Government, but the captain would only give him four hours to consider. The indemnification was granted.

Lord Byron conducted the business in behalf of the captain. In the evening, conversing with Stanhope on the subject, the colonel said the affair was conducted in a bullying manner. His Lordship started into a passion and contended that law, justice, and equity had nothing to do with politics. "That may be," replied Stanhope, "but I will never lend myself to injustice."

His Lordship then began to attack Jeremy Bentham. The colonel complained of such illiberality, as to make personal attacks on that gentleman before a friend who held him in high estimation.

"I only attack his public principles," replied Byron, "which are mere theories, but dangerous, — injurious to Spain, and calculated to do great mischief in Greece."

Stanhope vindicated Bentham, and said, "He possesses a truly British heart; but your Lordship, after professing liberal principles from boyhood, have, when

called upon to act, proved yourself a Turk.”

“What proofs have you of this?”

“Your conduct in endeavouring to crush the press by declaiming against it to Mavrocordato, and your general abuse of liberal principles.”

“If I had held up my finger,” retorted his Lordship, “I could have crushed the press.”

“With all this power,” said Stanhope, “which by the way you never possessed, you went to the prince, and poisoned his ear.”

Lord Byron then disclaimed against the liberals. “What liberals?” cried Stanhope. “Did you borrow your notions of freemen from the Italians?”

“No: from the Hunts, Cartwrights, and such.”

“And yet your Lordship presented Cartwright’s Reform Bill, and aided Hunt by praising his poetry and giving him the sale of your works.”

“You are worse than Wilson,” exclaimed Byron, “and should quit the army.”

“I am a mere soldier,” replied Stanhope, “but never will I abandon my principles. Our principles are diametrically opposite, so let us avoid the subject. If Lord Byron acts up to his professions, he will be the greatest, if not, the meanest of mankind.”

“My character,” said his Lordship, “I hope, does not depend on your assertions.”

“No: your genius has immortalized you. The worst will not deprive you of fame.”

Lord Byron then rejoined, “Well; you shall see: judge of me by my acts.” And, bidding the colonel good night, who took up the light to conduct him to the passage, he added, “What! hold up a light to a Turk!”

Such were the Franklins, the Washingtons, and the Hamiltons who undertook the regeneration of Greece.

CHAPTER XLVI *Lord Byron appointed to the command of three thousand Men to besiege*

Lepanto — The Siege abandoned for a Blockade — Advanced Guard ordered to proceed — Lord Byron's first Illness — A Riot — He is urged to leave Greece — The Expedition against Lepanto abandoned — Byron dejected — A wild diplomatic Scheme Three days after the conversation related in the preceding chapter, Byron was officially placed in the command of about three thousand men, destined for the attack on Lepanto; but the Suliotes remained refractory, and refused to quit their quarters; his Lordship, however, employed an argument which proved effectual. He told them that if they did not obey his commands, he would discharge them from his service.

But the impediments were not to be surmounted; in less than a week it was formally reported to Byron that Missolonghi could not furnish the means of undertaking the siege of Lepanto, upon which his Lordship proposed that Lepanto should be only blockaded by two thousand men. Before any actual step was, however, taken, two spies came in with a report that the Albanians in garrison at Lepanto had seized the citadel, and were determined to surrender it to his Lordship. Still the expedition lingered; at last, on the 14th of February, six weeks after Byron's arrival at Missolonghi, it was determined that an advanced guard of three hundred soldiers, under the command of Count Gamba, should march for Lepanto, and that Lord Byron, with the main body, should follow. The Suliotes were, however, still exorbitant, calling for fresh contributions for themselves and their families. His troubles were increasing, and every new rush of the angry tide rose nearer and nearer his heart; still his fortitude enabled him to preserve an outward show of equanimity. But, on the very day after the determination had been adopted, to send forward the advanced guard, his constitution gave way.

He was sitting in Colonel Stanhope's room, talking jestingly, according to his wonted manner, with Captain Parry, when his eyes and forehead occasionally discovered that he was agitated by strong feelings. On a sudden he complained of a weakness in one of his legs; he rose, but finding himself unable to walk, called for assistance; he then fell into a violent nervous convulsion, and was placed upon a bed: while the fit lasted, his face was hideously distorted; but in the course of a few minutes the convulsion ceased, and he began to recover his senses: his speech returned, and he soon rose, apparently well. During the struggle his strength was preternaturally augmented, and when it was over, he behaved with his usual firmness. "I conceive," says Colonel Stanhope, "that this fit was occasioned by over-excitement. The mind of Byron is like a volcano; it is full of fire, wrath, and combustibles, and when this matter comes to be

strongly agitated, the explosion is dreadful. With respect to the causes which produced the excess of feeling, they are beyond my reach, except one great cause, the provoking conduct of the Suliotes.”

A few days after this distressing incident, a new occurrence arose, which materially disturbed the tranquillity of Byron. A Suliote, accompanied by the son, a little boy, of Marco Botzaris, with another man, walked into the Seraglio, a kind of citadel, which had been used as a barrack for the Suliotes, and out of which they had been ejected with difficulty, when it was required for the reception of stores and the establishment of a laboratory. The sentinel ordered them back, but the Suliote advanced. The sergeant of the guard, a German, pushed him back. The Suliote struck the sergeant; they closed and struggled. The Suliote drew his pistol; the German wrenched it from him, and emptied the pan. At this moment a Swedish adventurer, Captain Sass, seeing the quarrel, ordered the Suliote to be taken to the guard-room. The Suliote would have departed, but the German still held him. The Swede drew his sabre; the Suliote his other pistol. The Swede struck him with the flat of his sword; the Suliote unsheathed his ataghan, and nearly cut off the left arm of his antagonist, and then shot him through the head. The other Suliotes would not deliver up their comrade, for he was celebrated among them for distinguished bravery. The workmen in the laboratory refused to work: they required to be sent home to England, declaring, they had come out to labour peaceably, and not to be exposed to assassination. These untoward occurrences deeply vexed Byron, and there was no mind of sufficient energy with him to control the increasing disorders. But, though convinced, as indeed he had been persuaded from the beginning in his own mind, that he could not render any assistance to the cause beyond mitigating the ferocious spirit in which the war was conducted, his pride and honour would not allow him to quit Greece.

In a letter written soon after his first attack, he says, “I am a good deal better, though of course weakly. The leeches took too much blood from my temples the day after, and there was some difficulty in stopping it; but I have been up daily, and out in boats or on horseback. To-day I have taken a warm bath, and live as temperately as can well be, without any liquid but water, and without any animal food”; then adverting to the turbulences of the Suliotes, he adds, “but I still hope better things, and will stand by the cause as long as my health and circumstances will permit me to be supposed useful.” Subsequently, when pressed to leave the marshy and deleterious air of Missolonghi, he replied, still more forcibly, “I cannot quit Greece while there is a chance of my being of (even supposed) utility. There is a stake worth millions such as I am, and while I can stand at all I must stand by the cause. While I say this, I am aware of the difficulties, and

dissensions, and defects of the Greeks themselves; but allowance must be made for them by all reasonable people.”

After this attack of epilepsy Lord Byron became disinclined to pursue his scheme against Lepanto. Indeed, it may be said that in his circumstances it was impracticable; for although the Suliotes repented of their insubordination, they yet had an objection to the service, and said “they would not fight against stone walls.” All thought of the expedition was in consequence abandoned, and the destinies of poor Byron were hastening to their consummation. He began to complain!

In speaking to Parry one day of the Greek Committee in London, he said, “I have been grossly ill-treated by the Committee. In Italy Mr Blaquiere, their agent, informed me that every requisite supply would be forwarded with all despatch. I was disposed to come to Greece, but I hastened my departure in consequence of earnest solicitations. No time was to be lost, I was told, and Mr Blaquiere, instead of waiting on me at his return from Greece, left a paltry note, which gave me no information whatever. If ever I meet with him, I shall not fail to mention my surprise at his conduct; but it has been all of a piece. I wish the acting Committee had had some of the trouble which has fallen on me since my arrival here: they would have been more prompt in their proceedings, and would have known better what the country stood in need of. They would not have delayed the supplies a day nor have sent out German officers, poor fellows, to starve at Missolonghi, but for my assistance. I am a plain man, and cannot comprehend the use of printing-presses to a people who do not read. Here the Committee have sent supplies of maps. I suppose that I may teach the young mountaineers geography. Here are bugle-horns without bugle-men, and it is a chance if we can find anybody in Greece to blow them. Books are sent to people who want guns; they ask for swords, and the Committee give them the lever of a printing-press.

“My future intentions,” continued his Lordship, “as to Greece, may be explained in a few words. I will remain here until she is secure against the Turks, or till she has fallen under their power. All my income shall be spent in her service; but, unless driven by some great necessity, I will not touch a farthing of the sum intended for my sister’s children. Whatever I can accomplish with my income, and my personal exertions, shall be cheerfully done. When Greece is secure against external enemies, I will leave the Greeks to settle their government as they like. One service more, and an eminent service it will be, I think I may perform for them. You, Parry, shall have a schooner built for me, or I will buy a vessel; the Greeks shall invest me with the character of their ambassador, or agent: I will go to the United States, and procure that free and

enlightened government to set the example of recognising the federation of Greece as an independent state. This done, England must follow the example, and then the fate of Greece will be permanently fixed, and she will enter into all her rights as a member of the great commonwealth of Christian Europe.”

This intention will, to all who have ever looked at the effects of fortune on individuals, sufficiently show that Byron’s part in the world was nearly done. Had he lived, and recovered health, it might have proved that he was then only in another lunation: his first was when he passed from poesy to heroism. But as it was, it has only served to show that his mind had suffered by the decadency of his circumstances, and how much the idea of self-exaltation weakly entered into all his plans. The business was secondary to the style in which it should be performed. Building a vessel! why think of the conveyance at all? as if the means of going to America were so scarce that there might be difficulty in finding them. But his mind was passing from him. The intention was unsound — a fantasy — a dream of bravery in old age — begotten of the erroneous supposition that the cabinets of Christendom would remain unconcerned spectators of the triumph of the Greeks, or even of any very long procrastination of their struggle.

CHAPTER XLVII

The last Illness and Death of Lord Byron — His last Poem

Although in common parlance it may be said, that after the attack of epilepsy Lord Byron's general health did not appear to have been essentially impaired, the appearance was fallacious; his constitution had received a vital shock, and the exciting causes, vexation and confusion, continued to exasperate his irritation.

On the 1st of March he complained of frequent vertigoes, which made him feel as though he were intoxicated; but no effectual means were taken to remove these portentous symptoms; and he regularly enjoyed his daily exercise, sometimes in boats, but oftener on horseback. His physician thought him convalescent; his mind, however, was in constant excitement; it rested not even during sleep.

On the 9th of April, while sailing, he was overtaken by the rain, and got very wet: on his return home, he changed the whole of his dress; but he had been too long in his wet clothes, and the stamina of his constitution being shaken could not withstand the effects. In little more than two hours he was seized with rigors, fever, and rheumatic pains. During the night, however, he slept in his accustomed manner, but in the morning he complained of pains and headache; still this did not prevent him from going out on horseback in the afternoon — it was for the last time.

On returning home, he observed to one of the servants that the saddle was not perfectly dry, from having been so wet the day before, and that he thought it had made him worse. He soon after became affected with almost constant shivering; sudorific medicines were administered, and blood-letting proposed; but though he took the drugs, he objected to the bleeding. Another physician was in consequence called in to see if the rheumatic fever could be appeased without the loss of blood. This doctor approved of the medicines prescribed, and was not opposed to the opinion that bleeding was necessary, but said it might be deferred till the next day.

On the 11th he seemed rather better, but the medicines had produced no effect.

On the 12th he was confined to bed with fever, and his illness appeared to be increasing; he was very low, and complained of not having had any sleep during the night; but the medical gentlemen saw no cause for alarm. Dr Bruno, his own physician, again proposed bleeding; the stranger still, however, thought it might

be deferred, and Byron himself was opposed to it. "You will die," said Dr Bruno, "if you do not allow yourself to be bled." "You wish to get the reputation of curing my disease," replied his Lordship, "that is why you tell me it is so serious; but I will not permit you to bleed me."

On the 13th he sat up for some time, after a sleepless night, and still complained of pain in his bones and head.

On the 14th he also left his bed. The fever was less, but the debility greater, and the pain in his head was undiminished. His valet became alarmed, and, doubtful of the skill of the doctors around him, entreated permission to send to Zante for an English physician of greater reputation. His Lordship desired him to consult the others, which he did, and they told him there was no occasion to call in any person, as they hoped all would be well in a few days.

His Lordship now began to doubt if his disease was understood, and remarked repeatedly in the course of this day, that he was sure the doctors did not understand it. "Then, my Lord," said Fletcher, his valet, "have other advice." "They tell me," rejoined his Lordship, "that it is only a common cold, which you know I have had a thousand times."

"I am sure you never had one of so serious a nature."

"I think I never had."

Fletcher then went again to the physicians, and repeated his solicitations that the doctor in Zante might be sent for; but was again assured that his master would be better in two or three days.

At length, the doctor who had too easily consented to the postponement of the bleeding, seeing the prognostications of Dr Bruno more and more confirmed, urged the necessity of bleeding, and of no longer delay. This convinced Byron, who was himself greatly averse to the operation, that they did not understand his case.

On the 15th his Lordship felt the pains abated, insomuch that he was able to transact some business.

On the 16th he wrote a letter, but towards the evening he became worse, and a pound of blood was taken from him. Still the disease was making progress, but Dr Bruno did not yet seem much alarmed; on the contrary, he thought were more blood removed his recovery was certain. Fletcher immediately told his master, urging him to comply with the doctor's wishes. "I fear," said his Lordship, "they know nothing about my disorder, but" — and he stretched out his arm — "here, take my arm and do whatever you like."

On the 17th his countenance was changed; during the night he had become weaker, and a slight degree of delirium, in which he raved of fighting, had come on. In the course of the day he was bled twice; in the morning, and at two in the

afternoon. The bleeding, on both occasions, was followed by fainting fits. On this day he said to Fletcher, "I cannot sleep, and you well know I have not been able to sleep for more than a week. I know that a man can only be a certain time without sleep, and then he must go mad, without anyone being able to save him; and I would ten times sooner shoot myself than be mad, for I am not afraid of dying — I am more fit to die than people think."

On the 18th his Lordship first began to dread that his fate was inevitable. "I fear," said he to Fletcher, "you and Tita will be ill by sitting up constantly, night and day"; and he appeared much dissatisfied with his medical treatment. Fletcher again entreated permission to send for Dr Thomas, at Zante: "Do so, but be quick," said his Lordship, "I am sorry I did not let you do so before, as I am sure they have mistaken my disease; write yourself, for I know they would not like to see other doctors here."

Not a moment was lost in executing the order, and on Fletcher informing the doctors what he had done, they said it was right, as they now began to be afraid themselves. "Have you sent?" said his Lordship, when Fletcher returned to him. — "I have, my Lord."

"You have done well, for I should like to know what is the matter with me."

From that time his Lordship grew every hour weaker and weaker; and he had occasional flights of delirium. In the intervals he was, however, quite self-possessed, and said to Fletcher, "I now begin to think I am seriously ill; and in case I should be taken off suddenly, I wish to give you several directions, which I hope you will be particular in seeing executed." Fletcher in reply expressed his hope that he would live many years, and execute them himself. "No, it is now nearly over; I must tell you all without losing a moment."

"Shall I go, my Lord, and fetch pen, ink, and paper."

"Oh, my God! no, you will lose too much time, and I have it not to spare, for my time is now short. Now pay attention — you will be provided for."

"I beseech you, my Lord, to proceed with things of more consequence."

His Lordship then added,

"Oh, my poor dear child! — my dear Ada! — My God! could I have but seen her — give her my blessing — and my dear sister Augusta, and her children — and you will go to Lady Byron and say — tell her everything — you are friends with her."

He appeared to be greatly affected at this moment. His voice failed, and only words could be caught at intervals; but he kept muttering something very seriously for some time, and after raising his voice, said,

"Fletcher, now if you do not execute every order which I have given you, I will torment you hereafter, if possible."

This little speech is the last characteristic expression which escaped from the dying man. He knew Fletcher's superstitious tendency, and it cannot be questioned that the threat was the last feeble flash of his prankfulness. The faithful valet replied in consternation that he had not understood one word of what his Lordship had been saying.

"Oh! my God!" was the reply, "then all is lost, for it is now too late! Can it be possible you have not understood me!"

"No, my Lord; but I pray you to try and inform me once more."

"How can I? it is now too late, and all is over."

"Not our will, but God's be done," said Fletcher, and his Lordship made another effort, saying,

"Yes, not mine be done — but I will try" — and he made several attempts to speak, but could only repeat two or three words at a time; such as,

"My wife! my child — my sister — you know all — you must say all — you know my wishes" — — The rest was unintelligible.

A consultation with three other doctors, in addition to the two physicians in regular attendance, was now held; and they appeared to think the disease was changing from inflammatory diathesis to languid, and ordered stimulants to be administered. Dr Bruno opposed this with the greatest warmth; and pointed out that the symptoms were those, not of an alteration in the disease, but of a fever flying to the brain, which was violently attacked by it; and, that the stimulants they proposed would kill more speedily than the disease itself. While, on the other hand, by copious bleeding, and the medicines that had been taken before, he might still be saved. The other physicians, however, were of a different opinion; and then Dr Bruno declared he would risk no farther responsibility. Peruvian bark and wine were then administered. After taking these stimulants, his Lordship expressed a wish to sleep. His last words were, "I must sleep now"; and he composed himself accordingly, but never awoke again.

For four-and-twenty hours he continued in a state of lethargy, with the rattles occasionally in his throat. At six o'clock in the morning of the 19th, Fletcher, who was watching by his bed-side, saw him open his eyes and then shut them, apparently without pain or moving hand or foot. "My God!" exclaimed the faithful valet, "I fear his Lordship is gone." The doctors felt his pulse — it was so.

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

But the fittest dirge is his own last lay, written on the day he completed his thirty-sixth year, soon after his arrival at Missolonghi, when his hopes of obtaining distinction in the Greek cause were, perhaps, brightest; and yet it breathes of dejection almost to boding.

‘Tis time this heart should be unmoved
Since others it has ceased to move,
Yet though I cannot be beloved
Still let me love.

My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

The fire that in my bosom preys
Is like to some volcanic isle,
No torch is kindled at its blaze —
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fears, the jealous care,
Th’ exalted portion of the pain,
And power of love I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But ‘tis not here — it is not here —
Such thoughts should shake my soul; nor now
Where glory seals the hero’s bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece around us see;
The Spartan borne upon his shield
Was not more free.

Awake! not Greece — she is awake —
Awake my spirit! think through whom
My life-blood tastes its parent lake,
And then strike home!

I tread reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood! Unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?

 The land of honourable death
Is here, up to the field and give
 Away thy breath.

Seek out — less often sought than found —

 A soldier's grave — for thee the best
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
 And take thy rest.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The funeral Preparations and final Obsequies

The death of Lord Byron was felt by all Greece as a national misfortune. From the moment it was known that fears were entertained for his life, the progress of the disease was watched with the deepest anxiety and sorrow. On Easter Sunday, the day on which he expired, thousands of the inhabitants of Missolonghi had assembled on the spacious plain on the outside of the city, according to an ancient custom, to exchange the salutations of the morning; but on this occasion it was remarked, that instead of the wonted congratulations, "Christ is risen," they inquired first, "How is Lord Byron?"

On the event being made known, the Provisional Government assembled, and a proclamation, of which the following is a translation, was issued

"Provisional Government of Western Greece.

"The day of festivity and rejoicing is turned into one of sorrow and mourning.

"The Lord Noel Byron departed this life at eleven o'clock last night, after an illness of ten days. His death was caused by an inflammatory fever. Such was the effect of his Lordship's illness on the public mind, that all classes had forgotten their usual recreations of Easter, even before the afflicting event was apprehended.

"The loss of this illustrious individual is undoubtedly to be deplored by all Greece; but it must be more especially a subject of lamentation at Missolonghi, where his generosity has been so conspicuously displayed, and of which he had become a citizen, with the ulterior determination of participating in all the dangers of the war.

"Everybody is acquainted with the beneficent acts of his Lordship, and none can cease to hail his name as that of a real benefactor.

"Until, therefore, the final determination of the national Government be known, and by virtue of the powers with which it has been pleased to invest me, I hereby decree:

"1st. To-morrow morning, at daylight, thirty-seven minute-guns shall be fired from the grand battery, being the number which corresponds with the age of the illustrious deceased.

"2nd. All the public offices, even to the tribunals, are to remain closed for three successive days.

"3rd. All the shops, except those in which provisions or medicines are sold, will also be shut; and it is strictly enjoined that every species of public

amusement and other demonstrations of festivity at Easter may be suspended.

“4th. A general mourning will be observed for twenty-one days.

“5th. Prayers and a funeral service are to be offered up in all the churches.

“A. MAVROCORDATOS.

“GEORGIS PRAIDIS, *Secretary*.

“Given at Missolonghi, this 19th of April, 1824.”

The funeral oration was written and delivered on the occasion, by Spiridion Tricoupi, and ordered by the government to be published. No token of respect that reverence could suggest, or custom and religion sanction, was omitted by the public authorities, nor by the people.

Lord Byron having omitted to give directions for the disposal of his body, some difficulty arose about fixing the place of interment. But after being embalmed it was sent, on the 2nd of May, to Zante, where it was met by Lord Sidney Osborne, a relation of Lord Byron, by marriage — the secretary of the senate at Corfu.

It was the wish of Lord Sidney Osborne, and others, that the interment should be in Zante; but the English opposed the proposition in the most decided manner. It was then suggested that it should be conveyed to Athens, and deposited in the temple of Theseus, or in the Parthenon — Ulysses Odysseus, the Governor of Athens, having sent an express to Missolonghi, to solicit the remains for that city; but, before it arrived, they were already in Zante, and a vessel engaged to carry them to London, in the expectation that they would be deposited in Westminster Abbey or St Paul’s.

On the 25th of May, the *Florida* left Zante with the body, which Colonel Stanhope accompanied; and on the 29th of June it reached the Downs. After the ship was cleared from quarantine, Mr Hobhouse, with his Lordship’s solicitor, received it from Colonel Stanhope, and, by their directions it was removed to the house of Sir E. Knatchbull, in Westminster, where it lay in state several days.

The dignitaries of the Abbey and of St Paul’s having, as it was said, refused permission to deposit the remains in either of these great national receptacles of the illustrious dead, it was determined that they should be laid in the ancestral vault of the Byrons. The funeral, instead of being public, was in consequence private, and attended by only a few select friends to Hucknell, a small village about two miles from Newstead Abbey, in the church of which the vault is situated; there the coffin was deposited, in conformity to a wish early expressed by the poet, that his dust might be mingled with his mother’s. Yet, unmeet and plain as the solemnity was in its circumstances, a remarkable incident gave it

interest and distinction: as it passed along the streets of London, a sailor was observed walking uncovered near the hearse, and on being asked what he was doing there, replied that he had served Lord Byron in the Levant, and had come to pay his last respects to his remains; a simple but emphatic testimony to the sincerity of that regard which his Lordship often inspired, and which with more steadiness might always have commanded.

The coffin bears the following inscription:

LORD BYRON, OF ROCHDALE,
BORN IN LONDON, JANUARY 22, 1788;
DIED AT MISSOLONGHI,
IN WESTERN GREECE,
APRIL 19, 1824.

Beside the coffin the urn is placed, the inscription on which is,

Within this urn are deposited the heart, brains, etc. of the deceased Lord Byron.

CHAPTER XLIX

The Character of Lord Byron

My endeavour, in the foregoing pages, has been to give a general view of the intellectual character of Lord Byron. It did not accord with the plan to enter minutely into the details of his private life, which I suspect was not greatly different from that of any other person of his rank, not distinguished for particular severity of manners. In some respects his Lordship was, no doubt, peculiar. He possessed a vivacity of sensibility not common, and talents of a very extraordinary kind. He was also distinguished for superior personal elegance, particularly in his bust. The style and character of his head were universally admired; but perhaps the beauty of his physiognomy has been more highly spoken of than it really merited. Its chief grace consisted, when he was in a gay humour, of a liveliness which gave a joyous meaning to every articulation of the muscles and features: when he was less agreeably disposed, the expression was morose to a very repulsive degree. It is, however, unnecessary to describe his personal character here. I have already said enough incidentally, to explain my full opinion of it. In the mass, I do not think it was calculated to attract much permanent affection or esteem. In the detail it was the reverse: few men possessed more companionable qualities than Lord Byron did occasionally; and seen at intervals in those felicitous moments, I imagine it would have been difficult to have said, that a more interesting companion had been previously met with. But he was not always in that fascinating state of pleasantry: he was as often otherwise; and no two individuals could be more distinct from each other than Byron in his gaiety and in his misanthropy. This antithesis was the great cause of that diversity of opinion concerning him, which has so much divided his friends and adversaries. Of his character as a poet there can be no difference of opinion, but only a difference in the degree of admiration.

Excellence in talent, as in every other thing, is comparative; but the universal republic of letters will acknowledge, that in energy of expression and liveliness of imagery Byron had no equal in his own time. Doubts, indeed, may be entertained, if in these high qualities even Shakspeare himself was his superior.

I am not disposed to think with many of those who rank the genius of Byron almost as supreme, that he has shown less skill in the construction of his plots, and the development of his tales, than might have been expected from one so splendidly endowed; for it has ever appeared to me that he has accomplished in them everything he proposed to attain, and that in this consists one of his great merits. His mind, fervid and impassioned, was in all his compositions, except *Don Juan*, eagerly fixed on the catastrophe. He ever held the goal full in view,

and drove to it in the most immediate manner. By this straightforward simplicity all the interest which intricacy excites was of necessity disregarded. He is therefore not treated justly when it is supposed that he might have done better had he shown more art: the wonder is, that he should have produced such magnificent effects with so little. He could not have made the satiated and meditative Harold so darkling and excursive, so lone, "aweary," and misanthropical, had he treated him as the hero of a scholastic epic. The might of the poet in such creations lay in the riches of his diction and in the felicity with which he described feelings in relation to the aspect of scenes amid the reminiscences with which the scenes themselves were associated.

If in language and plan he be so excellent, it may be asked why should he not be honoured with that pre-eminent niche in the temple which so many in the world have by suffrage assigned to him? Simply because, with all the life and beauty of his style, the vigour and truth of his descriptions, the boldness of his conceptions, and the reach of his vision in the dark abysses of passion, Lord Byron was but imperfectly acquainted with human nature. He looked but on the outside of man. No characteristic action distinguishes one of his heroes from another, nor is there much dissimilarity in their sentiments; they have no individuality; they stalk and pass in mist and gloom, grim, ghastly, and portentous, mysterious shadows, entities of the twilight, weird things like the sceptred effigies of the unborn issue of Banquo.

Combined with vast power, Lord Byron possessed, beyond all question, the greatest degree of originality of any poet of this age. In this rare quality he has no parallel in any age. All other poets and inventive authors are measured in their excellence by the accuracy with which they fit sentiments appropriate not only to the characters they create, but to the situations in which they place them: the works of Lord Byron display the opposite to this, and with the most extraordinary splendour. He endows his creations with his own qualities; he finds in the situations in which he places them only opportunities to express what he has himself felt or suffered; and yet he mixes so much probability in the circumstances, that they are always eloquently proper. He does everything, as it were, the reverse of other poets; in the air and sea, which have been in all times the emblems of change and the similitudes of inconstancy, he has discovered the very principles of permanency. The ocean in his view, not by its vastness, its unfathomable depths, and its limitless extent, becomes an image of deity, by its unchangeable character!

The variety of his productions present a prodigious display of power. In his short career he has entitled himself to be ranked in the first class of the British poets for quantity alone. By *Childe Harold*, and his other poems of the same

mood, he has extended the scope of feeling, made us acquainted with new trains of association, awakened sympathies which few suspected themselves of possessing; and he has laid open darker recesses in the bosom than were previously supposed to exist. The deep and dreadful caverns of remorse had long been explored but he was the first to visit the bottomless pit of satiety.

The delineation of that Promethean fortitude which defied conscience, as he has shown it in *Manfred*, is his greatest achievement. The terrific fables of Marlowe and of Goethe, in their respective versions of the legend of Faustus, had disclosed the utmost writhings which remorse in the fiercest of its torments can express; but what are those Laocoon agonies to the sublime serenity of *Manfred*. In the power, the originality, and the genius combined, of that unexampled performance, Lord Byron has placed himself on an equality with Milton. The Satan of the *Paradise Lost* is animated by motives, and dignified by an eternal enterprise. He hath purposes of infinite prospect to perform, and an immeasurable ambition to satisfy. Manfred hath neither purpose nor ambition, nor any desire that seeks gratification. He hath done a deed which severs him from hope, as everlastingly as the apostacy with the angels has done Satan. He acknowledges no contrition to bespeak commiseration, he complains of no wrong to justify revenge, for he feels none; he despises sympathy, and almost glories in his perdition.

The creation of such a character is in the sublimest degree of originality; to give it appropriate thoughts and feelings required powers worthy of the conception; and to make it susceptible of being contemplated as within the scope and range of human sympathy, places Byron above all his contemporaries and antecedents. Milton has described in Satan the greatest of human passions, supernatural attributes, directed to immortal intents, and stung with inextinguishable revenge; but Satan is only a dilatation of man. Manfred is loftier, and worse than Satan; he has conquered punishment, having within himself a greater than hell can inflict. There is a fearful mystery in this conception; it is only by solemnly questioning the spirits that lurk within the dark metaphors in which Manfred expresses himself, that the hideous secrets of the character can be conjectured.

But although in intellectual power, and in creative originality, Byron is entitled to stand on the highest peak of the mountain, his verse is often so harsh, and his language so obscure, that in the power of delighting he is only a poet of the second class. He had all the talent and the means requisite to embody his conceptions in a manner worthy of their might and majesty; his treasury was rich in everything rare and beautiful for illustration, but he possessed not the instinct requisite to guide him in the selection of the things necessary to the inspiration

of delight: — he could give his statue life and beauty, and warmth, and motion, and eloquence, but not a tuneful voice.

Some curious metaphysicians, in their subtle criticism, have said that *Don Juan* was but the bright side of *Childe Harold*, and that all its most brilliant imagery was similar to that of which the dark and the shadows were delineated in his other works. It may be so. And, without question, a great similarity runs through everything that has come from the poet's pen; but it is a family resemblance, the progeny are all like one another; but where are those who are like them? I know of no author in prose or rhyme, in the English language, with whom Byron can be compared. Imitators of his manner there will be often and many, but he will ever remain one of the few whom the world acknowledges are alike supreme, and yet unlike each other — epochal characters, who mark extraordinary periods in history.

Raphael is the only man of pre-eminence whose career can be compared with that of Byron; at an age when the genius of most men is but in the dawning, they had both attained their meridian of glory, and they both died so early, that it may be said they were lent to the world only to show the height to which the mind may ascend when time shall be allowed to accomplish the full cultivations of such extraordinary endowments.



'Lord Byron on his Death-bed' by Joseph Denis Odevaere, 1826



St. Mary Magdalene Church, Hucknall Torkard, Nottinghamshire — Byron's final resting place



Byron's grave